

Traveller communication campaign: rabies, African swine fever and plant pests

Dear All,

The French Ministry of Agriculture and Food Safety (MASA) has drawn the DGAC's attention to the importance of a new communication campaign aimed at travellers on the subject of rabies, African swine fever (ASF) and plant health, and would like to communicate as widely as possible through the "Beware of rabies", "African swine fever (ASF): act to prevent" and "Plants in danger, everyone concerned" campaigns.

France is regularly confronted with cases of **rabies** linked to illegal imports of pets from countries where the disease is circulating. The most recent case imported into France dates back to the end of October 2022 and was detected in a dog brought back from Morocco.

African swine fever is an animal disease caused by a virus that affects only domestic pigs and wild boar. There is no vaccine against this disease. While it poses no threat to human health, it can cause severe economic losses in agriculture, with 95% of infected pigs and wild boar dying from the disease. France is currently free of ASF, but the dynamic movement of the virus across Europe poses a permanent threat to wild boar and pig populations in France. In 2022, it appeared in northern Italy in wild boar, bringing the threat dangerously close to the French border. The disease was also detected in the Caribbean (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) in 2021. To keep France disease-free, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty is repeating its communication campaign from the beginning of July to the end of November 2023. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the need to prevent African swine fever among all stakeholders (professionals, hunters, transporters, travellers, etc.). Keeping our country free of the disease is vital: in addition to direct animal losses, the appearance of the virus in France would lead to the total or partial closure of export markets for French pigs or pork products.

Finally, the introduction of **plant diseases or pests** into France can have serious consequences for wild and cultivated plants. In order to raise awareness of the best practices for preserving the health of our plants, the "Plants in Danger" communication campaign aims to raise awareness nationwide throughout the summer period. Launched on 30 June, the campaign is aimed at the general public as well as travellers, amateur gardeners and nurserymen. They are asked not to bring back any plants in their luggage - which may be harbouring harmful organisms that are not always visible - and to make their purchases at dedicated sales outlets.

You are therefore asked to pass on the following instructions to travellers:

- *Do not touch an unknown animal, and it is strictly forbidden to take it home with you. The animal may be infected with rabies and transmit the disease to people or other animals.*
- *Contact the French authorities (French embassies, departmental veterinary services (Direction Départementale en Charge de la Protection des Populations), Ministry of Agriculture) for information on the health conditions for introducing or importing pets into France.*

- *Do not transport pigs or pig products. If you do, declare it to the transport authorities.*
- *Make sure you dispose of your leftovers in suitable, closed bins.*
- *Only duly inspected plants with a plant passport may be purchased and transported.*

MASA provides the following resources on its website:

- Folder Beware of rabies <https://agriculture.gouv.fr/gare-la-rage> and a communication kit:
<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/campagne-gare-la-rage-kit-de-communication>
- Folder African swine fever (ASF): taking action to prevent:
<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/peste-porcine-africaine-ppa-agir-pour-prevenir> and a communication kit:
<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/peste-porcine-africaine-le-kit-de-communication>
- Folder Plants in danger:
<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/plantes-en-danger-tous-concernees> and a communication kit:
<https://agriculture.gouv.fr/plantes-en-danger-le-kit-de-communication>

We would be grateful if you could ensure that they are distributed as widely as possible, particularly to travellers to or from high-risk areas.

Office of the Director General of Civil Aviation