



United Nations Command

Camp Humphreys, Republic of Korea

FACT SHEET

AFRICAN SWINE FEVER OUTBREAK (2019-2020)

May 5, 2020

Upon the detection of African Swine Fever in the Republic of Korea (ROK) in the fall of 2019, the ROK government initiated a containment and decontamination program requiring UNC support. At the government's request, UNC suspended all non-operational tours to the Joint Security Area and limited access to other areas within the DMZ identified under the African Swine Fever (ASF) containment program. Additionally, UNC authorized and coordinated aerial decontamination operations in areas across the DMZ and expedited the installation of individual decontamination units to mitigate the spread of the disease.

What is African Swine Fever? ASF is a virus that causes hemorrhagic fever with high mortality rates in domestic pigs. It persistently infects its natural hosts, including warthogs, bush pigs, wild boars, and ticks, all of which are vectors for the disease. ASF is endemic to Sub-Saharan Africa, but has spread across Europe and Asia, with major cases documented in Eastern European nations (e.g. Czech Republic), Russia, and China before reaching the Korean Peninsula. ASF does not cause disease in humans, but there are concerns about spreading the virus by personnel and vehicles transiting through infected areas.

Background on 2019 Outbreak: Starting in mid-September 2019, the ROK government discovered ASF cases at a pig farm in Paju near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). There were also indications of ASF affecting livestock and wild boars in Yoncheon, Cheorwon, and the inside the DMZ. By October 31, 2019, there were 14 confirmed cases of ASF at local farms and 18 infected wild boars discovered. Those numbers have since swelled, with over 500 confirmed cases in wild boars by April 2020.



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ROK Government Response: The ROK government executed a series of containment and preventive measures in order to limit the spread of ASF. The measures included:

- **DMZ Access Limitation:** The ROK government requested UNC suspend DMZ tours on September 30, 2019 and the UNC CDR approved the suspension on October 1, 2019. UNC also limited its own access requests.
- **Aerial Decontamination Operations:** The ROK deployed Forest Service Agency Helicopters to spray decontaminant in various areas across the DMZ beginning on October 4, 2019 through December 2019. Aerial decontamination operations in the DMZ ended due to cold weather temperatures which causes the decontaminant to be non-effective.
- **Individual Decontamination Units:** The ROK government installed individual vehicle and personnel decontamination units at various locations along the DMZ.
- **Culling Operations:** Since discovery of the disease in domestic livestock, ROK government officials culled any pig population where ASF had been present. As of October 31, 2019, the ROKG culled 154,548 livestock and 502 wild boars.
- **Buffer Zones:** On October 10, 2019, ROKG announced and established six ASF Buffer Zones in Dongducheon, Goyang, Pocheon, Yangju, Yeoncheon (Gyeonggi Province), and Cheorwon (Gangwon Province). These buffer zones were further broken down by risk level: risk zone, break out/buffer zone, alert zone, and quarantine zone. The “Caution Area” extends into Yanggu and Goseong, effectively covering the entire DMZ.

United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNMAC) Support to ASF Containment: At the request of the ROKG, UNCMAC suspended tours to the JSA and limited non-operational access to areas across the DMZ, expedited access and construction requests, and coordinated messages to the Korean People’s Army (KPA) in support of the ROKG containment efforts. UNC strictly adheres to established decontamination protocols and tailors personnel and mission operations to mitigate potential spread of African Swine Fever.



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Image 1: Vehicle Sprayer entering DMZ in the vicinity of TC-East





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Image 2: Individual Decon Units deployed near Arrowhead Hill





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Image 3: UNC Arrowhead Hill Personnel using Decon Units

