

All pigs on Yuen Long pig farm with samples tested positive for ASF virus earlier will be culled

As several samples taken from two sheds on a licensed pig farm in Wong Nai Tun, Yuen Long were tested positive for African Swine Fever (ASF) virus earlier, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (February 9) announced culling of all pigs on the farm.

A spokesman for the AFCD said, "Six pig samples were taken from an isolated shed were tested positive for ASF on February 4 and two more samples from another shed were tested positive too on February 6. It shows that the virus is spreading on the farm. The AFCD, after consulting international experts in the area, considered it prudent to cull all the pigs on the farm."

The spokesman explained, "Transporting pigs out of the farm has been suspended since ASF virus was detected on the farm. Culling all pigs on the farm is a prudent solution. The Department has liaised with the stakeholders and informed them of the decision. According to the contingency plan on ASF, the AFCD will cull the remaining some 3000 pigs in an orderly manner as the ground situation allows and as soon as possible. The pig owner will be compensated according to the established mechanism."

The spokesman further said, "So far, samples taken from the other three pig farms within three kilometres of the farm were all negative. As no abnormalities have been found during inspection of these farms, pigs on the three pig farms are allowed to be transported to slaughterhouses. For the sake of prudence, the AFCD will send in staff to inspect the pigs before they are transported out of the farms to ensure that only pigs in good health condition are allowed to be sent to slaughterhouses. Besides, the pig transportation vehicles of these three pig farms are not to transport pigs of other farms at the same time and to undergo thorough cleansing and disinfection before they leave the slaughterhouses."

The AFCD will continue to investigate and trace the source of ASF virus with international experts in the area, step up inspection of local pig farms and conduct tests if necessary to keep all local farms under close surveillance. The AFCD has also notified all farmers to alert the Department immediately if abnormal health conditions are observed in pigs.

The spokesman stressed that ASF is not a zoonotic disease and will not infect humans, hence does not cause any food safety risk. Pork cooked thoroughly is safe for consumption. Members of the public do not need to be concerned. Up till now, the incident affects only one pig farm but not the operation of slaughterhouses nor the overall supply of live pigs as live pigs from other sources can make it up.

As disposal operations take time, the AFCD releases updated operation

information every day on the departmental web page, www.afcd.gov.hk for the public.