



# US Swine Health Improvement Plan

*Piloting a proven platform for safeguarding, certifying, and bettering animal health*

US Swine Health Improvement Plan  
2630 Veterinary Medicine  
1800 Christensen Drive  
Ames, IA 50011

## Frequently Asked Questions

### General

March 2021

#### 1) What is the scope of the US SHIP pilot program?

**Response:** A project team of swine interest veterinarians from four land grant universities is spearheading this USDA sponsored pilot project entitled, “The Development and Demonstration of a US Swine Health Improvement Plan modelled after the National Poultry Improvement Plan”.

The primary objectives of this endeavor are to develop and implement an African Swine Fever (ASF)-Classical Swine Fever (CSF) Monitored Certification Program modelled after the basic tenets of the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP) H5/H7 Avian Influenza Monitored certification of US Commercial Poultry operations.

Upon the conclusion of this two-year pilot project (should there be interest), the experiences gained and operations established through the pilot could be transitioned into a more formal and ongoing platform (i.e., US Swine Health Improvement Plan or US SHIP) for safeguarding, certifying, and bettering the health of US swine and longer-term competitiveness of the US pork industry.

Participation in this pilot project is open to all pork producers and packers/slaughter facilities in states that elect to participate.

#### 2) What benefits will a successful implementation of the US SHIP pilot program provide to the US pork industry?

**Response:** Establishing a US Swine Health Improvement Plan (US SHIP) presents an opportunity to create an officially recognized and proven platform for sustainably making stepwise progress in addressing animal health related issues of high consequence that extend beyond the immediate influence of an individual state, producer or packer’s farm gate.

Specific aims of this US SHIP ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program include:

1. Enhance all three aspects (prevention, response, & recovery) of trade impacting disease (TID) preparedness amongst participating producers, slaughter facilities, and states through proactively establishing an industry-informed and working system of operations and certification built upon well-defined program requirements for biosecurity, traceability, and disease surveillance.
2. Reduce the impact of recurring endemic diseases of high consequence through the sustainable advancement of sanitary standards and practices that mitigate disease spread into and between farms.
3. Provide US pork industry participants a first-hand experience in developing and participating in an “NPIP like” program customized to meet the needs of the US pork industry.

**3) What benefits will a successful implementation of the US SHIP pilot program provide to individual participants and stakeholders?**

**Response:** Certified producers and packers/slaughter facilities participating in the US SHIP pilot program will benefit by being recognized for complying with the ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program standards for biosecurity, traceability, and disease surveillance. These standards will leverage existing programs and processes (i.e. Pork Quality Assurance (PQA), Secure Pork Supply (SPS)) and establish precedent for their use across all participating states and regions of the US.

While advancing practices that mitigate risks of disease introduction is a primary focus, proactively developing and implementing an industry-informed and functional system prior to an ASF-CSF incursion will also enable participants and states to readily scale up the necessary testing to demonstrate freedom of disease across specified supply chains, regions, and market segments throughout a Response and Recovery Phase.

The US SHIP ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program aims to play a primary role in helping support the responsible movement of swine and continuity of business and trade outside of ASF-CSF control areas. Implementing uniform and effective systems for early detection and demonstrating evidence of freedom of disease are foundational elements needed to support ongoing interstate and international commerce over the course of a response and recovery period.

There is precedent for willing trading partners to recognize specific areas (regionalization) as being free of specified diseases within an affected country. Recognizing the health status of commercial livestock by region (counties, states, or provinces) has long been a critical component of making stepwise progress over the course of large-scale disease control or eradication efforts domestically and internationally.

**4) Who can participate in the US SHIP pilot program?**

**Response:** Any interested swine producer or packer/slaughter facility in a state participating in the US SHIP pilot program. Swine producers or packer/slaughter facilities located in states not participating in the US SHIP are not eligible to participate in the US SHIP pilot program.

**5) The USDA APHIS administers NPIP, who is responsible for administering the US SHIP pilot program?**

**Response:** The principal investigators identified in the USDA grant along with the hired US SHIP pilot program staff will serve as the administrators for the initial US SHIP pilot program. These investigators represent Iowa State University, University of Minnesota, University of Illinois, and South Dakota State University. The US SHIP pilot program staff have been hired through Iowa State University for the 2-year pilot. The National Swine Disease Council is serving in an advisory capacity.

