

## Pig culling operation on Yuen Long pig farm with pigs found with ASF virus completed

Regarding the incident announced on January 2, where samples of pigs from a Yuen Long pig farm tested positive for African Swine Fever (ASF), the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) launched a culling operation on the farm concerned on January 4. The operation was completed today (January 5).

An AFCD spokesman said, "According to the contingency plan on ASF, the AFCD has sent staff to cull and handle a total of 429 pigs on the licensed farm in San Tin, Yuen Long, since January 4. The operation was completed today. All culled and handled pigs were sent to the West New Territories Landfill for dumping according to established procedures."

The spokesman further said, "The AFCD will arrange thorough cleaning and disinfection of the farm, and has notified the World Organisation for Animal Health of this incident. An investigation and tracing of the source of the virus in collaboration with international experts is underway."

Regarding the eight pig farms within 3 kilometres of the index farm, transport of any pigs from them is still suspended for the sake of prudence. Once the pig culling operations of other pig farms with pigs found with the ASF virus in the related zone are completed, the AFCD will arrange veterinary inspections of the pig farms in the area and collect further samples from pigs for ASF virus testing as appropriate. If no abnormal health condition is noted on the pigs, and all samples have tested negative for the ASF virus, pigs on these pig farms would be allowed to be transported to slaughterhouses.

The AFCD will continue to keep local pig farms under close surveillance as well as conducting tests if necessary. The AFCD has also reminded all farmers to ensure biosecurity measures have been properly implemented and alert the Department immediately if an abnormal health condition is observed in pigs. Meanwhile, AFCD staff are currently inspecting all local licensed pig farms in phases to ensure biosecurity measures have been properly implemented. Surveillance of activities of wild pigs in the vicinity of the index farm has also been stepped up.

The spokesman stressed that ASF is not a zoonotic disease and will not infect humans, hence does not present any food safety risk. Pork cooked thoroughly is safe for consumption. Members of the public do not need to be concerned. The incident does not affect the operation of local slaughterhouses nor the overall supply of live pigs.

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## EPD responds to concerns regarding implementation of municipal solid waste charging

In response to recent media reports on the implementation of municipal solid waste (MSW) charging on April 1, 2024, as well as concerns raised by citizens and groups of different sectors, a spokesperson for the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) said, "These views reflect that society is starting to show concern towards the implementation of MSW charging from April 1, 2024, onwards and its relevant legislative requirements. Since the legislation relating to MSW charging was passed by the Legislative Council (LegCo) in August 2021, the EPD has conducted various preparatory work, such as launching promotional and educational activities, continuously enhancing recycling facilities, and maintaining close communication and co-operation with stakeholders from all sectors to prepare for the implementation of MSW charging together."

On publicity, since August 2023, the EPD has been continuously publicising the commencement date and details of MSW charging through major media by phases. As at end December 2023, the EPD has broadcast Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio about 4 000 times (i.e. about 30 times per day on average); broadcast promotional videos on over 9 000 display monitors at public transport stations, on vehicles, at shopfronts of restaurants and at lift lobbies; displayed over 1 200 banners at roadsides in various districts, government facilities and public rental housing (PRH) estates; displayed advertisements on 240 buses, 100 public light buses and 18 ferries; displayed posters on over 2 000 advertising light boxes at public transport stations and lift lobbies; and displayed online advertisements on about 100 mobile applications and websites relating to news and everyday matters, etc. The EPD has planned to start publicising the sales arrangements of designated bags and labels later this month. The promotional activities on MSW charging shall continue until end 2024.

MSW charging goes hand in hand with waste reduction and recycling. On strengthening the support for recycling facilities at the district level, the EPD has been continuously expanding its community recycling network GREEN@COMMUNITY during the past three years. There are currently over 170 public collection points in Hong Kong, including 11 Recycling Stations, 34 Recycling Stores (the first Recycling Store located in an MTR station, namely GREEN@TSING YI, will come into operation in the first quarter of 2024), and over 130 Recycling Spots operating weekly at fixed times and locations in the form of kerb-side collection booths. GREEN@COMMUNITY has always been well received by the public. It received over 5 million visits for clean recycling in 2023, and there are over 400 000 registered accounts for the GREEN\$ Participation Incentive Scheme. Moreover, the EPD will establish small-scale

Recycling Stores in 50 PRH estates progressively. It has recently completed the relevant tender assessment and will award service contracts shortly, thereby providing a more convenient means for PRH and nearby residents to practise clean recycling so as to complement the implementation of MSW charging on April 1, 2024. Three of the small-scale Recycling Stores have already commenced operation, including GREEN@KWAI FONG, GREEN@TAI WO HAU and GREEN@KAI YIP, with the rest of these Recycling Stores to commence operation gradually from this month onwards.

