

Agriculture Risk Advisor

First Quarter 2019

2019 FARMING PREDICTIONS

In the absence of a crystal ball, here's what some industry experts are predicting for farmers in 2019:

- **Fewer soybeans, but more corn and spring wheat**—The U.S. is expected to continue to be the number one corn producer in the world, but tariffs will make Brazil the top soybean producer. U.S. soybean farmers are likely to transition to corn or spring wheat.
- **Corn prices likely to increase to \$3.90 per bushel**—This is likely due to three years of strong international demand for meat as producers rely on corn to feed their livestock.
- **A shift in trade**—Over the past year, the U.S. doubled sales to the European Union and Mexico, which are now our top two soybean export markets.
- **Cost and profits flat**—Fertilizer and fuel prices may increase, but lower cash rents will balance it out.
- **Better dairy markets**—Since it can't get much worse, prices are likely to increase, but the predicted 5 percent gain won't offset large losses.

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AFRICAN SWINE FEVER: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

African swine fever (ASF) is spreading rapidly throughout China, prompting the U.S. Department of Agriculture to strengthen its border protections. The first case in China was reported on Aug. 3, 2018, and by Dec. 7, there were over 5,000 cases. China is the world's largest pork producer, with a sow base of about 40 million compared to 6 million in the U.S.

What are the symptoms? Symptoms include fever, anorexia, lethargy, blotchy skin, bloody diarrhea and even sudden death.

Is there a risk to humans? No. ASF can't be transmitted to humans, so it isn't a public health or food safety concern.

How is it controlled? The only way to control it is by extermination of infected herds.

Can it reach the U.S.? Yes, it can be spread by international travelers with contaminated footwear or clothing. It can also spread through importation of contaminated meat products and feed ingredients.

How Can Producers Protect Their Herds?

- Require a five-day waiting period before accepting visitors or workers from ASF-positive regions.
- Prohibit workers from bringing meat from their home country into the U.S.
- Ask your feed suppliers about the origin of feed ingredients.
- Enroll in the Secure Pork Supply program at [SecurePork.org](https://www.securepork.org).