

Samples taken from wild pig carcasses test positive for ASF virus

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (February 28) announced that samples taken from three wild pig carcasses under the surveillance programme for African swine fever (ASF) have tested positive for the ASF virus.

As there were a number of wild pig deaths found in Stanley recently, samples were collected by the AFCD from three wild pig carcasses found in the above-mentioned area for testing. The results were positive for the ASF virus. The AFCD will continue to monitor wild pig deaths and maintain surveillance in the wild pig population.

Currently, no pig farms are affected by this case. There are no pig farms on Hong Kong Island. The AFCD has notified all local pig farmers about the case with a reminder to them 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 conditions 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 spokesman stressed that for personal safety and prevention of foods contaminated with the ASF virus being introduced to wild pigs, members of the public should keep away from wild pigs. They should not feed any wildlife, including wild pigs, and put garbage in lidded bins. Dead wild pigs found should be reported 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 for 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 ASF.