The outbreak of African Swine Fever (ASF) in a semi-commercial pig farm was confirmed in Samphelling, under Chukha Dzongkhag on April 17, 2022. The disease was confirmed by the National Centre for Animal Health, Serbithang using real time-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test. ASF is a highly contagious viral disease that causes up to 100% mortality in affected farms. The most commonly observed signs in the pigs are high fever, respiratory distress, reddening of skin, diarrhea and vomiting, loss of appetite and weakness, abortion in pregnant sows and sudden death. Although ASF does not affect humans, it can cause catastrophic socio-economic consequences for the pig farming sector. Currently, there are no effective vaccines and treatments available for the prevention and control of this disease. In the event of outbreaks, based on the risk assessment, pre-emptive culling of the pig population is adopted to prevent spread of virus from the affected areas.

The National Incident Command Committee (NICC), chaired by Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Forests has activated the Incident Operation Centre (IOC) at Thromde
Veterinary Hospital & Satellite Laboratory (TVH&SL), Bhuentsboling with the Rapid Response Team (RT) for the immediate containment and response to the outbreak. As of today, the affected farm has recorded 44 deaths and seven pigs are reported sick. There are around 615 pigs in total at risk of the disease in the affected area. Due to the risk of disease spreading from the affected area, the movement of all livestock and livestock products shall be banned from Samphelling geog under Shulba, Dzongkhag until further notice. Based on the risk assessment, the Department of Livestock will provide information on the relaxation of the ban on livestock and livestock products in a phased manner. However, the import of pig and pig products from the certified suppliers shall remain unchanged. The Ministry would like to request the relevant agencies and the public of Samphelling to provide support to the IOC in order to contain the outbreak. The response to the ASF outbreak is initiated jointly by the Department of Livestock, BAFRA and local authorities in Chulsha and Phuentsboling. Failure to comply with the official control measures shall be firmly dealt in accordance with the Livestock Act of Bhutan 2001. All the pig farmers across the country are also cautioned to enhance farm biosecurity and implement good husbandry practices such as limiting visitors on the farm, using disinfectant foot dips in the entry points of farm, segregating sick animals and refraining from feeding untreated swills or kitchen wastes containing pig offal to the pigs. The general public are requested to report any instances of unusual illness and mortality in pigs, and sale and movement of live pigs, pork and pork products out of the infected areas to the following toll-free numbers: 1244 (DoL) or 1555 (BAFRA).

The current outbreak of ASF in the country is reported following the recent reports of outbreaks in the region including the north-eastern states of India.