

Monitoring mechanism of live pigs supplied to Hong Kong by FEHD

A spokesman for the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (January 4), to ensure that the live pigs supplied to Hong Kong are not infected by African Swine Fever (ASF), the Government has established mechanism to monitor animal diseases at import level and in slaughterhouses, including the inspection of imported live pigs for consumption.

The spokesman for the CFS stressed, "ASF is not a zoonotic disease and will not infect humans, hence does not cause any food safety risk."

At present, live pigs supplied to Hong Kong are sourced from registered farms which are under the supervision and monitoring of the Mainland authority. Every consignment of live pigs supplied to Hong Kong must undergo quarantine and inspection before export and be accompanied by an official health certificate and does not have syndrome of ASF. Veterinary Officers of the CFS at Animal Inspection Station will also inspect the health conditions of live pigs. If the registered farm in the Mainland is affected by ASF, the live pigs from the farm cannot be imported to Hong Kong. If there are any pigs suspected to be infected with ASF, samples will be collected and sent to the Veterinary Laboratory of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department for testing. All pigs have to undergo stringent ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections in slaughterhouses before supplying to the market. In the past four years, there is no live pigs supplied from the Mainland to Hong Kong was detected ASF.

With the implementation of daily clearance arrangement since June 2019, all live pigs admitted to the slaughterhouses will be slaughtered within 24 hours. Lairages at different areas of the slaughterhouses will be cleared and undergo thorough cleaning and disinfection every day to reduce the risk of ASF infection and the virus from being carried from slaughterhouses to local farms. Furthermore, Mainland live pig vehicles and local ones are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected every time they leave the slaughterhouse, and the respective designated positions for their cleaning and disinfection are separated. Disinfection pools have been installed near the entrance gate to facilitate disinfection of wheels for pig-conveying trucks entering and leaving slaughterhouse. The FEHD and the operators of the slaughterhouses have been deployed additional manpower to monitor and ensure the vehicles have been undergo thorough cleaning and disinfection before leaving.

The government has been attaching great importance to the impact of ASF to local pig farmers and the pig rearing industry, and have been monitoring the latest developments. The recent cases of ASF in Hong Kong did not affect the operation of local slaughterhouses and hence did not affect the supply of live pigs and the price.