

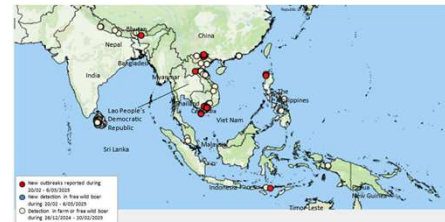
Bridging gaps in risk communication and community engagement for African swine fever management in Asia and the Pacific

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Introduction

- African swine fever (ASF) threatens domestic and wild pig populations, causing significant socio-economic impacts across Asia and the Pacific.
- Despite containment efforts, gaps in risk communication and community engagement have contributed to the disease's continued spread.
- The FAO Emergency Centre for Transboundary Animal Diseases (ECTAD), in partnership with Bhutan's National Center for Animal Health and the Philippine Bureau of Animal Industry, conducted knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) surveys to identify and address these gaps.

Figure 1. ASF situation map as of 6 March 2025.



Disclaimers: Names and boundaries in this map. Dotted line represents approximately the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir agreed upon by India and Pakistan. The final status of Jammu and Kashmir has not yet been agreed upon by the parties.
Source: United Nations Geospatial, 2020. Map of the World. [Cited February 2025]. Modified with data from WOA-HAHIS & media information (Republic of Korea, Viet Nam), WOA-HAHIS & government websites (India & the Philippines), official database 'Iskhna' (Indonesia), WOA-HAHIS and National Authorities (Other) using Emergency Prevention System Global Animal Disease Information System (EMPRES-1), 2025.

Methods

- Study Sites:** Selected communities in Bhutan (two districts, n=60) and the Philippines (three provinces, n=459).
- Approach:**
 - KAP surveys and focus group discussions were conducted among key stakeholders (farmers, local authorities, veterinarians).
 - Assessment of awareness, misconceptions and biosecurity adoption.
 - Evaluation of communication strategies to improve ASF management.

Conclusions

- Cultural context and participatory communication are critical in ASF management.
- These findings offer valuable insights for controlling other transboundary animal diseases.
- Strengthening localized and community-driven interventions can enhance resilience, protect livelihoods and safeguard pig populations.

Recommendations

- Community-Driven Advocacy:** Strengthen engagement through participatory communication approaches.
- Structured Risk Communication:** Develop tailored messaging strategies for key stakeholders.
- Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement real-time adaptation of messages based on community responses.
- Leveraging Media:** Use both digital and traditional platforms to reinforce biosecurity behaviours.

Key findings

- Awareness:** High levels of ASF awareness but prevalent misconceptions about its non-zoonotic nature and environmental persistence.
- Biosecurity Adoption:** Limited uptake despite knowledge of preventive measures.
- Perceptions of Government Interventions:** In Bhutan, farmers expressed concerns over ASF control measures, linked to limited understanding of disease severity.
- Innovative Interventions:**
 - Bhutan:** The "Biosecurity Champions" initiative improved community engagement and compliance.
 - Philippines:** Social media campaigns effectively countered misinformation and reinforced biosecurity practices.
- Need for Attitudinal Change:** Emphasis on behavioural interventions and participatory risk communication.



Focus group discussion with farmers in the Philippines.
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Focus group discussion with government veterinarians in Bhutan. © FAO/Choki Wangmo