

US SHIP Project Overview

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Development and Demonstration of a US Swine Health Improvement Plan modelled after the National Poultry Improvement Plan

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Introduction

Following the conclusion of a 12-month case study (Is it time for a NPIP-like program for the US pork industry?) in 2019, this team of investigators is now moving forward with a pilot project entitled the “Development and Demonstration of a US Swine Health Improvement Plan modelled after the National Poultry Improvement Plan”. The USDA funding received to support this pilot project (\$495,000, over 2-years) aims to provide support for the human resources, management systems, and outreach necessary to facilitate the initiation and central coordination of this pilot project. Each participating state (ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program Official State Agency) will be responsible for funding internal operations within their respective states. Producer and packer participants will provide support through advancement of sanitary standards, systems of traceability and connectivity of animal health and swine movement information, and disease surveillance.

Overview of Pilot Program:

The primary objectives of this endeavor are to develop and implement a pilot 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 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 the longer-term competitiveness of the US pork industry.

NPIP is an industry, state, and federal partnership that has long played a central role in bettering the health of US poultry and the competitiveness of the US poultry and egg industries. NPIP’s H5/H7 Avian Influenza Monitored certification supports ongoing disease surveillance and the adoption of practices that mitigate disease spread into and between farms. The H5/H7 Avian Influenza Monitored certification held by meat-type chicken and turkey slaughter plants, commercial egg laying operations, and states has played a primary role in helping sustain export markets and interstate commerce from unaffected regions during times of an Avian Influenza Virus (AIV) outbreak of significance affecting US Poultry.

In this project, we plan to enroll US pork producers and slaughter facilities in participating states that meet specified program requirements and wish to participate in this ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program.

We will develop:

- a working system of enrolled farm sites and packing facilities meeting or exceeding well-defined sanitary (biosecurity) standards,
- traceability requirements, and
- ongoing ASF-CSF surveillance program testing requirements

The project team will establish a group of technical advisors/subject matter experts from across the US pork industry to assist in drafting program standards for consideration. A forum of industry stakeholders (ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program House of Delegates) will be convened to review, amend, and determine the program's content, direction, and requirements for certification. As is with NPIP's system of governance, the resulting Program Standards derived through this democratic forum of US pork industry stakeholders (House of Delegates) will be brought forth for review by USDA Veterinary Services. The number of voting delegate positions representing the interests of each participating state will be proportionate to the number of commercial swine in their respective state. Each participating state's voting delegation will be inclusive of the State Animal Health Official or their designee. Participating state's will be responsible for designating an entity to administer this pilot program, verify participant status, and maintain a current list of the certified participants in their respective states. State level recognition and participation in this pilot ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program will be determined by the State Animal Health Official.

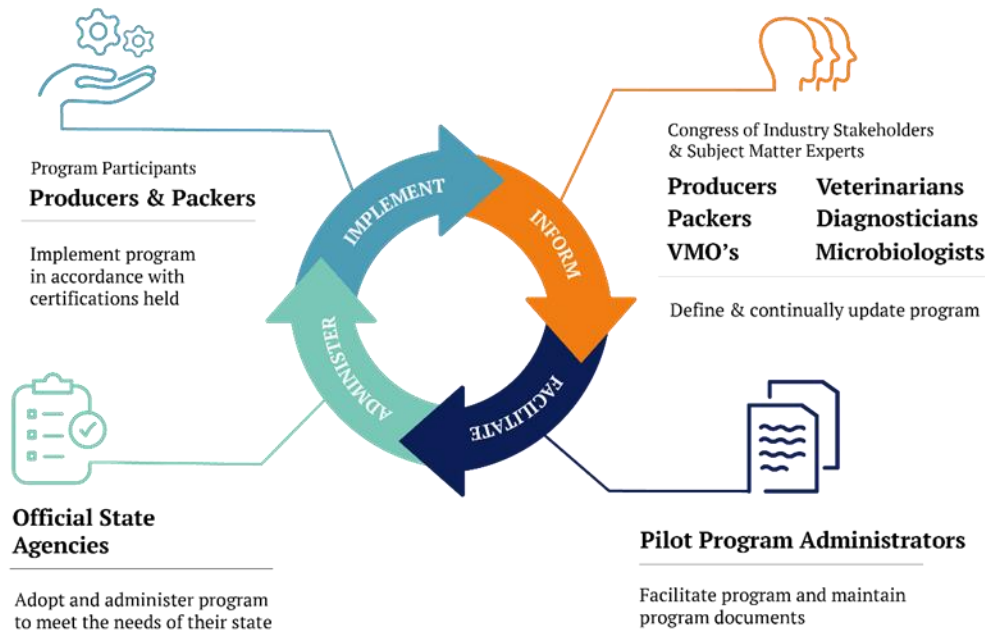
Objectives of Pilot Program:

