

Wild pig carcass samples test positive for ASF virus

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (January 14) announced that samples taken from a wild pig carcass had tested positive for African Swine Fever (ASF) virus under the surveillance programme for ASF.

As there were a number of wild pig deaths found in the area around Wong Yue Tan in Tai Po, samples were collected from a wild pig carcass which was in a relatively intact state found in the abovementioned area for tests. Results are positive for ASF virus. The AFCD will continue to monitor any deaths that warrant attention, and maintain surveillance in the wild pig population.

Currently, no pig farms are found affected by this case. There are no pig farms located within three kilometres of Wong Yue Tan. All local pig farmers have been immediately notified about the case and have been advised to enhance farm biosecurity to prevent intrusion of wild pigs and introduction of 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 of animals 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 case will not affect the supply of live pigs to the local market."

The spokesman stressed that for personal safety and prevention of foods contaminated with ASF virus to be introduced to wild pigs, members of the public should keep away from them. Do not feed any wildlife, including wild pigs, and put garbage in lidded bins. If any dead wild pig is found, please report 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 of 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.