

Philippines DA, BAI initiate controlled vaccine administration to combat African Swine Fever spread

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Philippines Department of Agriculture DA has set aside P300 million for the procurement of 600,000 ASF vaccines. On August 30, 2024 kicked off the controlled trial of a Vietnam-developed African Swine Fever live vaccine in Lobo, Batangas—a municipality with one of the highest cases of ASF. The ASF outbreak has caused widespread havoc in the swine industry, resulting in the loss of millions of pigs and threatening farmers' livelihoods. Currently, 32 provinces are still grappling with the ASF virus.

The rollout of the vaccine will involve inoculating healthy pigs to curb the spread of the devastating disease that has been hounding the multibillion-peso hog industry since 2019. Only healthy pigs will be injected with the live but weakened virus. The introduction of this vaccine is a significant step forward in the fight against ASF, which has severely impacted both large and small-scale hog farmers across the country.

DA Assistant Secretary for Swine and Poultry Constante Palabrica, a doctor of veterinary medicine, said developing hog immunity from ASF infection is critical to limiting the spread of the virus that has resulted in the death of millions of the country's hog population.

ASF has severely affected both large integrators and backyard farms. While larger farms can invest in biosecurity measures, 60% of our hog population in backyard farms struggle with insufficient funding for effective protection," Asec. Palabrica explained.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said finding a suitable vaccine against ASF is essential to saving billions of investments, revitalizing backyard farms, and ensuring food security. DA is ready to find additional funds if the controlled tests prove successful in shielding growers from infection. In addition to this vaccine, the DA is exploring additional vaccines for breeders and growers to further support the industry.