

**Voluntary Report** – Voluntary - Public Distribution

**Date:** November 19, 2024

**Report Number:** DR2024-0018

**Report Name:** US Pork Meat Exports Continue to Rise with ASF Becoming Endemic in the Dominican Republic

**Country:** Dominican Republic

**Post:** Santo Domingo

**Report Category:** Agricultural Situation, Livestock and Products, Pest/Disease Occurrences, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

**Prepared By:** Virgilio Mayol

**Approved By:** Chanda Berk

**Report Highlights:**

African Swine Fever (ASF) remains a significant challenge in the Dominican Republic. Despite initial emergency response efforts, the disease is now endemic, with outbreaks showing an upward trend in 2024 and continuing to consistently appear throughout the country. A decline in local production due to the disease continues to provide increased export opportunities for U.S. pork & pork products to the Dominican Republic, which are looking to set another record in 2024 after reaching 96,010 Metric Tons (MT) in 2023.

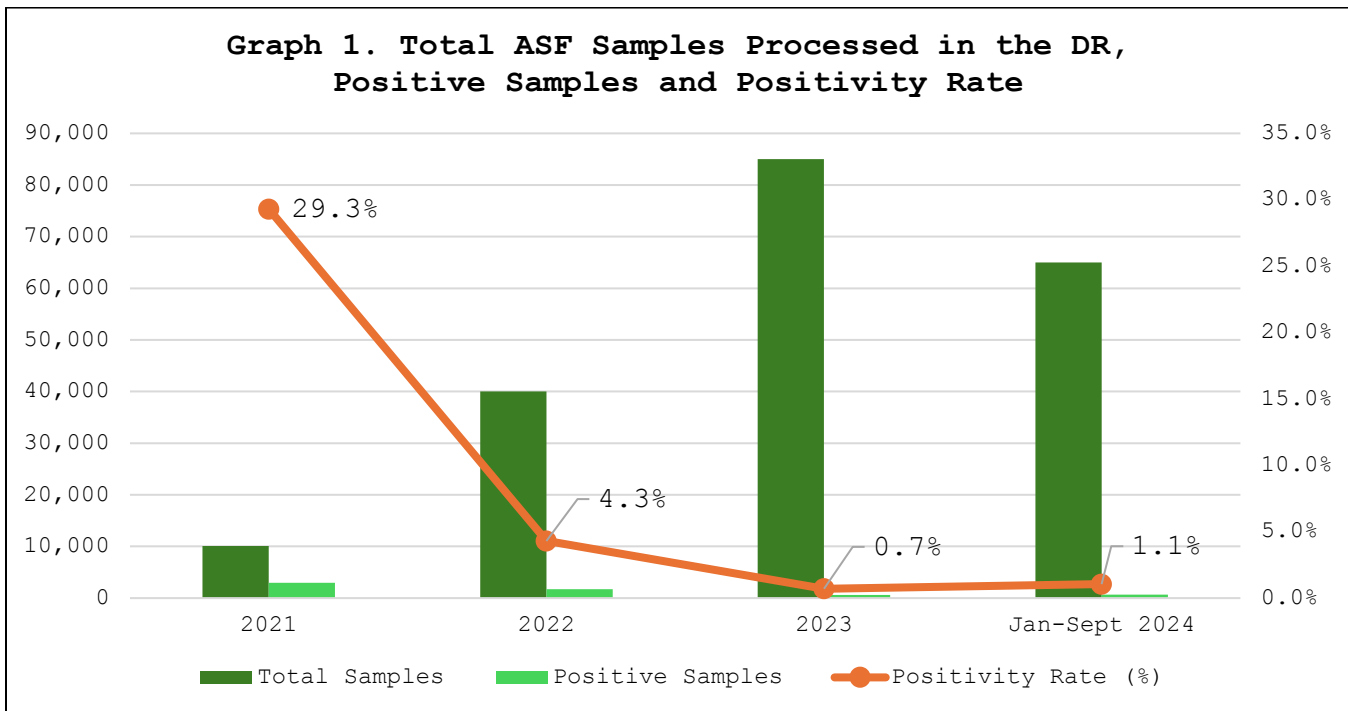
## 1. Current Status of the African Swine Fever (ASF) in the Dominican Republic

In July 2021, African Swine Fever (ASF) was officially detected in the Dominican Republic (DR). Although Dominican authorities quickly implemented an emergency response plan, a lack of resources and technical capacity hindered the deployment of an aggressive surveillance program and the ability to restrict animal movement. As a result, the disease spread throughout the country, leading to the death or depopulation of approximately 30 percent (210,000 head) of the national swine herd.