There have been quite a number of concerns on the recycling of food waste, which accounts for 30 per cent of the total volume of MSW disposal. The EPD has been continuously expanding the collection service for food waste over the past year, including collecting food waste from more public and private premises and areas where restaurants are concentrated. In September 2023, the EPD completed the installation of smart recycling bins for collecting food waste in 100 blocks of PRH estates, which is six months earlier than the original target schedule. The total volume of food waste recovered has reached about 200 tonnes per day, representing a 30 per cent increase from last year. The EPD is actively collaborating with the Housing Department and the Hong Kong Housing Society to gradually expand the food waste collection service to all PRH estates within 2024, with the service currently covering 70 PRH estates. Additionally, since December 29, 2023, the Environmental Campaign Committee has started accepting applications from private housing estates with at least 1 000 households for subsidies to install smart food waste recycling bins and provide related maintenance services for a duration of two years, so as to further encourage the recycling of domestic food waste.

To further encourage recycling efforts, the Environment and Ecology Bureau will introduce two bills into LegCo later this year, including requiring property management companies and owners' organisations of private residential buildings to separately collect common types of recyclables and pass the recyclables collected to downstream recyclers for processing, with a view to implementing the legislation by end 2024; and establishing a common legislative framework for producer responsibility schemes (PRSs), as well as formulating subsidiary legislations, to gradually implement PRSs for five types of products, including plastic beverage containers, beverage cartons, electric vehicle batteries, vehicle tyres and lead-acid batteries, starting from 2025.

The EPD has maintained close communication with different sectors and they have jointly formulated eight Best Practice Guides for different trades to prepare for the implementation of MSW charging. As at end December 2023, the EPD has conducted 52 online meetings and briefings for the property management trade and owners' organisations, reaching out to over 6 000 stakeholders. To facilitate the property management industry in better understanding the arrangements of MSW charging, the EPD is working with the Property Management Services Authority to organise trainings on MSW charging under its Continuing Professional Development Scheme, which are open for applications by holders of the Property Management Practitioner Licence to enhance their skills in handling property management duties. The EPD has also

been arranging meetings with District Council members to introduce to them to the operational details of MSW charging and consult them on publicity at the district level. We have now confirmed our attendance at meetings of District Councils or its subsidiary committees for seven Districts and will continue to liaise with the District Officers of other Districts to confirm the dates of the meetings.

The spokesperson said, "Some people are worried that citizens may deposit waste at public places illegally after the implementation of MSW charging, while some others have misunderstood that the Government will not prosecute persons who litter during the six-month phasing-in period upon the commencement of MSW charging. We must emphasise that the phasing-in period only serves to assist the public in developing the practice of depositing waste with the use of designated bags and that the Government will not tolerate any littering activity which gravely impacts public hygiene and harms the living environment of citizens. Our enforcement agencies will continue to take enforcement actions against littering activities even during the phasing-in period of MSW charging, and serve upon persons who litter in public places fixed penalty tickets with a fixed penalty of \$3,000, regardless of whether such persons have used designated bags or designated labels, under the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570). Furthermore, we understand that it is a common practice for citizens to clean up their homes before Lunar New Year. We encourage these citizens to properly separate recyclables from general waste when cleaning up and pass the waste and the recyclables to refuse collection points and GREEN@COMMUNITY collection points respectively during their operating hours, so as to enhance public hygiene and facilitate resources circulation. The Government will strengthen the manpower at these collection points, with details to be announced later. The public may also earn GREEN\$ points when recycling at GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities during their operating hours."

The EPD welcomes citizens and people from various sectors to express their views and concerns for the better implementation of MSW charging.

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## **Postal services to Australia subject to delay**

â€‹Hongkong Post announced today (January 5) that, as advised by the postal administration of Australia, due to a rail incident and flooding in certain areas, mail delivery services to Western Australia and Queensland are subject to delay.

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## Eight landlords of subdivided units under regulated tenancies convicted of contravening relevant statutory requirements

Eight landlords of subdivided units (SDUs) who contravened Part IVA of the Landlord and Tenant (Consolidation) Ordinance (Cap. 7) (the Ordinance) pleaded guilty and were fined a total of \$26,300 today (January 5) at the Eastern Magistrates' Courts. Since the Ordinance has come into force, a total of 87 SDU landlords have been convicted of contravening the Ordinance.