**6) Who is responsible for the oversight of the US SHIP pilot program within each state?**

**Response:** Once the standards for ASF-CSF certification are determined in the inaugural US SHIP House of Delegates (HOD), each state interested in participating will identify their US SHIP Official State Agency (OSA). Each state electing to participate is responsible for determining where and how they choose to house and operate the US SHIP OSA. NPIP OSA's are commonly housed at the State Animal Health Official's Office / Board of Animal Health / Department of Agriculture, the state's producer association, the state's official veterinary diagnostic laboratory, or at the land-grant university in their state.

## 7) How will participant information be kept confidential?

**Response:** Each US SHIP Official State Agency (OSA) will be responsible for housing and managing the information needed to maintain the participant status for the program participants within their respective state.

Records anticipated to be housed or maintained by the OSA include:

- Premise level information (Contact information, Premises Type, Premises ID, Location)
- Primary herd veterinarian (clinic) of record
- An affidavit of compliance with biosecurity requirements

Program participant capabilities needing to be verified by the OSA include:

- The ability to readily generate the past 30 days of swine or swine germplasm movement into or out of participating premises in a prescribed electronic format (CSV file) as needed.

While the entity responsible for housing the OSA is expected to vary by state, the State Animal Health Official / Department of Agriculture / Board of Animal Health related agencies are the entities that are most generally responsible for maintaining the livestock premises level information within their respective state.

Participation in US SHIP is voluntary which is a foundational element aiding in the OSA's ability to secure any such program specific information deemed to be confidential or sensitive in nature.

## 8) Will certificates be issued to program participants during the US SHIP pilot program?

**Response:** Yes, US SHIP pilot program participants meeting or exceeding the requirements for certification will be issued a certificate.

## 9) What is the role of the accredited veterinarian in the US SHIP pilot program?

**Response:** Veterinarians serve a critical role in advocating, educating, and helping facilitate their clients' participation in the US SHIP pilot program. Program participants will be required to have a valid client patient relationship (VCPR) with an accredited veterinarian to comply with the established requirements for certification.

## 10) Will there be regular audits of participating producers and packers/slaughter facilities?

**Response:** Each OSA for the states participating in the US SHIP pilot program will be responsible for conferring certifications and verifying compliance on an as needed basis.

## 11) How stringent will the certification requirements be to enroll in the US SHIP pilot program?

**Response:** The anticipated requirements for certification are intended to represent a clearly tangible improvement to the status-quo of FAD preparedness; in the event of an ASF or CSF incursion, provide the baseline elements needed to support interstate commerce and evidence of freedom of ASF-CSF across supply chains, areas, and regions and yet be practical for implementation across the broad spectrum of US pork industry participants.

Characteristics being utilized in the development of the standards in the US SHIP pilot program include:

- Straightforward and scalable
- Inclusive and flexible
- Synergistic with existing efforts (i.e. don't recreate the wheel)

It is intended that the US SHIP pilot program requirements will leverage the participating producers' and packers/slaughter facilities' experience with Pork Quality Assurance (PQA), Secure Pork Supply (SPS) Plan, and utilization of electronic data capture for movement and health certificates.

## 12) What is the timeline for the US SHIP pilot program?

**Response:** The first half of 2021 will be focused on identifying states and regions of the US where there is a critical mass of interest among state animal health officials, packers, and producers that would like to have their interests represented in the inaugural US SHIP House of Delegates (HOD). Simultaneously, technical committees will be drafting program standard documents for consideration by the US SHIP HOD.

It is anticipated that the inaugural US SHIP HOD (Congress) will be held in September 2021.

Following the conclusion of the US SHIP HOD and subsequent assimilation of Version 1.0 of the program standards, each state electing to participate will proceed with establishing their US SHIP Official State Agency and initiating participant sign-up in Q4 of 2021.

At the conclusion of this 2-year pilot program, systems ongoing could cease, be continued temporarily for an additional year, or begin a transition into a more formal and ongoing platform for safeguarding, certifying, and bettering the health of US swine and the competitiveness of the US pork industry in the domestic and global marketplace.

## 13) What are the key roles and responsibilities for the successful implementation of the US SHIP pilot?

**Response:** Please refer to the [roles and responsibilities](#) section of the US SHIP [website](#).