

[AFCD conducts exercise to test avian influenza outbreak response \(with photos\)](#)

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (November 12) carried out an exercise to review the preparedness of the AFCD and other departments in case a poultry culling operation is required in response to an outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza in Hong Kong.

About 110 staff members of the AFCD, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health and the Civil Aid Service took part in the exercise, codenamed "Bluebell", to familiarise themselves with the work procedures and biosecurity measures necessary for carrying out the operation, and to test the response plans.

A field command centre and a mock chicken farm were set up at the exercise venue for participants to carry out their front-line duties, which included mobilising staff and resources, setting up different operation areas in the mock chicken farm, and following personal biosecurity guidelines when entering and leaving the mock chicken farm.

A spokesman for the AFCD pointed out that avian influenza has occurred from time to time in different parts of the world, and Hong Kong should stay vigilant at all times. The exercise has been held annually and can ensure that the relevant departments stand ready to execute effectively the contingency plan in case a culling operation in Hong Kong is necessary.

The spokesman stressed that the Government will continue to implement diligently the prevention and control measures, and urged the poultry trade and the general public to remain vigilant and help guard against avian influenza viruses.

In addition, the Government will step up surveillance before the winter season. These measures include conducting surprise inspections targeting local poultry farms and pet bird shops, the collection of more samples from the wholesale poultry market and retail outlets for tests on avian influenza, and enhanced actions to combat the illegal import of live birds at boundary control points.

The AFCD has notified the World Organisation for Animal Health of the exercise.

