

Pig disposal procedure on Yuen Long pig farm with pigs found with ASF virus starts

Regarding the incident announced on November 7 where samples of pigs from a local pig farm were detected with African Swine Fever (ASF) virus, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has collected samples from 37 pigs in the concerned farm for further testing yesterday (November 8). Results showed that samples from six pigs tested positive for ASF virus. The AFCD has launched a disposal operation at around 7am today (November 9) on the farm concerned.

An AFCD spokesman said, "According to the contingency plan on ASF, the AFCD sent around 30 staff to dispose pigs on the licensed farm in Lau Fau Shan, Yuen Long this morning. All pigs, totalling around 5 600 were to be disposed. The disposed pigs would be sent to New Territories West landfills for dumping according to established procedures."

The spokesman further said, "The AFCD will arrange cleaning and disinfection of the farm. The AFCD has notified the World Organisation for Animal Health of this incident and is investigating and tracing the source of the virus in collaboration with international experts. Regarding the three pig farms within three kilometres of the index farm, all the pig samples collected by the AFCD on November 7 tested negative for ASF virus. No reports of abnormalities have been received from these three pig farms so far. For the sake of prudence, the AFCD will still suspend transport of any pigs from the three pig farms within three kilometres of the index farm until further notice. "

The AFCD will continue to keep local pig farms under close surveillance and conduct tests if necessary. The AFCD has also notified all farmers to alert the Department immediately if abnormal health condition is observed in pigs.

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. The incident does not affect the operation of local slaughterhouses nor the overall supply of live pigs.

As disposal operations take time, the AFCD will release updated operation information every day on the departmental web page, www.afcd.gov.hk for the public.

Speech by CE at Hong Kong Forum on US-China Relations 2023 Welcome Dinner (English only) (with photos/video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at Hong Kong Forum on US-China Relations 2023 Welcome Dinner today (November 9):

Deputy Director Liu Guangyuan (Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR)), Acting Commissioner Li Yongsheng (Acting Commissioner of the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China in the HKSAR), Mr John Zhao (Chairman of the China-United States Exchange Foundation), Mr Bi Jingquan (Executive Vice Chairman of the China Center for International Economic Exchanges), ladies and gentlemen,

Good evening to you all! It's a pleasure to be here tonight, with you, to have this welcome opportunity to address the Hong Kong Forum on US-China Relations. Before I start, I echo something that was said earlier: Hong Kong is a special place under the "one country, two systems" principle, which I will explain later. But there are several DNAs that belong to Hong Kong that will never change. This is the place where you work hard and play hard. This is the place you can enjoy and be yourself.

I'm delighted to see that a number of you have flown in from the United States, from Europe, Asia and Australia.

Your presence today, and tomorrow, is compelling testimony to the value of the China-US Exchange Foundation, and this Forum, in bringing together high-level, highly respected, leaders – from government and the diplomatic corps, business, academia and more.

I take heart in knowing that each and every one of you is working to revitalise the connections that have long blessed Hong Kong-US relations. Working, as well, to refresh, to rekindle, the ties between China and the US.

I take heart, too, in this comment, from Confucius. "A gentleman," said the philosopher and teacher, "seeks harmony, not conformity." In Chinese, 和而不同.

More than an honourable objective, I believe it has become an essential one. In today's hyper-complex world – a world replete with conflicting governments, economies, peoples and goals – the need to seek common ground, while reserving our differences, has never been more acute.

And President Xi Jinping, speaking last month in Beijing at the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, had this to say: "Viewing others' development as a threat, or taking economic interdependence as a risk, will not make one's own life better or speed up one's development

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The US and Hong Kong have a long history of co-operation. Of finding common ground, and mutual rewards, in trade and investment, education, culture and people-to-people ties.

Indeed, 2023 marks the 180th anniversary of the United States' diplomatic presence in Hong Kong. Our ties, ladies and gentlemen, are deep.

