

Samples taken from wild pig carcass test positive for ASF virus

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (May 30) announced that samples taken from a wild pig carcass under the surveillance programme for African swine fever (ASF) have tested positive for the ASF virus.

A debilitated wild pig was found in the area near Tai Lam Wu, Sai Kung, by AFCD staff, while following up on a wild pig sighting report from a member of the public recently. The wild pig subsequently died and samples were collected by the AFCD from the wild pig carcass for testing. Results are positive for the ASF virus. The AFCD will report the findings to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and continue to monitor any wild pig deaths that warrant attention, and maintain surveillance in the wild pig population.

There is one pig farm located within three kilometres of Tai Lam Wu, Sai Kung. The AFCD will arrange veterinary inspection to this farm and follow up if necessary. At the moment, no pig farms are found affected by this case. All local pig farmers have been immediately notified about the case and have been advised to enhance farm biosecurity to prevent intrusion of wild pigs and introduction of the ASF virus into their farms. Local pig farmers are also reminded to notify the AFCD if their pigs show any health issues. The AFCD has been closely monitoring the health condition of pigs on all local pig farms and samples will be collected for testing if necessary.

An AFCD spokesman said, "ASF is a highly contagious disease affecting domestic and wild pigs. However, it is not a zoonotic disease and does not infect humans and hence does not cause any food safety risk. Well-cooked pork is safe for consumption. The case will not affect the supply of live pigs to the local market."

The spokesman stressed that for personal safety and prevention of foods contaminated with the ASF virus to be introduced to wild pigs, members of the public should keep away from them. Do not feed any wildlife, including wild pigs, and put garbage in lidded bins. If any dead wild pig is found, please report via 1823.

With a view to strengthening the surveillance of ASF on local wild pigs, the AFCD has been working with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on a surveillance programme for ASF since late 2019. This has involved testing of the ASF virus in wild pig carcasses reported by the FEHD. The programme includes the New Territories and Kowloon. Other areas found with a large number of wild pig deaths are also included. To enable early detection, samples collected from humanely dispatched wild pigs are also tested for the ASF virus.

Housing Authority endeavours to allocate public housing flats

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

In response to media enquiries on vacant flats in completed public rental housing (PRH) estates of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA), a spokesman for the Housing Department issued the following statement today (May 30):

The number of vacant flats in PRH estates varies daily depending on circumstances. Domestic flats are recovered from time to time in PRH estates. They will be used for allocation to meet various purposes in accordance with the annual allocation plan, such as to PRH applicants on the waiting list, for rehousing use for redevelopment projects and various types of transfer exercises, including transfer of overcrowded households. During the period from recovery to successful allocation, temporary vacancy may occur due to various reasons, for example, renovation works or refurbishment being in progress, awaiting replies from applicants under offer, pending re-allocation of refused offers to other applicants, pooling flats for transfer schemes' allocation or being reserved for internal transfer of households on social, medical or compassionate grounds.

The above situation is normal in the allocation process and hence the number of vacant flats varies every day. The HA will adhere to the principle of optimising public housing resources and allocate lettable rental flats to various categories of applicants as soon as possible.

For flats that are less popular with the applicants and have been vacant for some time, the Housing Department will make use of the Express Flat Allocation Scheme (EFAS) to invite eligible applicants, who have been on the waiting list for one year or more, to select flats in accordance with their priority. EFAS is launched around the middle of each year, having regard to the housing resources available. In addition to assisting PRH applicants to move into PRH flats earlier, EFAS also helps let the less popular PRH flats to optimise the public housing resources.

Moreover, pockets of narrow spaces are found in domestic blocks of some PRH estates completed in earlier years. Most of them have been used as storerooms and vacant bays in the estates. The Housing Department has been keeping in view the usage of these storerooms and vacant bays and exploring various ways for better utilisation of these spaces, including converting them to PRH flats or other non-domestic use, subject to the compliance with related laws and regulations, technical feasibility, environmental constraints, lease restrictions and obtaining approvals, etc.

Through enhanced provisions of natural lighting and ventilation, the

Housing Department has in recent years successfully identified suitable storerooms/vacant bays for conversion to about 130 public housing flats. Amongst them, about 110 have already had the conversion works completed, while the remaining 20 or so are expected to be completed in the second quarter of this year.

HAD distributes complimentary COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff in Kowloon City, Kwai Tsing, Yuen Long and Eastern Districts (with photos)

â€œIn light of positive test results for the COVID-19 virus from sewage samples collected in Kowloon City, Kwai Tsing, Yuen Long and Eastern Districts, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) said today (May 30) that the Kowloon City District Office (KCDO), the Kwai Tsing District Office (K&TDO), the Yuen Long District Office (YLDO) and the Eastern District Office (EDO) have distributed a total of about 309 000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in the Districts.

The KCDO and the K&TDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Sky Tower, Majestic Park, residential premises around Pak Tai Street, San Shan Road and Ma Tau Kok Road in Kowloon City District and Highland Park, Yin Lai Court and Cheung On Estate in Kwai Tsing District through the property management companies and the owners' corporations.

The YLDO also distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Long Ping Estate for voluntary testing through the property management company.

