

PANORAMA

Thematic portfolio



African swine fever: responding to the global threat



PERSPECTIVES

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Although African swine fever (ASF) has historically been confined to the continent of Africa, the risk of introductions into ASF-free countries has never been greater. ASF has now spread to more than 21 countries since the first report of an outbreak in the Caucasus region in 2007, reaching the People's Republic of China in 2018. The situation in ASF-infected countries has not improved, increasing the risk that ASF will continue to spread to other countries, resulting in devastating economic impacts on farmers worldwide. Clearly, there is a need for additional scientific information and tools to control ASF.

The Global African Swine Fever Research Alliance (GARA) was launched in April 2013, at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center, in response to the continued threat posed by ASF to pig farmers worldwide. The aim of GARA is to establish and sustain global research partnerships that will generate scientific knowledge and tools to contribute to the successful prevention, control, and, where feasible, eradication of ASF. This objective can be achieved through six strategic goals:

- **Goal 1.** Identify research opportunities and facilitate collaborations within the Alliance
- **Goal 2.** Conduct strategic and multidisciplinary research to better understand ASF
- **Goal 3.** Determine the social and economic drivers and impacts of ASF
- **Goal 4.** Develop novel and improved tools to support the prevention and control of ASF
- **Goal 5.** Determine the impact of ASF prevention and control tools
- **Goal 6.** Serve as a communication and technology-sharing gateway for the global ASF research community and stakeholders.



1st GARA Scientific Conference, Plum Island Animal Disease Center, Orient Point, New York, United States of America, 6-8 April 2013

Today, GARA consists of 38 partner research institutions working together to fight the threat of ASF. The Alliance maintains the [GARA website](https://bulletin.woah.org/) to facilitate communication and provide technical information. One of GARA's most

important initiatives is the series of biennial ASF Gap Analysis workshops it organises; for example, an ASF Gap Analysis Workshop in Sardinia, Italy, April 2018.



4th GARA Scientific Conference, Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale, Cagliari, Sardinia, Italy, 11–13 April 2018

The [report](#) from this workshop was instrumental in setting the research agenda and activities of the Alliance. Importantly, this report also provides information on the gaps in the scientific information and tools available for controlling ASF, as well as a list of research priorities for addressing those gaps. This information is critical in guiding stakeholders and funding agencies, and in the establishment of strategic research collaborations within GARA. Examples of important stakeholders who are supporting the work of GARA include the International Research Consortium on Animal Health ([STAR-IDAZ IRC](#)) and the International Development Research Centre ([IDRC](#)).

As ASF continues to spread around the world we must not forget that the origin of this devastating animal disease is Africa, where the ASF virus continues to evolve in complex ecological settings. Today, the focus seems to be primarily on the Georgia 2007 ASF virus strain, which is still spreading across Asia. However, could another strain with different characteristics once again escape from Africa? This will be a key topic at the next GARA scientific meeting in Kampala, Uganda, 25–27 August 2020.

[GARA website](#)

AROUND THE WORLD

► NETWORK INITIATIVES

Global African Swine Fever Research Alliance (GARA)

'Fighting African Swine Fever Together'

SUMMARY

The Global African Swine Fever Research Alliance's mission is to establish and sustain global research partnerships that will generate scientific knowledge and tools to contribute to the successful prevention and control of African swine fever.

KEYWORDS

#African swine fever (ASF), #Global African Swine Fever Research Alliance (GARA).

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