Trade has long galvanised those ties. The US trade surplus with Hong Kong is the second-largest among all its trading partners in the world. Last year, it was valued at over US\$ 21 billion. The US is also among Hong Kong's largest sources of foreign direct investment.

We share many values, too, from the rule of law to the free flow of capital, goods and talent, freely convertible currencies, and open and free markets.

These values and advantages that Hong Kong enjoys are, of course, enshrined in the Basic Law.

What distinguishes Hong Kong is our "one country, two systems" principle. This framework ensures that Hong Kong enjoys the unwavering support of the country. China's national initiatives create far-reaching opportunities for Hong Kong – and the companies and economies that partner with us.

It also means that Hong Kong's common law system – the only such jurisdiction in China – will continue to reassure companies and investors from around the world.

Come to think of it. Most of the leading international financial centres around the globe practise the common law. In that sense, Hong Kong speaks the same, familiar language that gives easy and comforting confidence to global investors.

Hong Kong ranks third in Asia in the rule of law, according to the World Bank Group's Worldwide Governance Indicators.

In this year's "Rule of Law Index", published by the World Justice Project, Hong Kong placed 23rd out of 140 countries and jurisdictions. That means Hong Kong is among the top 20 per cent in regard to the rule of law. Hong Kong also scored higher than some countries in Europe, and the US. I mention this not to be complacent – we always want to be the number one. I say this because when some people criticise us, they should look at their ranking in the Project.

Some people have asked: What are the standards of rights and freedoms enjoyed in Hong Kong? Good question. The answer is clear and straightforward. They are international standards. They are governed by the provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights as applied to Hong Kong, and

so enshrined in the Basic Law.

The people of Hong Kong have always enjoyed these rights and freedoms. The Hong Kong SAR Government endeavours to ensure this crucial attribute is firmly upheld.

Besides the Government, who else is protecting the enforcement of these rights and freedoms in Hong Kong? The answer is also clear and straightforward. The courts of Hong Kong at all levels, and most significantly, the Court of Final Appeal.

Yes, Hong Kong courts exercise their judicial power independently, free from any interference.

Our Court of Final Appeal is vested with the power of final adjudication. We have overseas judges sitting on the Court of Final Appeal. Currently, 11 eminent jurists from the United Kingdom, Australia and Canada serve as non-permanent judges of the Court of Final Appeal.

I take pride in our judiciary and its exercise of judicial power independently. So you can well understand why this speaker, and many individuals in the Hong Kong SAR Government, and indeed many across the community, found it absolutely unacceptable and outrageous for some Members of the US Congress to seek to impose sanctions on Hong Kong judges, prosecutors and other government officials.

Our judiciary exercises its power independently and in accordance with the law. Any suggestions otherwise are, at best, political grandstanding and, at worst, a base attempt at intimidation, at blackmailing. And without a doubt, a smear campaign, a political campaign to attack China and its Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The world knows about Hong Kong's long tradition in the rule of law. You are the best referee in this regard. You can see it as you walk in Hong Kong, work in Hong Kong or live in Hong Kong. Seeing is believing.

Ladies and gentlemen, security and stability are central to the success of every country, every economy. Hong Kong included. In 2019, Hong Kong's stability came under serious threat as a result of riots and violence. Today, our streets are peaceful and the doors of our shopping malls are widely and safely open once again to the people of Hong Kong, to travellers and to businesspeople from all over the world, and for you as well. So tonight after dinner, do take a walk in the shopping mall, spend your money, help the economy, contributing to the wellbeing of Hong Kong as well.

The International Monetary Fund, earlier this year, reaffirmed Hong Kong's standing as an international financial centre. And Hong Kong remains among the world's most competitive economies, this year ranked seventh, globally.

In my Policy Address, last month, I announced a range of measures to support our economy and to expand our reach, building new markets and expanding longstanding ties – from the 10 member states of ASEAN (Association

of Southeast Asian Nations) to the Middle East.