In addition, the EDO distributed rapid test kits to households, cleansing workers and property management staff living and working in Tung Hei Court, Tung Yan Court, Felicity Garden, Tung Lam Court and residential premises around Tai Shek Street and Shing On Street for voluntary testing through the property management companies.

The HAD made the above arrangements in the hope of identifying infected persons early.

Members of the public may refer to the demonstration video produced by the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) under the Department of Health (DH) via www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzFAUzTtmKk to learn how to use the rapid antigen test (RAT) kit.

Persons testing positive through an RAT should take a photo of the test result and declare the result within 24 hours via the Declaration System for Individuals Tested Positive for COVID-19 Using Rapid Antigen Test (www.chp.gov.hk/ratp). If members of the public encounter difficulties in using the online platform, they can call the automated system at 183 6119 to register their identification document and telephone number. The CHP under the DH will contact the relevant person later to complete the report procedure. There is no need to declare negative test results.

The Government appeals for the co-operation of members of the public to safeguard the health of themselves and their families by undergoing testing on a voluntary basis and fighting the virus together. The Government urges all individuals who are in doubt about their own health condition, or individuals with infection risks (such as individuals who have visited places with epidemic outbreaks or had contact with cases that tested positive), to undergo testing promptly for early identification of infected persons to reduce the transmission risks of COVID-19.





Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 0.00am today (May 30), a total of 430 patients who tested positive for COVID-19 are currently hospitalised for treatment, including 43 new patients. Among the patients staying in isolation facilities, 82 patients are in isolation wards, 14 patients are in second-tier isolation wards and 35 patients are in the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, of which 20 in total are new patients. Among the hospitalised patients, 10 of them are in critical condition and eight are in serious condition, of which four critical patients are receiving intensive care. There were 36 patients who have recovered, including 23 patients who have been discharged. In addition, two patients who passed away in public hospitals was reported.

In the fifth wave of the epidemic, there are 50 176 patients who have recovered so far, including 49 820 patients who have been discharged. And since early 2020, there are 62 556 patients who have recovered, including 62 200 patients who have been discharged.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

CHP investigates 24 confirmed and 91 asymptomatic additional SARS-CoV-2 virus cases with 10 cases pending status by nucleic acid tests as well as 150 cases tested positive by rapid antigen tests

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (May 30) announced the latest epidemic situation of COVID-19. As of 0.00am, May 30, the CHP was investigating 125 additional cases that tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus by nucleic acid tests (24 confirmed cases, 91 asymptomatic cases and 10 cases with pending case status) in the past 24 hours. Separately, 150 additional positive cases through rapid antigen tests (RATs) (71 symptomatic cases and 79 asymptomatic cases) were reported. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 762 074 and 450 296 cases that have tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RATs respectively for the SARS-CoV-2 virus so far.

The aforementioned newly reported cases consist of 48 imported cases (40 cases and eight cases tested positive by nucleic acid tests and RATs respectively). The CHP is continuing with epidemiological investigations on the cases. Please refer to the "COVID-19 Thematic Website" (www.coronavirus.gov.hk) for more information.

Meanwhile, according to the whole genome sequencing analysis by the DH's Public Health Laboratory Services Branch, Hong Kong has recorded a total of 15 cases, 84 cases, 14 cases and 11 cases carrying the sub-lineages BA.2.12, BA.2.12.1, BA.4 and BA.5 under the Omicron mutant strain respectively.

In addition, as of 0.00am, May 30, a total of 9 165 death cases that had tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus during the fifth wave (since December 31, 2021) were recorded, with 9 087 and 75 deaths reported from the Hospital Authority and public mortuaries respectively as well as three deaths reported from the Chinese University of Hong Kong Medical Centre. Hong Kong has so far recorded a total of 9 378 death cases that have tested positive for the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Furthermore, among the earlier cases by nucleic acid tests reported, there were cases (including pending cases) changed to confirmed, asymptomatic or re-positive cases. As at yesterday (May 29), the total number of confirmed cases was 332 311, while the figures for asymptomatic cases, re-positive cases and pending/unknown cases recorded since January 1 were 199 200, 24 and 230 414 respectively.

As the passenger flight (ET608) operated by Ethiopian Airlines arriving

in Hong Kong from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and Bangkok, Thailand, on May 27 had one passenger who failed to comply with the requirements specified under the Prevention and Control of Disease (Regulation of Cross-boundary Conveyances and Travellers) Regulation (Cap. 599H), as well as four passengers who tested positive upon arrival, the DH thus invoked Cap. 599H to prohibit the landing of passenger flights in Hong Kong from Addis Ababa and Bangkok operated by Ethiopian Airlines from May 31 to June 4.

The spokesman for the CHP stressed that as the local situation of COVID-19 infection is still severe, the CHP strongly appeals to the community to continue to comply with social distancing measures, avoid going out and refrain from participating in unnecessary or crowded activities or gatherings. This would lower the risk of infection and prevent the virus from spreading in the community.

â€‹The spokesman reminded that COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective in preventing severe cases and deaths from the SARS-CoV-2 virus. They can provide effective protection to those vaccinated in preventing serious complications and even death after infection. People who have yet to receive vaccination, especially senior citizens, chronic patients and other immunocompromised persons who face a higher chance of death after COVID-19 infection, should get vaccinated as early as possible for self-protection and to reduce the risk of falling seriously ill and death should they get infected.