

LCQ12: Measures to control wild pigs

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yuet-ming and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Miss Diane Wong, in the Legislative Council today (December 18):

Question:

It has been reported that an incident of a wild pig injuring a person happened in Ta Kwu Ling recently, leaving the injured person in grave condition. Subsequently, I have received requests for assistance one after another from many members of the community in the New Territories (NT) districts who highlight the serious wild pig nuisance in various NT districts. Taking the North District as an example, farmers suffer considerable economic losses as installing fences cannot stop wild pigs from intruding into agricultural fields for foraging. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of wild pigs in Hong Kong and the respective numbers of wild pigs captured and humanely dispatched as at November this year; if so, of a breakdown of such information by District Council district; of the methods for compiling statistics on and projecting the number of wild pigs;

(2) of the specific methods currently used to capture and humanely dispatch wild pigs as well as the manpower and resources required per year to handle wild pig issues;

(3) as it is learnt that at present, installing fences and setting up traps cannot effectively stop wild pigs from intruding into agricultural fields and villages in NT, to prevent wild pigs from injuring people, whether the Government will consider providing more effective measures to control wild pigs in NT, including controlling their population; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) regarding the formulation of measures and the future work to control wild pigs in Hong Kong, whether the Government has drawn reference from the relevant experiences of the Mainland and other countries or regions; if so, of the specific details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government adopts multipronged measures in addressing the public's concerns on the issue of wild pigs in Hong Kong. Since November 2021, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has been capturing and humanely dispatching wild pigs that pose nuisances and potential risks to the public, on a regular basis and upon receiving reports of their presence

near residential areas. The Government amended the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance (Cap. 170) twice in December 2022 and May this year, expanding the feeding ban area of wild animals from monkey habitats to the entire territory of Hong Kong in an effort to combat human feeding of wild pigs; introducing a fixed penalty of \$5,000 for illegal feeding, as well as increasing the maximum penalty of illegal feeding from a fine of \$10,000 to \$100,000 and imprisonment for one year. The AFCD has established an inter-departmental working group on feeding ban enforcement with relevant departments, with a view to enhancing enforcement. As of December 10 this year, relevant departments had issued a total of 110 fixed penalty notices, of which 12 were related to illegal feeding of wild pigs. Moreover, the AFCD has launched a series of public education activities with the theme of "All For No Feeding", including setting up education booths in various districts, organising talks at schools and elderly centres, placing advertisements on different platforms, releasing promotional videos, in order to raise public awareness of the latest feeding ban regulations, the negative consequences of feeding wild animals, and the do's and don'ts when encountering wild pigs.

The recent years have seen gradual improvement of the situation of wild pig nuisance in Hong Kong. According to the AFCD's statistics, the overall population of wild pigs decreased from about 1 830 in 2022 to about 1 360 in 2023, and further decreased to around 900 in 2024. The latest number of wild pig nuisance black spots is 15, reduced by about 64 per cent as compared with 42 in 2022. The number of human injury cases caused by wild pigs is seven so far this year, decreased by about 80 per cent from 36 in 2022.

Regarding the injury case caused by wild pigs at Lei Uk Sun Tsuen, Ta Kwu Ling, which took place on November 15 this year, the AFCD had promptly deployed staff to conduct on-site investigation, inspected the area with village representatives and local farmers, placed multiple traps near the place where the incident occurred, as well as set up surveillance cameras, with a view to capturing the wild pigs concerned as soon as possible. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has also put in place rubbish bins with improved design at the refuse collection points in the area concerned to prevent wild pigs from climbing into the bins and scavenging for food, thereby reducing the incentive for their presence.

Having consulted the AFCD, our replies to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Chan are as follows:

(1) From January to November this year, the relevant figures of the wild pig capture and dispatch operations conducted by the AFCD with a breakdown by District Council districts are tabulated as follows:

District	Number of operations	Number of wild pigs humanely dispatched
North	10	15
Sha Tin	26	53

Tai Po	29	55
Sai Kung	27	52
Tuen Mun	24	80
Yuen Long	14	25
Tsuen Wan	22	38
Kwai Ching	0	0
Islands	0	0
Sham Shui Po	11	28
Kwun Tong	6	21
Wong Tai Sin	6	6
Kowloon City	0	0
Yau Tsim Mong	0	0
Central and Western	30	55
Eastern	37	66
Southern	48	96
Wan Chai	27	43
Total	317	633

Since 2019, the AFCD has commissioned an expert of wildlife ecology and statistics to collect data by setting up infrared camera traps at various locations in Hong Kong's countryside, and utilise ecological statistical models to analyse and estimate the population density of wild pigs, thereby assessing the number of wild pigs in Hong Kong. The statistical results indicate that the number of wild pigs in Hong Kong has decreased from about 2 500 in 2019 to around 900 in 2024.

(2) When capturing wild pigs that pose a danger to the public, veterinary officers of the AFCD will first use dart guns with anaesthetic to capture the wild pigs, and then dispatch them humanely through injection of drugs. Since 2023, the AFCD has further allocated resources to expand operations to cover more rural areas, and increased operation frequency to an average of at least 28 operations per month. Efficiency of such operations has also been enhanced through installation of surveillance cameras and deploying new trapping devices.

Over the past three years, the AFCD had deployed an average of 33 officers each year to handle wild pig management-related work, and the relevant average annual expenditure was about \$21 million.

(3) In respect of the nuisance and damages caused by the occurrence of wild pigs on farmlands and in rural areas, the Tai Lung Experimental Station of the AFCD regularly holds seminars to explain the methods for preventing wild pigs on farmlands (such as building sturdy fences or electric fences, and using sound or light to drive them away, etc.), provides demonstration facilities for reference and offers on-site technical support to farmers. Eligible farmers can apply for a grant from the AFCD through the Farm Improvement Scheme under the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund to

purchase facilities for preventing wild pigs. The grant will be issued on a reimbursement basis, covering 90 per cent of the relevant costs (with a cap of \$50,000 or \$100,000, depending on the number of production units owned by the farmers). Farmers may also choose to apply for low-interest loans from the loan funds managed by the AFCD to purchase the relevant facilities.

Furthermore, upon receiving enquiries or complaints regarding wild pig sightings on farmlands, the AFCD will deploy staff to conduct on-site investigations, provide affected farmers with advice on preventive measures against wild pig nuisance, install surveillance cameras at relevant locations and carry out capture operations as necessary. From January to December 10 this year, the AFCD had conducted a total of 101 capture operations in response to nuisance or damages caused by wild pigs on farmlands or in rural areas, with 224 wild pigs humanely dispatched. The AFCD will continue to step up its efforts in this regard in the future.

(4) The AFCD is conducting a comprehensive review of the current wild pig management strategies and relevant measures. In this regard, the department has commissioned a wildlife management expert to assist in conducting an in-depth review and formulating an enhanced wild pig management action plan, which would also outline an implementation timeline and monitoring protocol, covering strategies to couple with nuisance caused by wild pigs on farmlands and in rural areas as well. In the course of formulating the new wild pig management action plan, the AFCD will widely make reference to the Mainland and overseas practices and experiences of wild pig management, as well as proactively exchange views with relevant experts and organisations. The AFCD aims to complete the review in the first half of 2025.