Some of those technical capacities have been strengthened with support from USDA and international organizations like the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the Interamerican Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA), the International Regional Organization for Agricultural Health (OIRSA) and others. For example, with support from USDA/APHIS, the Central Veterinary Laboratory (LAVECEN) significantly increased its capacity for ASF testing and its now recognized as a model in the region. Additionally, financial support from USDA/APHIS enabled the Dominican government to enhance its compensation program, promote biosecurity investments at the farm level, foster alternative livelihoods for farmers, and raise general awareness about the disease.

While some of these efforts have shown success, a cohesive response has remained elusive, with many experts agreeing that the disease has now become endemic in the country.

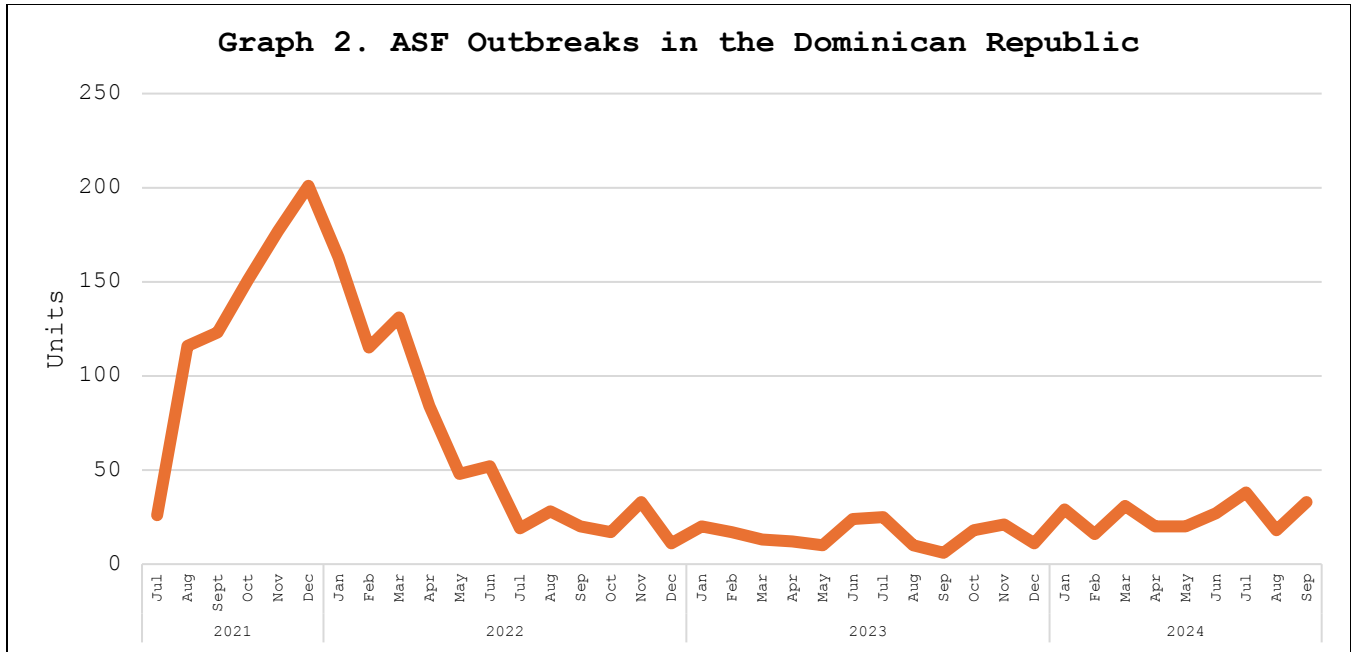
According to data from the Dominican Republic’s Incident Command System (ICS-DR), unit designed by the Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) to coordinate local ASF response, ASF testing has increased significantly since the disease was detected in the country. The LAVECEN processed 10,000 samples in 2021, increasing that number to 40,000 in 2022 and 85,000 in 2023. As of September 2024, LAVECEN has processed 65,000 samples, on track to surpass the total from the previous year.



