



Ref: VITT1200/SVD-PORTUGAL

# SWINE VESICULAR DISEASE IN PORTUGAL

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## Summary

An outbreak of Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD) has been reported in a pig holding in Central Portugal. Presence of the disease was suspected on 17 December 2003, and the whole herd was reported to have been slaughtered. The disease was officially reported to the Member States at 19.24pm on 22 December 2003.

Portugal has applied disease control measures required under EU law.

The initial information indicates that the outbreak was confined to this single pig herd. There are no reports of the disease spread to other pig herds. The UK has not imported live pigs or porcine germplasm in 2003. Records show a very low level of import of meat products from Portugal.

Italy is the only country in the EU where SVD continues to be reported on a regular basis. Four new outbreaks during December bring the annual total to 27 outbreaks reported during 2003.

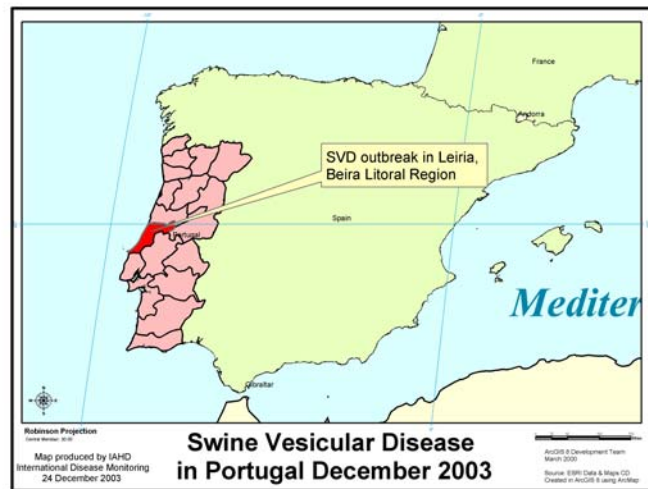
The disease may be manifested as sub-clinical, thus making it difficult to detect. However, the outbreak of SVD in Portugal was suspected on clinical signs. Currently, no information is available to link this outbreak to SVD virus of Italian origin.

The Veterinary Directorate considers that the risk of this outbreak to the UK animal health via legal trade is low. However, the Veterinary Directorate will continue to monitor and re-assess the situation. An outbreak of SVD disease in another Member State is of concern as this may indicate increased potential for the disease spread within the Community.

# 1. SWINE VESICULAR DISEASE - PORTUGAL

## 1.1 Disease Report

The last case of swine Vesicular Disease (SVD) in Portugal was reported in September 1995. On 23 December 2003, the Portuguese authorities notified<sup>1</sup> Member States of an outbreak of SVD in the Beira Litoral area, Concelhodo Leiria, located in the Central region of Portugal (Map 1).



**Map 1: Location of SVD outbreak in Portugal**

The clinical presence of the disease was suspected on 17 December 2003 in a holding with 1754 pigs. The holding was put under restrictions the same day. Epidemiological investigation indicated that no pigs have left the affected holding in the 30 days before the initial clinical suspicion of the disease.

## 2. LEGAL TRADE – CURRENT SITUATION

### 2.1 Live pigs and porcine germplasm

The IAHD electronic database indicates that there were no imports of live pigs or porcine germplasm from Portugal for the past 11 months. The OIE Code states that the incubation period for SVD is between 2-7 days, but Council Directive 92/119/EEC specifies 28 days as the maximum incubation period.

<sup>1</sup> European Commission, (2003). Outbreak of Swine Vesicular Disease (SVD) in Portugal. Directorate E/E2 – Animal health and welfare, zootechnics. Brussels, SANCO/E2/AL/ck(03)/D/522938, SVD-PT-01, 23 December 2003.

## **2.2 Meat/meat products**

Intra-community trade in pig meat and pig meat products is not subject to border inspection controls or electronic notification of consignments. The latest recorded data (up to September 2003) from the HM Customs and Excise indicated a low level (about 2,000kg) of pig meat and products from Portugal in 2003.

Affected Member States are required to impose EU rules in the protection and surveillance zones around outbreaks. Imports of pigs and pig meat are subject to EU rules, which prohibit exports of meat from areas subject to disease restrictions.

## **3. SVD DISEASE RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE**

### **3.1 The situation in Portugal**

The last reported outbreak of SVD in Portugal was in 1995. Following the clinical suspicion, the Portuguese authorities implemented disease control measures as per EU rules (92/119/EEC). These rules require that all pigs from the affected holding are slaughtered, establishment of protection and surveillance zone around the affected holding and complete standstill on pig movements within these zones, including cleaning and disinfection of vehicles transporting pigs. The C&D measures are applied throughout Portugal

The Commission have not imposed safeguard measures on the basis that Portugal has acted to remove the risk from live pigs (see below) and exports of meat are very limited.

## **4. ASSESSMENT OF THE RISK TO THE UK**

On the basis of current information on the outbreak of SVD in Portugal, the Veterinary Directorate presently considers that with regard to:

### **4.1 Legal trade in:**

#### **4.1.1 Live pigs**

- The risk is negligible as no live pigs have been imported from Portugal during the past 11 months and the Portuguese authorities have provided an assurance that no live pigs will be exported unless they first test negative for SVD.

#### **4.1.2 Pig meat/meat products**

- The risk is low. It will be negligible if surveillance required in the protection and surveillance zones confirms no spread to

other farms. The records indicate low levels of import of meat and meat products in 2003. The Portuguese CVO has confirmed that abattoirs in Portugal are now closed for the Christmas break. Swill feeding, which predisposes to infection by the oral route is banned in the UK. Infection by this route is achieved by contact of infected material with abraded skin / mucous membranes. The OIE states that the most significant route of infection is contact with faeces and infected live pigs.

#### **4.3 Personal imports**

- Personal imports may pose a risk for the introduction of the disease from infected Member States and countries worldwide. Although this type of risk is difficult to quantify, it appears that the background risk remains unchanged given an on-going presence of SVD in one Member State (Italy).

### **5. CONCLUSION**

The initial information indicates that the outbreak is confined to a single pig herd. There are no reports of localized spread of the disease among commercial pig farms. Portugal has declared that they have destroyed all pigs from the affected holding, applied a complete standstill on pig movements in the protection and surveillance zone, and applied additional cleaning and disinfection requirements nationwide for vehicles transporting pigs.

The Veterinary Directorate continues to monitor the situation and will re-assess the risks when new information becomes available.

This outbreak poses a low risk to UK animal health. The Veterinary Directorate considers that an outbreak of SVD disease in another Member State is of concern as this may indicate increased potential for the disease spread within the Community. We will maintain close contact with the Commission to press for further action if disease is shown to have become more widespread.

Nigel Gibbens  
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