The offences of these landlords include (1) failing to submit a Notice of Tenancy (Form AR2) to the Commissioner of Rating and Valuation within 60 days after the term of the regulated tenancy commenced; (2) failing to produce copies of the bills and provide an account in writing when requiring the tenants to pay for the reimbursement of the apportioned water and/or electricity charges; (3) requesting the tenant to pay money other than the types permitted under the Ordinance; and (4) failing to provide the tenant with a rent receipt. One of the landlords who contravened a total of nine offences under (1), (2) and (4) above was fined \$6,700.

The Rating and Valuation Department (RVD) earlier discovered that the landlords failed to comply with the relevant requirements under the Ordinance. Upon an in-depth investigation and evidence collection, the RVD prosecuted against the landlords.

A spokesman for the RVD hopes that these convictions will send a strong message to SDU landlords that they must comply with the relevant requirements under the Ordinance, and also remind SDU tenants of their rights under the Ordinance. He also stresses that the RVD will continue to take resolute enforcement action against any contraventions of the Ordinance. Apart from following up on reported cases, the RVD has been adopting a multipronged approach to proactively identify, investigate and follow up on cases concerning landlords who are suspected of contravening the Ordinance. In particular, the RVD has been requiring landlords of regulated tenancies to provide information and reference documents of their tenancies for checking whether the landlords concerned have complied with the requirements of the Ordinance. If a landlord, without reasonable excuse, refuses to provide the relevant information or neglects the RVD's request, the landlord commits an offence and is liable to a fine at level 3 (\$10,000) and to imprisonment for three months. Depending on the actual circumstances and having regard to the information and evidence collected, the RVD will take appropriate actions on individual cases, including instigating prosecutions against suspected contravention of the Ordinance.

The RVD spokesman appeals to members of the public to come forward and report to the RVD promptly any suspected cases of contravening the relevant requirements. This would help curb illegal acts as soon as possible. Reporting can be made through the telephone hotline (2150 8303), by email ([enquiries@rvd.gov.hk](mailto:enquiries@rvd.gov.hk)), by fax (2116 4920), by post (15/F, Cheung Sha Wan Government Offices, 303 Cheung Sha Wan Road, Kowloon), or in person (visiting the Tenancy Services Section office of the RVD at Room 3816-22, 38/F, Immigration Tower, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong, and please call 2150 8303 to make an appointment). Furthermore, the RVD has provided a form (Form AR4) ([www.rvd.gov.hk/doc/en/forms/ar4.pdf](http://www.rvd.gov.hk/doc/en/forms/ar4.pdf)) on its website to facilitate SDU tenants' reporting to the RVD.

The RVD reminds that pursuant to the Ordinance, a regulated cycle of regulated tenancies is to comprise two consecutive regulated tenancies (i.e. the first-term tenancy and second-term tenancy) for an SDU, and the term of each regulated tenancy is two years. A tenant of a first-term tenancy for an SDU is entitled to be granted a second-term tenancy of the regulated cycle, thus enjoying a total of four years of security of tenure. Since the first batch of regulated tenancies is about to approach their second-term tenancies, the RVD has started a new round of publicity and education work in order to assist SDU landlords and tenants to understand the important matters pertaining to the second-term tenancy, and procedures that need to be followed about two months prior to the commencement of the purported second-term tenancy. In addition, the RVD started to issue letters enclosing relevant information to the concerned landlords and tenants of regulated tenancies by batches, according to the expiry time of their first-term tenancies, to remind them about their respective obligations and rights under the Ordinance. These landlords and tenants may also visit the dedicated page for the second-term tenancy on the RVD's website ([www.rvd.gov.hk/en/tenancy\\_matters/second\\_term\\_tenancy.html](http://www.rvd.gov.hk/en/tenancy_matters/second_term_tenancy.html)) for the relevant information, including a concise guide, brochures, tutorial videos and frequently asked questions, etc. SDU landlords and tenants are also advised to familiarise themselves with the relevant statutory requirements and maintain close communication regarding the second-term tenancy for handling the matters properly and in a timely manner according to the Ordinance.

For enquiries related to regulated tenancies, please call the telephone hotline (2150 8303) or visit the RVD's webpage ([www.rvd.gov.hk/en/our\\_services/part\\_iva.html](http://www.rvd.gov.hk/en/our_services/part_iva.html)) for the relevant information.

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## **[Import of poultry meat and products from Gifu Prefecture in Japan](#)**

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The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 5) that in view of a notification from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5 avian influenza in Gifu Prefecture in Japan, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the area with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 1 080 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 200.84 million poultry eggs from Japan in the first nine months of last year.

"The CFS has contacted the Japanese authority over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the World Organisation for Animal Health and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreak. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.