Source: Built by Post with data from ICS-DR.

The positivity rate of ASF samples processed through LAVECEN had consistently declined until 2024. Although the rate dropped from 29.3 percent in 2021 to 0.7 percent in 2023, it has increased to 1.05 percent thus far in 2024.

When analyzing detected ASF outbreaks<sup>1</sup> in the DR, there was a peak in December 2021, with 201 outbreaks; however, that number has significantly declined, and by September 2024, only 33 outbreaks were detected. Nonetheless, ICS-DR data shows an upward trend in ASF outbreaks during 2024, with average monthly outbreaks increasing by 63 percent compared to 2023, rising from 16 to 26.

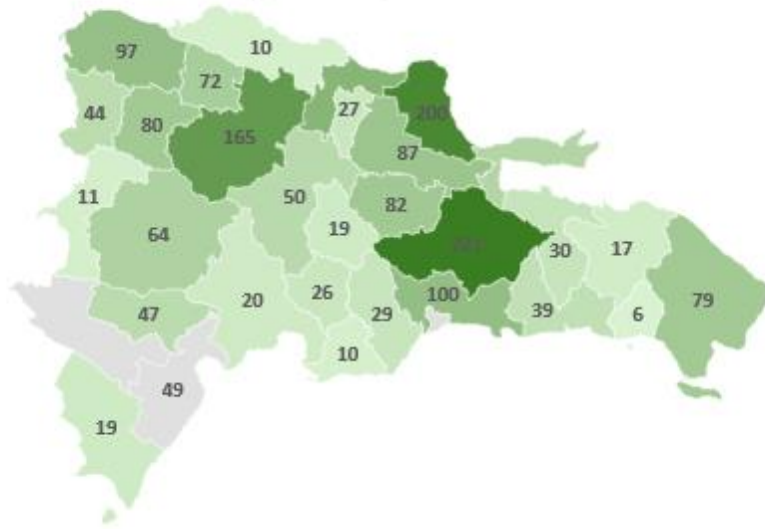


Source: Built by Post with data from ICS-DR.

ASF is or has been present in almost every corner of the DR, with confirmed outbreaks in 28 out of 31 provinces of the country. The most affected province has been Monte Plata with 221 outbreaks followed by Maria Trinidad Sanchez with 200 cases and Santiago with 165.

<sup>1</sup> According to the World Animal Health Organization (WOHA), an outbreak “means the occurrence of one or more cases in an epidemiological unit”.

