

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.

CHP follows up two food poisoning outbreak clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 4) following up two food poisoning outbreak clusters.

The CHP issued a press release on December 30 (www.info.gov.hk/gia/general/202312/30/P2023123000548.htm) to remind members of the public about two food poisoning outbreak clusters involving nine people, who developed abdominal pain and diarrhoea after consuming catering food. The food poisoning might have been caused by infection of *Clostridium perfringens* or *Vibrio parahaemolyticus*.

Investigations of the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department revealed that the food factory might have cooked the food inadequately and stored the food under improper temperatures for a long period of time.

Relevant food items suspected to have caused food poisoning were produced on December 21 and 25 last year, and were distributed to clients for consumption by catering delivery. As long holiday and festive celebration was involved, the CHP could not rule out that the affected food items have been supplied to clients of more than two clusters. As such, the CHP reminded members of the public who have consumed catering food (including diced beef, shrimps and scallops pasta and beef ribs in red wine sauce) from "Food Fever" from December 21 to 25 last year and presented with gastro-intestinal disease symptoms, to contact the CHP by calling hotline (2125 2372) from Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) from 9am to 5.30pm and seek medical attention.

The CHP appealed to members of the public to patronise licensed and reliable restaurants if they need to order food.

The CHP said that food poisoning caused by *Clostridium perfringens* is usually associated with meat and meat products that are cross-contaminated, inadequately cooked or stored under sub-optimal temperature for prolonged period. The incubation period ranges from 6 to 24 hours (usually 10 to 12 hours). Severe abdominal pain and acute diarrhoea are common symptoms. Also, food poisoning caused by *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* is usually associated with undercooked seafood or cooked food that are cross-contaminated by raw seafood, with incubation period ranging from 4 to 30 hours (usually 12 to 24 hours). Common symptoms include abdominal pain, diarrhoea, vomiting, and/or fever.

Transcript of remarks by SDEV on quarterly land sale programme for January to March 2024 (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, at a media session today (January 4) on the quarterly land sale programme for January to March 2024:

Reporter: Can you tell us is the failed tender in the previous quarter the major reason that makes the Government think that it is not a right time to put up residential sites for tender in this quarter? Can you recap in English when may you resume selling residential sites? The residential units that you mentioned are still slightly lower than the target, what would the Government do to really meet the target in this quarter in terms of providing enough residential units?

Secretary for Development: On your first question on why we are not rolling out sites for private housing in this quarter, as I have mentioned in my introductory remarks, basically we determine what sort of sites to offer and whether to offer any sites for sale on a quarterly basis, because we have to take into account the prevailing market situation and the latest position regarding the expected outturn for our annual supply. So as I mentioned, it is our estimation that by now, our expected outturn for the whole year should be quite close to our annual supply target for housing land, and that's one reason. The second reason is that in recent months, we have witnessed that the market is not too keen in tendering for residential sites. We do have failed tender, and even if we have successful tender, as in the case of Cheung Sha, we have only one bid. So this is a signal that the Government has to take into account. If we can make ends meet largely, for this current financial year, I think it is prudent for us to also take into account the prevailing market sentiments by not putting up further sites for sale in this quarter. But we do not have a formula, as to what we will roll out or when we will roll out residential sites again. I would see you very often, every quarter I would come to account for the quarterly land sale programme. So very soon I will give an account of our plan for the next quarter and we will do that on a quarterly basis.

Reporter: Is this the first time that the Government did not put up tender for any residential sites ever, and since when? Does that mean you have a sluggish market expectation towards the end of this quarter?

Secretary for Development: I have not gone into many years back but I think it is the first time in recent years in which we have not put up a private housing site for sale. But I don't think this is something to be of alarm, because as a responsible government, it is only right for us to plan our land

sale programme in a prudent and controlled manner, taking into account the supply from other sources, including the other sources of private land involving lease modifications, the prevailing market sentiments, as well as the estimated outturn which, I have mentioned, is pretty close to our target this year. I think it is only right for the Government to plan our land sales not in a mechanical manner, but in a very prudent and controlled manner, taking into account all relevant factors.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Import of poultry meat and products from Blouberg Local Municipality of Limpopo Province in South Africa suspended

â€‹â€‹The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 4) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H7N6 avian influenza in Blouberg Local Municipality of Limpopo Province in South Africa, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products from the area with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that Hong Kong has currently established a protocol with South Africa for the import of poultry meat but not for poultry eggs. According to the Census and Statistics Department, no poultry meat was imported into Hong Kong from South Africa in the first nine months of last year.

"The CFS has contacted the South African authority over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the WOAH 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.

CHP investigates imported cluster of

bacillary dysentery cases

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 4) investigating an imported cluster of bacillary dysentery infection affecting six persons, and reminded members of the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent infection.

The cluster involves three male and three female participants of a tour group which travelled from Hong Kong to Tuİ̇rkiye. The six of them, aged between 38 and 60, presented with symptoms of acute gastroenteritis including abdominal pain, diarrhoea and vomiting since December 21 last year. Four of them sought medical consultation and one of them required hospitalisation. All the affected persons are in stable condition. The stool specimens of one person yielded *Shigella sonnei*.

An epidemiological investigation by the CHP revealed that the tour group comprised 10 persons and had stayed in Tuİ̇rkiye from December 14 to 22 last year. They had meals at various restaurants and hotels there. According to the epidemiological investigation and information such as incubation periods of the patients, the CHP believes that the infection sources are the following restaurants/hotels:

Area	Name of restaurant
NevÅŸehir	Restaurant at Avrasya Hotel
NevÅŸehir	Dede Efendi Restaurant
Bolu	Restaurant at Koru Hotel
Ankara	Anit restaurant

The investigation is ongoing. Meanwhile, the CHP appealed to members of the public who have visited Tuİ̇rkiye, have a similar travel history, and consumed food at the aforementioned restaurants in mid to late December last year to seek medical attention as soon as possible if they develop relevant symptoms. They should also notify doctors about their travel history and the possibility of involving bacillary dysentery.

Bacillary dysentery is an intestinal infection caused by a group of *Shigella* bacteria which can be found in the human gut. It is transmitted directly by the faecal material of a patient/carrier or indirectly through contaminated food and water. It is also a cause of travellers' diarrhoea.

A spokesman for the CHP advised members of the public to maintain good personal and environmental hygiene to avoid infection. They should also take heed of the following:

- wash hands properly with soap and water before eating or handling food, and after going to the toilet or changing diapers;
- avoid high-risk food like shellfish, raw food or semi-cooked food;

- boil water and cook food thoroughly before consumption;
- purchase fresh food from reliable sources, and do not patronise unlicensed street vendors; and
- seek medical attention when they have symptoms of fever and diarrhoea, especially bloody diarrhoea.

For more details, please visit CHP's [bacillary dysentery page](#).