Thanks to the Basic Law, Hong Kong remains a separate customs territory.

We have signed free trade agreements (FTA) with 20 economies and investment agreements with 32 economies, and there will be many more to come. We also strive for early accession to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the world's largest FTA.

The Basic Law also authorises Hong Kong to continue, since 1997, as a full and separate member of international organisations such as WTO (World Trade Organization) and APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation). At last count, Hong Kong, China is a member in over 230 international organisations and conferences not limited to states.

Over 530 bilateral agreements we have signed with different countries, regions and international organisations are currently in force. As for multilateral agreements, some 260 of them are in force and applicable to the Hong Kong SAR.

Our wide and international network enables us to keep doing what we are good at: bridging between the Mainland of China and the rest of the world.

This week, a host of international and high-powered events showcasing the strengths of Hong Kong and fostering collaboration between our country and the world has filled up the calendar of Hong Kong, Asia's World City.

An immediate example is this very prestigious forum before us today. The Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit and the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law Asia Pacific Judicial Summit just concluded over the past two days. Both highly successful events, with a great turnout from the authorities and businesses of Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas.

Hong Kong continues to play an important role in strengthening regional co-operation. That is why Hong Kong will certainly be present at the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting in San Francisco next week. My Financial Secretary Paul Chan will be attending on my behalf, to represent Hong Kong, China and contribute to policy discussions under this year's theme, "Creating a Resilient and Sustainable Future for All". I count on Paul to do a very good job on my behalf.

Ladies and gentlemen, as I said at the very beginning, "A gentleman seeks harmony, not conformity." Hong Kong, thanks to our deep-rooted Chinese culture, is always a strong advocate for peace and harmony. When it comes to Hong Kong-US relations, if one sets aside all the domestic political interests, it should be pretty clear that there's much potential for stronger economic and trade ties between Hong Kong and the United States.

I take encouragement in noting that several US companies were among the 30 strategic companies that have agreed to set up or expand their businesses in Hong Kong through OASES, our Office for Attracting Strategic Enterprises.

Working together, we have much to gain. In business and investment, and

equally so in the arts, culture and entertainment.

Those of you who managed to get tickets to Yo Yo Ma's performances earlier this week here can attest to that. And I'm sure those who saw the Hong Kong Ballet on its US tour, earlier this year, would also wholeheartedly agree.

My thanks to the China-US Exchange Foundation, and the China Center for International Economic Exchanges, for organising this timely and invaluable international gathering.

I know the China-US Exchange Foundation is celebrating its 15th anniversary this year, and I offer my best wishes for your continued success down the road, of change and progress. I must thank you for giving me this opportunity to meet all the wise brains and minds, and the driver of the constructive US-China relations. This important relation, which needs nobody to highlight the importance of, is for the wellbeing of this world, for the long-term prosperity of mankind, and simply, for what is right for the people of this world.

I know you will enjoy the Forum, and I wish you all the best of business, and co-operation, in the coming year.

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. Thank you.



[Update on investigation of suspected Mycobacterium abscessus infection cluster](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (November 9) provided an update on the investigation of the suspected Mycobacterium abscessus infection cluster. There are no additional cases identified today and currently the suspected Mycobacterium abscessus infection cluster involves a total of 18 females.

The CHP has set up for the related cases an enquiry hotline (2125 2372), which operates from Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays) from 9am to 5.30pm to receive enquiries. The hotline was set up on November 3, and as of 3pm today, 19 calls were received, among which six females, aged 25 to 32, said that they had received relevant injection services and developed symptoms. They have been defined as cases of the infection cluster to receive follow-ups.

Also, the clinical sample of one of the 18 females involved in the infection cluster grew Mycobacterium abscessus yesterday (November 8). Currently there are a total of three females of the infection cluster whose clinical sample grew Mycobacterium abscessus.