**Graph 3. ASF Outbreaks per Province in the DR  
July 2021-September 2024**



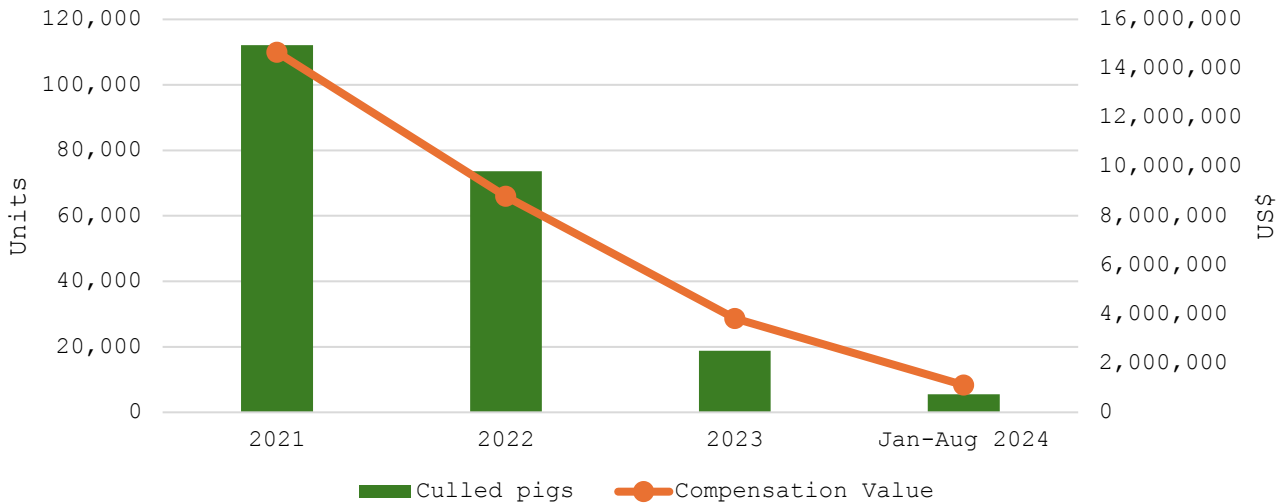
Powered by Bing  
© Microsoft, OpenStreetMap

Source: ICS-DR.

Through the DR’s compensation program for ASF affected pork producers, the country has culled 210,111 pigs as of September 2024 and has processed \$28.4 million in payments to more than 5,000 producers. USDA/APHIS has provided approximately \$15 million of that total.

As shown in Graph 4 below, the number of culled pigs by Dominican authorities has consistently declined since 2021, from 112,147 pigs to 5,507 pigs as of September 2024. Similarly, compensation payments have also decreased from \$15 million in 2021 to barely \$1 million as of September 2024.

**Graph 4. Culled Pigs Affected by ASF and  
Compensation Value Paid by the GoDR**



Source: Built by Post with data from ICS-DR.

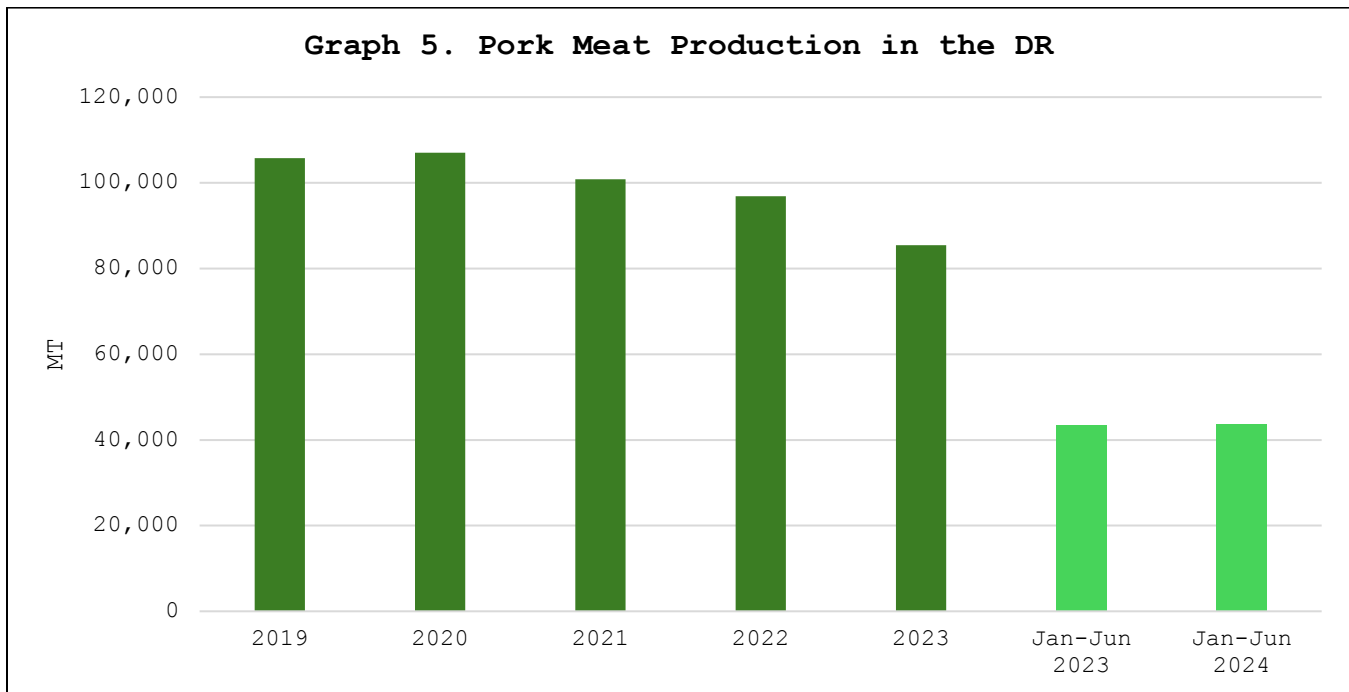
With neighbor countries expressing concern with the possibility of the disease spreading throughout the region, the Dominican authorities have also implemented bio-contention measures with support from USDA-APHIS. In that regard, the country has established canine units in the main airports of the country to inspect luggage of departing passengers. Additionally, incinerators have been installed or repaired in the main airports of the country to improve international garbage management. According to the Incident Command Team of the DR (ICT-DR) so far into 2024, more than 2,000 KG of food items intended to travel to the United States from the DR have been detected by the canine units and subsequently confiscated.