- Enhance ASF-CSF prevention, response and recovery through development of a voluntary health monitoring and certification structure derived through the input of industry, state, and federal partners.
- Mitigate the impact of recurring endemic diseases of high consequence through the advancement of broadly applicable sanitary standards that mitigate the spread of disease into and between farms.
- Provide US pork industry participants first-hand exposure to and experience with developing and implementing an "NPIP like" program tailored to meet the needs of the US pork industry, i.e. US Swine Health Improvement Plan or US SHIP. See <https://usswinehealthimprovementplan.com> for more details on NPIP and potential applications for the US Pork Industry.
- Provide lessons learned and the pilot's timeframe for state and federal veterinary medical officials to propose and receive input on any operational or regulatory changes needed to establish a US SHIP, if the pilot program is successful over time.

Expected Outcomes of Pilot Program:

- A pilot program with a system of governance and operations that closely resembles NPIP (i.e., Program Administrators, General Conference Committee, Technical Advisory Committee, House of Delegates, Official State Agencies, Program Participants, and USDA Veterinary Services). **See Figure 1.**

Figure 1. Pictorial of this pilot ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program’s operations and system of governance modeled after the US Poultry and Egg Industries long-standing National Poultry Improvement Plan.



- Working and officially recognized platform for driving sustainable, tangible, and stepwise improvement in all three phases (prevention, response, and recovery) of ASF-CSF preparedness, as well as for reducing the impact of recurring endemic diseases of high consequence among participating producers, packing facilities, and states.
- Clearly defined pilot ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program requirements (e.g., sanitary standards, traceability requirements, and surveillance-utilizing approved testing processes at NAHLN laboratories approved to conduct ASF-CSF testing) derived through the work of pilot project Administrators, an Advisory Board, Technical Advisory Committee of volunteer subject matter experts, a House of Delegates representing pork industry stakeholders from each participating state, and USDA Veterinary Services.
- Network of actively enrolled pork producers (farm sites) and packing (slaughter) facilities in participating states verified as meeting or exceeding the program requirements for this pilot ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program.
- Designated ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program Official State Agencies responsible for maintaining an up to date list of participating producers (farm sites) and packing (slaughter) facilities meeting the program requirements for certification in their respective state.

- Widespread adoption of well-defined, effective and practical sanitary standards, traceability requirements, and surveillance strategies among participants.
- Utility of improved animal health information technology platforms for maintaining pilot program participant information and status.
- In the event of the introduction of ASF or CSF into US Swine, the ASF-CSF Monitored Pilot Program could strengthen response and recovery efforts in participating states by providing a preconfigured, well-defined, and officially recognized system for mitigating disease spread, supporting continuity of business, and providing evidence of freedom of ASF or CSF outside of control areas.
- If proven successful, the Program Standards and systems of operation established through this pilot project may be transitioned into an officially recognized codified platform (i.e., US Swine Health Improvement Plan or US SHIP facilitated by USDA Veterinary Services and US SHIP Official State Agencies) for safeguarding, certifying, and bettering the health of US swine and the competitiveness of the US pork industry in the domestic and global marketplace.

Certification Program Details:

The program will be voluntary. Initial participants include US pork producers, packing (slaughter) facilities, participating states, and USDA Veterinary Services. Certificate holders will be US pork producers and packing (slaughter) facilities electing to participate.