In addition, the CHP has not identified new venues where injections took place, or relevant Instagram social media accounts today. The CHP again appeals that persons who have patronised the premises [announced on November 7](#), or have arranged and received relevant injections via relevant Instagram social media accounts after which they presented with relevant symptoms, should seek medical attention and call the hotline immediately. Officers of the CHP will assess their condition and arrange for follow-ups as appropriate.

Based on information obtained in a preliminary investigation, the CHP cannot rule out the possibility of illegal medical practice. Investigations are ongoing.

The DH reminded members of the public that injection procedures should only be performed by a locally registered doctor. Customers should look for his or her full name against the [list of registered doctors](#) of the Medical Council of Hong Kong as well as his or her professional qualifications and relevant experience. The DH also urged the public to observe the health advice below before receiving injections:

- Understand the procedure, potential risks and complications before receiving injections. Consult a doctor for an informed decision;
- Do not receive an injection in the case of a history of allergy to the injection, or infection or inflammation on the injection site;
- Request the full name of the doctor in writing if referred by a beauty service provider for the procedure, as well as the professional qualifications and relevant experience; and
- If symptoms develop, such as fever or feeling unwell, seek medical attention immediately.

â€‹The public may visit the DH's webpage on the [differentiation between medical procedures and beauty services](#) and the [Drug Database](#) of the Drug Office for more information.

Test results on hairy crabs and oysters satisfactory

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (November 9) announced the test results of the seasonal food surveillance project on hairy crabs and oysters. All samples passed the tests.

The tests for hairy crabs included veterinary drug residues, metallic contaminants, synthetic hormones, colouring matters and pesticide residues, as well as dioxins and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected 73 hairy crab samples at the import and retail levels for chemical tests and the test results were all satisfactory."

Moreover, the CFS continues to carry out chemical and microbiological tests on oysters and related products sampled from import, wholesale, and retail levels as part of its ongoing Food Surveillance Programme. From January to October this year, the CFS collected over 500 samples of oysters and related products for chemical and microbiological testing. Apart from one earlier announced imported fresh oyster sample which was found with excessive *Escherichia coli*, the rest of the samples have met the testing standards, achieving an overall passing rate of over 99.9 per cent. As the season of oyster consumption draws near, the CFS collected 20 extra oyster samples this week, sourced locally and from the Mainland, France, Japan and other places. These samples, collected at public markets, supermarkets, fresh provision shops and other retail stores, were submitted to the Government Laboratory for running more than 70 tests on heavy metals, including antimony, cadmium, chromium, inorganic arsenic, lead, and total mercury, via accredited methods. All testing results on metallic contaminants were found to be satisfactory.

Traders should have obtained relevant permits or written permission granted by the FEHD for selling hairy crabs and oysters, and the hairy crabs and ready-to-eat oysters being sold must be accompanied with health certificates issued by the relevant authorities of the exporting economies. They should source hairy crabs and ready-to-eat oysters from reliable suppliers and comply with the relevant regulatory requirements. Moreover, hairy crabs and ready-to-eat oysters for sale must be kept in a refrigerator.

The CFS advises members of the public to observe the following Five Keys to Food Safety in purchasing, storing, preparing and cooking hairy crabs to prevent food-borne illnesses and enjoy the seasonal food safely.

Choose wisely

- Buy hairy crabs from reliable and hygienic shops with the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit or relevant written permission granted by the FEHD;
- During purchase, check whether the hairy crabs for sale are kept in a refrigerator, and buy live crabs with intact, shiny shells and without a foul

smell; and

- For online purchase, buy from reliable online shops with licenses or restricted food permits, and pay attention to the nature and potential risk associated with food items purchased online.

Keep clean

- Brush and wash the crab shells and claws before cooking; and
- Wash hands with running water and soap, and rub for at least 20 seconds before consumption.

Separate raw and cooked foods

- Put the raw crabs in a container with a cover and store them separately from other foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross-contamination.

