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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS-2019-0051]

Addition of Laos to the List of Regions Affected with African Swine Fever

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that we have added Laos to the list of regions that the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service considers to be affected with African swine fever (ASF). We have taken this action because of confirmation of ASF in Laos.

DATES: Laos was added to the APHIS list of regions considered affected with ASF on July 5, 2019.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Ingrid Kotowski, Regionalization Evaluation Services, Veterinary Services, APHIS, 920 Main Campus Drive, Suite 200, Raleigh, NC 27606; (919) 855-7732; email: ingrid.kotowski@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

The regulations in 9 CFR part 94 (referred to below as the regulations) govern the importation of specified animals and animal products to prevent the introduction into the United States of various animal diseases, including African swine fever (ASF). ASF is a highly contagious disease of wild and domestic swine that can spread rapidly in swine populations with extremely high rates of morbidity and mortality. A list of regions where ASF exists or is

reasonably believed to exist is maintained on the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) website at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-and-animal-product-import-information/animal-health-status-of-regions/>. This list is referenced in § 94.8(a)(2) of the regulations.

Section 94.8(a)(3) of the regulations states that APHIS will add a region to the list referenced in § 94.8(a)(2) upon determining ASF exists in the region, based on reports APHIS receives of outbreaks of the disease from veterinary officials of the exporting country, from the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), or from other sources the Administrator determines to be reliable, or upon determining that there is reason to believe the disease exists in the region. Section 94.8(a)(1) of the regulations specifies the criteria on which the Administrator bases the reason to believe ASF exists in a region. Section 94.8(b) prohibits the importation of pork and pork products from regions listed in accordance with § 94.8 except if processed and treated in accordance with the provisions specified in that section or consigned to an APHIS-approved establishment for further processing. Section 96.2 restricts the importation of swine casings that originated in or were processed in a region where ASF exists, as listed under § 94.8(a).

On June 20, 2019, the veterinary authorities of Laos reported to the OIE the occurrence of ASF in that country. Therefore, in response to this outbreak, on July 5, 2019, APHIS added Laos to the list of regions where ASF exists or is reasonably believed to exist. This notice serves as an official record and public notification of that action.

As a result of that action, pork and pork products from Laos, including casings, are subject to APHIS import restrictions designed to mitigate the risk of ASF introduction into the United States.

Pursuant to the Congressional Review Act (5 U.S.C. 801 *et seq.*), the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs designated this action as not a major rule, as defined by 5 U.S.C. 804(2).

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 1633, 7701-7772, 7781-7786, and 8301-8317; 21 U.S.C. 136 and 136a; 31 U.S.C. 9701; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.4.

Done in Washington, DC, this 17th day of September 2019 .

Kevin Shea,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

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