Additionally, at the request of the Dominican Government, a safety trial for the ASF vaccine developed by USDA/ARS is currently taking place in the Dominican Republic. This trial is not expected to impact local production patterns or the current disease situation.

## 2. Impact of ASF in the Dominican Market

### 2.1. Production

According to official statistics from the Ministry of Agriculture, local pork production declined by 15 percent since ASF was detected in the DR, dropping from 100,830 MT in 2021 to 85,444 MT in 2023. When factoring in import volumes during that period, the production decline is likely even greater.



Source: Built by Post with data from MOA.

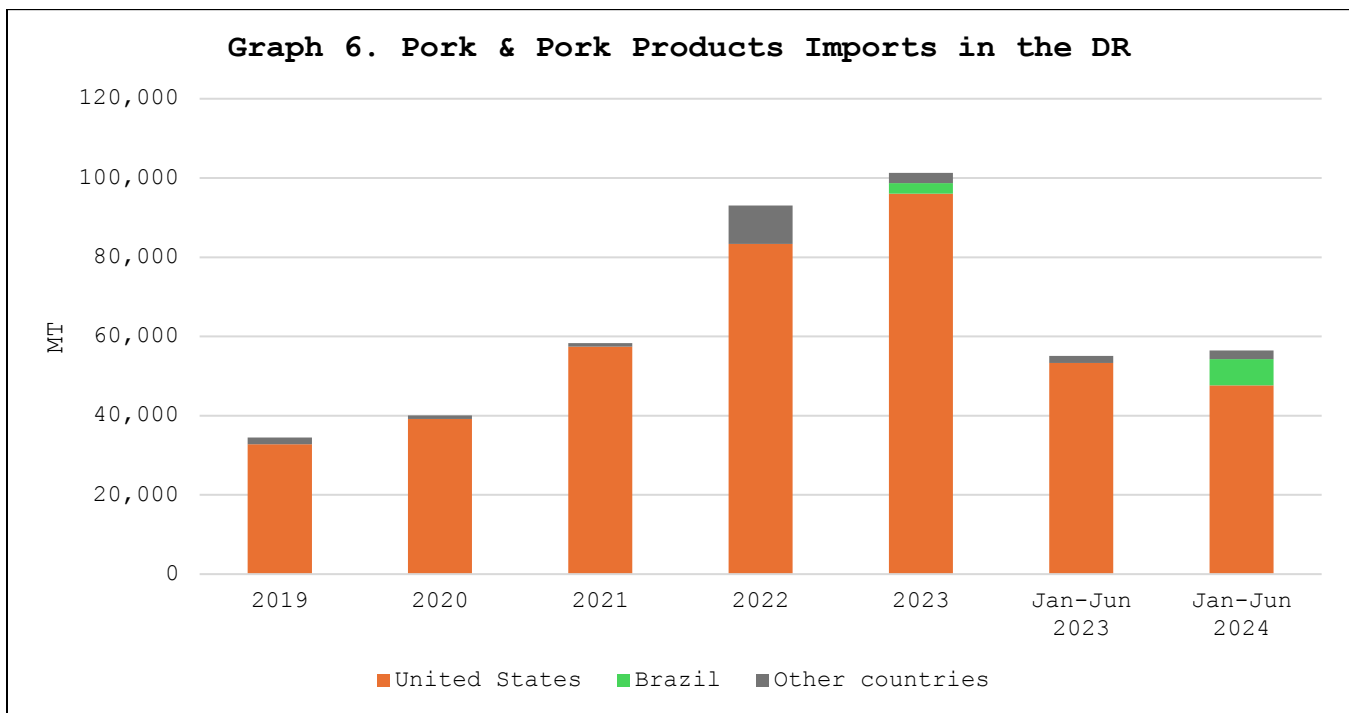
During the period from January to June 2024, local production increased by 1 percent compared to the same period last year. Some pork producers, particularly backyard farmers initially impacted by ASF, are in the process of repopulating their farms, which will positively affect local production moving forward.

