



Government of the United States Virgin Islands
Department of Agriculture



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News Release

For Immediate Distribution

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THE VIRGIN ISLANDS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE CONTINUES DISEASE SURVEILLANCE OF ALL SWINE AND CHICKEN (AVIAN) FARMS IN THE TERRITORY

The Virgin Islands Department of Agriculture Veterinary Services Division (VIDA VS) has embarked on a robust swine health surveillance program in partnership with the USDA. In response to the outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in pigs in the Dominican Republic and Haiti in 2021, every effort is being made to keep the disease out of the USVI, Puerto Rico and the United States.

A Protection Zone was created to mitigate the risk of ASF disease introduction into the territories and the United States.

This Protection Zone puts into place enhanced testing of all USVI swine farms twice a year, prohibition of swine and pork products from entering or leaving the USVI, and increased training and education of farmers and stakeholders regarding biosecurity. Customs and Border Protection has increased inspections of passengers, boats, aircraft and cargo leaving and entering the USVI.

Enhanced testing of swine is a multi-agency effort. All thirty swine farmers in the Territory have readily cooperated in these surveillance activities, resulting in 100% of swine farms being tested. VIDA abattoir staff have sampled all swine moving through the facility. USDA Wildlife Services staff have been sampling wild pigs. As a result, over 220 animals have been tested in the past six months and all have tested negative. VIDA VS with USDA will maintain this brisk pace of surveillance through the next year.

With the current outbreak of Avian Influenza on the US mainland, VIDA VS is continuing its extensive avian health surveillance program and will continue testing all poultry premises in the Territory. Movement of birds into the Territory is being monitored and may be restricted upon notification from USDA. VIDA VS has been testing birds since 2006 and all have had negative results.

Dr. Bethany Bradford, Director of Veterinary Services, thanks the swine farmers and poultry owners for their cooperation in protecting their animals, their farms, and ultimately our community. Dr. Bradford encourages each farmer to continue to practice good biosecurity on their farms and contact VIDA with questions and/or concerns.

To report any sick pigs or poultry, or to have your birds tested, call the Division of Veterinary Services:

St. Croix 340-642-7320
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