

Media Release



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NPA PRESS RELEASE

NPA reminds Prue Leith and all pig keepers on dangers of feeding food waste to pigs

The National Pig Association (NPA) would like to remind Prue Leith and the millions of Great British Bake Off viewers that feeding food waste to pigs is illegal and poses a serious disease risk to pigs.

Prue, who hosts the popular Channel 4 show, made a seemingly innocuous comment during an appearance at the Henley literary festival about where the leftover cakes and bread from the show go. Initially, she gave them to a neighbour to feed to their pigs until a vet intervened as the pigs were getting too fat, she said, adding, according to the Telegraph: "One of the cameramen has pigs and his vet hasn't said no."

The NPA understands the temptation for people to feed waste food to be pigs, something that has happened for as long as humans have kept domestic animals. However, for very good reasons, it is illegal to feed catering waste (even if it doesn't contain meat), kitchen scraps, meat or meat products to farmed animals.

The 2001 foot-and-mouth outbreak was officially linked to the feeding of swill containing infected meat to pigs on a farm in Northumberland. Before that an outbreak of Classical Swine Fever (CSF) in 2000 was thought to have originated when a pig kept outdoors ate a discarded ham sandwich.

African Swine Fever (ASF) is currently causing devastation in a number of Eastern European countries, recently leaping west to reach the Czech Republic and Romania for the first time. Affecting commercial farms, backyard farms and wild boar, some recent outbreaks, notably in the Czech Republic, have been linked to human spread via infected meat.

The European Commission has warned that the spread of ASF poses a 'serious risk to the European pigmeat market', while in the UK, the Animal Plant and Health Agency's (APHA) pig division has singled out ASF as its biggest exotic disease concern. APHA recently has raised the ASF risk threat from 'very low' to 'low'.

NPA chief executive Zoe Davies said: "We appreciate that Prue Leith's actions and her reported comments were made with the best intentions.

"But we simply cannot stress enough the risk posed to the pig industry by the feeding of waste food to pigs. The reality is that this is the most likely route for devastating diseases like ASF to get into our domestic pig population. An outbreak of ASF, or other diseases circulating around the world like FMD or CSF, would be catastrophic for the pig industry and the wider farming community.

“Most commercial farmers understand this, but as Prue Leith’s comments highlight, the message still isn’t getting through to members of the public, including those who keep small numbers of livestock and apparently their vets..

“Our message is a simple – do not feed catering waste to your pigs!”

The APHA, in partnership with the pig industry, has been running a social media and PR campaign this year to raise awareness of the disease risks inherent in feeding catering waste to farmed animals. It is currently looking to step up the campaign to focus on the risk of introducing ASF into the national pig herd in light of its spread in Eastern Europe.

Dr Davies added: “We fully support this campaign and will continue to try and ram the message home to all pig keepers and the wider public.”

Notes to editors

- 1) The NPA’s briefing on feeding catering waste to pigs can be viewed [here](#)
- 2) The NPA’s briefing on African Swine Fever can be viewed [here](#)
- 3) The Animal Plant and Health Agency [has issued a warning not to feed kitchen waste to farm animals](#)
- 4) A farmer was [fined £4,000 earlier this year](#) for feeding meat sandwiches to pigs
- 5) To read APHA’s views on the risks of ASF, click [here](#)
- 6) For more on the spread of ASF, click [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)
- 7) To view AHDB Pork materials and guidance on how to keep ASF out of UK pigs, click [here](#)

More information

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