Cook thoroughly

- Avoid eating raw crabs. Cook thoroughly and remove internal organs completely before consumption. Condiments such as salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi cannot kill bacteria or parasites that may be present in the crabs.

Safe temperature

- Cooked crabs should be consumed as soon as possible.

The spokesman also reminded that due to their specific growing nature, oysters can be easily contaminated by pathogens and chemical contaminants, and pose potential risks. Bacteria (e.g. *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* and *Vibrio vulnificus*) and viruses (e.g. norovirus and Hepatitis A virus) may accumulate in them if they are grown in or harvested from contaminated water. Consuming oysters without thorough cooking might risk direct intake of these microorganisms. Susceptible groups, such as pregnant women, young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems or liver diseases, should avoid eating them. Although ingestion of small amounts of heavy metals from food usually does not affect health, long-term consumption of foods containing excessive amounts of heavy metals (including shellfish) may affect health. To avoid intake of excessive contaminants from small portions of food, it is important to maintain a balanced diet.

HKSAR Government firmly rejects and strongly disapproves of misleading and slanderous remarks by foreign Catholic leaders against cases involving Lai Chee-ying

today (November 9) firmly rejected and strongly disapproved of the misleading and slanderous remarks jointly made by 10 foreign Catholic leaders against the law enforcement actions and legal proceedings in respect of the cases involving Lai Chee-ying and their request for immediate and unconditional release of him.

The HKSAR Government spokesman said, "The HKSAR Government firmly rejects and strongly disapproves of the fact-twisting remarks made by the foreign Catholic leaders to inappropriately interfere in the HKSAR's internal affairs and the HKSAR courts' independent exercise of judicial power. Any person, regardless of his or her identity, who attempts to interfere with the judicial proceedings in the HKSAR in order to procure a defendant's evasion of the criminal justice process, is blatantly undermining the rule of law of the HKSAR. Making a statement with the intent to interfere with or obstruct the course of justice, or engaging in a conduct with the same intent, is very likely to constitute the offence of criminal contempt of court or the offence of perverting the course of justice."

The spokesman reiterated, "Hong Kong is a society underpinned by the rule of law and has always adhered to the principle that laws must be obeyed and lawbreakers held accountable. Article 25 of the Basic Law provides that all Hong Kong residents shall be equal before the law. All law enforcement actions taken by the law enforcement agencies of the HKSAR are based on evidence, strictly according to the law and for the acts of the people concerned, and have nothing to do with their professions, political beliefs or backgrounds. It would be totally contrary to the rule of law for someone to suggest that certain groups of people could enjoy privileges and break the law without getting arrested or bearing legal responsibilities due to their capacity. Everyone, including journalists, should abide by the law.

"Under Article 85 of the Basic Law, the courts of the HKSAR shall exercise judicial power independently, free from any interference. The Judiciary of the HKSAR exercises judicial power independently in accordance with the law, and everyone charged with a criminal offence has the right to a fair hearing. The courts decide cases strictly in accordance with the evidence and all applicable laws. Cases will never be handled any differently owing to the professions, political beliefs or backgrounds of the persons involved. The prosecution has the burden to prove beyond reasonable doubt the commission of an offence before a defendant may be convicted by the court. In all the cases involving Lai Chee-ying, he had fully exercised his right to defend himself and the right to appeal, and the verdicts and sentences, if any, were given by the courts exercising judicial power independently, based on applicable laws, facts and evidence after open trials and hearings. Also, the detailed reasons for sentence are contained in the publicly available judgment."

The spokesman stressed, "The HKSAR shall continue, in accordance with the law, to effectively prevent, suppress and punish acts and activities that endanger national security and also to safeguard the rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong people. The HKSAR Government strongly urges the foreign Catholic leaders to discern facts from fallacies, and immediately stop

interfering in the HKSAR's internal affairs and the HKSAR courts' independent exercise of judicial power."