

## Local pig samples test positive for ASF virus

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (February 4) announced that samples taken from a local pig farm had tested positive for African Swine Fever (ASF) virus.

An AFCD spokesman said, "The concerned samples were taken from a licensed pig farm at Wong Nai Tun, Yuen Long. According to the contingency plan on ASF, the AFCD has immediately suspended any pigs to be transported from the farm concerned until further notice. The AFCD also inspected the concerned pig farm and took samples from pigs in different sheds for testing. The six pigs that were tested positive were all in the same shed. There were about 240 pigs in this shed and they will all be culled.

"The test results of pigs in other sheds on the farm were all negative. AFCD staff did not find any abnormalities in health condition of the pigs during inspection. Given the fact that there is stringent bio-security measures implemented on the farm to minimise the risk of infection, and that all sheds are separated structures without any linkage in between, further observation and testing are considered appropriate without the necessity of culling any pigs in other sheds at this stage after consulting international experts in the area. Thorough cleansing and disinfection is being conducted on the farm. The AFCD will continue to investigate and trace the source of the virus as well as notifying the World Organisation of Animal Health (OIE) and arranging for the samples to be sent to an OIE reference laboratory for further testing."

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 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 no infection on the farms. No reports of abnormalities from pig farms outside the three kilometre zone have been received. AFCD staff will step up inspection of all local pig farms; make sure bio-security measures have been properly implemented; and continue close surveillance to detect pigs with abnormalities and 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 cleansing and disinfection every day to further enhance the bio-security of, and minimise the risk of infection among pigs in the slaughterhouses.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and AFCD will continue to stringently conduct cleansing 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. The Mainland live pig vehicles and local ones should be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected every time they leave the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse (SSSH). And the respective designated positions for their cleansing and disinfection are separated. Manpower and equipment of the SSSH have been strengthened immediately for cleansing 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 produced a lot of promotional items disseminating information on ASF in the past 2 years including posters, and guidelines on cleansing and disinfection procedures of live pig transport vehicles, etc. to provide local pig farmers with information on ASF, its infection and control measures 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.