The DR has two large swine producer associations: the Dominican Association of Swine Farms (ADOGRANJA), which is comprised of the largest producers in the country, and the Dominican Federation of Pork Producers (FEDOPORC), a small-to-mid size formal producer group. It is estimated that both associations encompass between 350-400 commercial farms that supply approximately 70% of local pork meat production (approximately 60,000 MT per year).

Approximately 20,000 small backyard farmers, which are spread throughout the country, provide the remaining local supply (i.e.15,000 MT). In most cases, the livelihood of these farmers and their families depends on their ability to sell two to three pigs per month. In the DR, raising pigs in small, backyard farms is a historical economic activity, and pigs are recognized as “the piggy bank of the poor.”

## 2.2. Imports

With local pork production declining, imports of pork and pork products into the DR have reached record levels since 2021. In 2023, imports reached 101,324 MT, a 153 percent increase from the 40,084 MT imported in 2020. As of June 2024, imports reached 56,464 MT, a 3-percent increase compared to the same period last year, signaling the possibility of another record year for imports.



Source: Built by Post with data from Trade Data Monitor (TDM) and GATS/USDA.

The United States supplies most of the pork and pork products imported by the Dominican Republic. From 2019 to 2023, the United States supplied an average of 94 percent (61,748 MT) of pork and pork products imported by the DR. However, after having no presence in the Dominican pork market prior to 2023, Brazil has recently begun supplying significant quantities of pork meat to the DR. During the first half of 2024, Brazil supplied 6,642 MT of pork meat to the DR.

### 2.3. Prices

Pork prices have increased steadily in the Dominican Republic since ASF was detected in July 2021, according to data from MOA. As of June 2024, average retail prices of pork have reached \$2.36/pound, a 10 percent increase since July 2021 (\$2.14/pound).



Source: Built by Post with data from MOA.

Dominican authorities are attempting to stabilize pork prices in the local market with increased imports as shown in section 2.2 above and also by having the product included in the Pignoracion Program. The Pignoracion Program is a financial support program in which the Government covers the storage costs and provides low-cost financing to producers with the product as collateral. The GoDR also controls the entry of the stored product into the market.

### 3. Conclusion

As the disease has become endemic in the country, and with the disease also present in neighboring Haiti, where there are no current efforts to combat it, the possibility of eradicating the disease seems far-fetched. Local authorities seem to be moving toward mechanisms to ensure that the prevalence of the disease remains low, increasing bio contention measurements and increasing biosecurity practices at the farm level. Compensation payments are expected to end in the short term. Instead, the Dominican Government, with support from USDA/APHIS, is looking to establish a fund to finance the implementation of biosecurity measures at farms through no interest loans.

#### Attachments:

No Attachments.