

## **AFCD disbursing ex-gratia payments under Anti-epidemic Fund to pet shops selling hamsters**

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) announced today (February 15) that the department is disbursing one-off ex-gratia payments under the fifth round of the Anti-epidemic Fund to local hamster selling pet shops.

An AFCD spokesman said, "The application for the above ex-gratia payment has started since January 29. As of today, the AFCD has received a total of 29 applications and 17 of them have been approved. Ex-gratia payments by crossed cheques are being posted to the successful applicants, involving payments of around \$360,000. The department has expedited the processing of the applications such that disbursement of the ex-gratia payments can be made as soon as possible."

The AFCD earlier announced that, to provide financial relief to all local hamster selling pet shops which were affected by measures to minimise the risks of COVID-19 transmission from hamsters, a one-off ex-gratia payment would be disbursed to them. Each pet shop holding a valid Animal Trader Licence for selling hamsters is entitled to a one-off ex-gratia payment of between \$10,000 and \$30,000 according to its floor area. The application deadline for the ex-gratia payment is February 25. Eligible pet shop licensees should submit applications to the AFCD as soon as possible. The AFCD has notified eligible applicants by phone and sent them application forms by email or post. For enquiries, please call 2150 6904 or 2150 7165.

Currently, except the 'Little Boss' pet shop in Jardine's Bazaar, Causeway Bay, where thorough disinfection and cleansing is still underway, all local pet shops selling hamsters have been allowed by the AFCD to resume business.