

Local pig samples test positive for ASF virus

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (November 7) announced that samples taken from a local pig farm had tested positive for African Swine Fever (ASF) virus.

An AFCD spokesman said, "AFCD staff yesterday inspected a licensed pig farm at Lau Fau Shan, Yuen Long, and took samples from 32 pigs for testing. Results showed that samples from 16 pigs tested positive for ASF virus. The AFCD has immediately suspended transportation of any pigs from the farm concerned until further notice according to the contingency plan on ASF. The AFCD will arrange culling pigs on the farm concerned for the sake of prudence."

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.

He further said, "AFCD staff immediately notified all local pig farmers of this incident. In addition, AFCD staff inspected the three pig farms within three kilometres of the index farm. No abnormalities were found in the health of those pigs. For the sake of prudence, the AFCD has also temporarily suspended movements of pigs on these farms and will take samples from pigs for testing to ensure there is no infection on the farms. No reports of abnormalities from pig farms outside the three-km zone have been received. AFCD staff will remind local pig farmers to ensure biosecurity measures have been properly implemented, and continue close surveillance to detect pigs with abnormalities, if a farm is infected, as early as possible."

The present case does not affect the operation of local slaughterhouses nor the overall supply of live pigs. Since June 2019, a daily clearance arrangement whereby live pigs will be slaughtered within 24 hours upon admittance has been imposed in Sheung Shui and Tsuen Wan slaughterhouses. Under the arrangement, lairages in different areas of the slaughterhouses will be cleared out and undergo thorough cleaning and disinfection every day to further enhance the biosecurity of, and minimise the risk of infection among pigs, in the slaughterhouses.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the AFCD will continue to stringently conduct cleaning and disinfection of Mainland live pig transportation vehicles and their counterparts for local pigs at slaughterhouses to minimise the risk of cross infection of ASF. Mainland live pig vehicles and local ones should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected every time they leave the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse (SSSH), and the respective designated positions for their cleaning and disinfection are separated. Manpower and equipment of the SSSH have been strengthened immediately for cleaning and disinfection of the vehicles. In light of these

stepped up measures, the slaughterhouses need not be closed and other pigs need not be culled.

The AFCD has produced a lot of promotional items disseminating information on ASF including posters and guidelines on cleaning and disinfection procedures of live pig transport vehicles to provide local pig farmers with information on ASF, and its infection and control measures that pig farms should heed. The AFCD will continue to raise local pig farmers' knowledge of preventing ASF through various channels, including organising meetings and seminars with the trade.