Requirements for Certification (Draft):

- Enrolled and meeting defined program requirements for certification.
- Valid Veterinary Client-Patient Relationship with a licensed and accredited veterinarian (for producers)
- Achieving program sanitary (biosecurity) standards addressing each of the following areas:
 - Feed supply
 - On-farm practices
 - Live animal transport
 - Movement to slaughter
- Attaining program traceability standards.
 - Premises level (PIN and current farm or slaughter facility demographic information in ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program database)
 - Swine movements (available in electronic format for CSV/Excel file upload as needed)
- Remaining current on program-specific ASF-CSF surveillance testing requirements that utilize contemporary sampling strategies and diagnostic testing methods to demonstrate evidence of freedom of disease among participating pork producer farm sites, supply chains to packing (slaughter) facilities, and states.
 - Ongoing and well-defined ASF-CSF surveillance testing requirements will vary by farm type and the ASF-CSF status of the US.

- ASF-CSF testing can only be conducted at participating USDA NAHLN laboratories certified to conduct ASF-CSF testing for the USDA.
 - All ASF-CSF test results will be accessible (reported) to the appropriate State Animal Health Official (SAHO) and USDA officials.
 - Any non-negative ASF-CSF test results that arise through this ongoing surveillance and testing outside of ASF-CSF control areas would go through conventional USDA ASF-CSF confirmatory testing and reporting procedures.
- ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program surveillance testing is intended to complement ongoing systems of FAD surveillance across the US and specifically support the following efforts:
 - ASF-CSF preparedness and surveillance efforts on an ongoing basis.
 - Continuity of business and demonstrating evidence of freedom of ASF-CSF outside of ASF-CSF control areas.

System of Governance for Pilot Program:

- Administration – Facilitated by the Principal and Co-Investigators of this pilot program.
- General Conference Committee – Small group of US Pork Industry stakeholders (Producers, Packers, & Veterinarians) including representation from the various industry sectors, veterinary medical officials, and geographical regions participating in this pilot to serve in an advisory capacity to the pilot program Administration. Due to the pilot nature of this program, and uncertainty as to the number of states and regions participating, volunteers will be sought out by this pilot program’s Administration to serve in this capacity. (Note: Pilot project Administration will look for synergies with and/or representation from the volunteer members serving on the National Swine Disease Council to serve in this General Conference Committee capacity). Future members of the General Conference Committee would be envisioned to be elected positions by the House of Delegates.
- Technical Advisory Committee –Subject Matter Experts appointed by the ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program Administration that will serve to draft program standards and requirements of certification for consideration by an ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program House of Delegates. The Focus areas of Technical Advisory Committee:
 - Sanitary Standards
 - Feed Supply
 - On-Farm
 - Live haul
 - Movement to slaughter
 - Surveillance & Diagnostics
 - Traceability standards beyond mandatory requirements
 - Glossary of ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program terminology
- House of Delegates - Decision making body that determines program content, direction, and requirements for certification by majority vote.
 - The number of voting delegate positions for each participating state will be proportionate to the number of NASS-enumerated swine in their respective state (i.e., equivalent to the number of eligible voting delegates at the National Pork Industry Forum).

- Voting delegates representing each participating state will be appointed by each participating state's pork producer association. If a participating state does not have an active pork producer association, delegate selection will be deferred to the respective state's Department of Agriculture.
 - Each participating state's voting delegation will be inclusive of the State Animal Health Official or their designee.
 - State level participation in this pilot ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program will be determined by the State Animal Health Official.
- USDA Veterinary Services – Provide input to and review of Program Standards.

Certifying Agency for Pilot Program:

Each participating state will be responsible for designating an entity to administer this pilot program, verify participant status, and maintain a current list of the certified participants in their respective states (i.e., ASF-CSF Monitored Certification Program Official State Agency).

- Pilot program Administrators, Project Coordinator, and System Support Specialist at the Iowa State University will be responsible for the following:
 - Keeping ASF Monitored Certification Program standards and certification requirement documents up to date.
 - Providing participating ASF Monitored Certification Program Official State Agencies access to a software platform for maintaining pilot program participant information and status
 - Aggregating participant information from ASF Monitored Certification Program Official State Agencies for summary level (pilot program-wide) reporting.

Timeline of Pilot Program:

As currently planned, this is two-year pilot project with forming stages beginning in Fall 2020, with initiation of the program in participating states in late spring (2nd quarter) 2021. At the conclusion of this pilot program, systems ongoing could cease, be continued temporarily, or be rolled 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.