**ABSTRACT**

Epidemiological Characteristics of African Swine Fever (ASF) in the Philippines 2019 – 2023 and the Evolution of National ASF Prevention and Control Strategies

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**Background/Objective**

African swine fever (ASF) is a severe viral disease affecting domestic and wild pigs responsible for serious production and economic losses around the world. Since first reported in the Philippines in the last quarter of 2019, ASF continues to affect the swine production sector of the country. Classified as a high-impact transboundary animal disease, ASF is particularly challenging especially in a country with mostly small-scale producers combined with geographically widespread animal movement.

**Methodology**

This study aimed to describe the epidemiological features of the ASF epidemic from 2019 to 2023 in the domestic pigs in the Philippines focusing on the characteristics of the virus, how it entered, the potential risk factors that may have contributed to its spread in the country, and the strategies employed by the government in mitigating the disease. The study also employed methodologies on spatial data analysis including spatial autocorrelation and directional analysis of data from 2019 to 2023.

**Results and Conclusion**

Swine populations in 872 cities and municipalities in 68 of 81 provinces in the country were affected between August 2019 and August 2023. The study found a downward trend in the ASF cases in the country from 2019 – 2023. It peaked to 97.01% in April, 2020. Then, it started a downtrend and bottomed to 4.85% in August, 2021. In 2022, the lowest positivity rate was recorded in August 2022 at 3.64%. As of August 2023, the positivity rate was at 6.12%.

The government’s approach to addressing the ASF threat has evolved from prevention strategies in response to the growing threat of disease introduction and spread of ASF in the region, shifting to strategies aimed at controlling local infections and prevention of incursion into areas still free from the disease, to the current community-based approach involving local government unit engagement, surveillance, biosecurity, capability building and public awareness, repopulation and recovery.