

# Government officers met trade representatives on contingency plans for African Swine Fever

The Government officers today (December 28) met local pig farmers and stakeholders related to supply chain of live pigs on preventive measures and contingency plans to guard against the spreading of African Swine Fever (ASF) to Hong Kong, culling arrangements under different scenarios as well as the Government's assistance to the trade and compensation for culling of pigs.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) briefed local pig farmers this afternoon at the Tai Lung Experimental Station on the Government's plans. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) also met representatives of the trade and the relevant stakeholders, including slaughterhouse operators, livestock agents, buyers and meat transportation companies, in the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse this afternoon to explain to them the related arrangements.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) said, "Today's meetings effectively allowed all the parties to exchange views on the contingency plans so as to get well prepared for prevention of ASF. We welcome local pig farmers' support for the contingency plans including the culling arrangements, and their continued co-operation with the Government closely on taking preventive measures."

"ASF is not a zoonotic disease and will not be transmitted to human, hence posing no food safety risk. Well-cooked pork and pork products are safe for consumption. As ASF could cause massive infection and death in pigs within a short period of time, the relevant Government departments have been closely monitoring the latest developments of ASF, heightening vigilance and implementing the corresponding measures since the first ASF case occurred on the Mainland in August this year.

"The Government has made reference to the prevention and control guidelines and experience of the World Organisation for Animal Health and in various places including the European Union and on the Mainland, and also taken into account the situation of local pig rearing industry and slaughterhouse operation when strengthening the preventive measures and devising contingency plans. The Government also seeks expert advice from time to time along the way. The Government has been maintaining liaison with the local pig rearing sector and gradually implementing various preventive measures, such as deepening the trade's understanding of ASF as well as enhancing cleansing and disinfection in different areas of live pig supply, in a bid to protect the local pig rearing industry and prevent ASF from spreading into local pig farms. All imported and local pigs have to undergo ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections in slaughterhouses to ensure that pigs supplied to the market are fit for human consumption.

"The Mainland authorities exercise stringent inspection and quarantine on live pigs for supply to Hong Kong. So far, there has been no ASF in any registered pig farms supplying Hong Kong (registered farm). If a registered farm were to be infected with ASF or located within or near to the ASF infected area, its supply of live pigs would be suspended. We will continue to closely liaise with the relevant Mainland authorities to strive to maintain steady supply of live pigs to Hong Kong," the spokesman added.

FEHD also releases on its website daily information on the quantity and auction price of live pigs supplied and the estimated number of live pigs to be supplied on the following day, which has helped enhance the transparency and effective operation of the market. Website:  
[www.fehd.gov.hk/english/sh/index.html](http://www.fehd.gov.hk/english/sh/index.html)

### **Culling arrangements**

According to the contingency plan for local pig farms, in the event to ASF infection, all pigs in that farm will be culled, and the farm will be cleansed and disinfected thoroughly. Restocking of pigs for business resumption could only take place upon inspection to the satisfaction of veterinary surgeons. AFCD will also block and prohibit the movement of pigs of other farms within three kilometres of the infected farm, and closely monitor the situation. If any pig in those farms were found to be infected with ASF, all pigs therein will also be culled. AFCD has devised the procedures for culling in a humane manner.

Incubation period of ASF is at least four days, i.e. 96 hours. ASF virus may be found in slaughterhouses in three scenarios. First, live pigs have been supplied to a slaughterhouse by a local pig farm or a registered farm within 96 hours prior to the identification of ASF in that farm. Second, a consignment of pigs from a local pig farm or a registered farm on the way to a slaughterhouse is found to be infected, but those pigs have yet to come into contact with other pigs in the slaughterhouse. Third, a pig in the lairage in a slaughterhouse is found to be infected.

In the first scenario, if pigs have been supplied to a slaughterhouse by an infected farm within 96 hours prior to the identification of ASF, all pigs from that farm remaining in the slaughterhouse will be culled. Other pigs in the slaughterhouse will be subject to thorough examination by veterinary surgeons. Sampled testing will be conducted if necessary, such as when the pigs are suspected to be infected. The pigs will be slaughtered and supplied to the market only after they are confirmed to be not infected. The slaughterhouse concerned will be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected after clearance.

In the second scenario, the whole consignment of pigs will be culled. As for other pigs, thorough examination will be conducted by the veterinary surgeons, and sampled testing will be conducted if necessary, such as when the pigs are suspected to be infected. The pigs will be slaughtered and supplied to the market only after they are confirmed to be not infected. The slaughterhouse concerned will be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected after clearance.

In the third scenario, all pigs in the slaughterhouse will be culled. The slaughterhouse will be thoroughly cleansed and disinfected after clearance. As the infected pig may come from either a local farm or a registered farm, or may be infected after entering the slaughterhouse, AFCD will block the movement of pigs of those local farms which have supplied pigs to the slaughterhouse within 96 hours prior to the identification of ASF and carry out an in-depth investigation, until it can rule out the possibility that the local farms concerned are infected. As for the registered farms which have supplied pigs to the slaughterhouse within 96 hours prior to the identification of ASF, the Centre for Food Safety of FEHD will notify the Mainland authorities concerned.

### **Enhanced preventive measures**

As to local pig farms, AFCD implements various preventive measures against ASF, including disseminating information to the trade and pig farmers about prevention against ASF via different channels (e.g. seminars, letters etc.) with a view to raising their awareness on disease precautions. AFCD requests pig farmers to implement proper biosecurity measures, strictly control the access of vehicles and personnel to pig farms, enhance cleansing and disinfection of vehicles and personnel entering and leaving pig farms and carefully handle excrement.

Apart from stepping up inspection to all pig farms, AFCD has also amended the licence conditions for livestock keeping to ban the storage or use of swill of pork origin or in contact with pork or pork products as feed from January 12, 2019. Pig farmers could apply for financial assistance and loan from AFCD if necessary to purchase facilities for strengthening biosecurity, such as high pressure jets and equipment required for switching to use formulated feed, etc. In addition, the importation of breeding pigs from the Mainland has also been suspended since September this year.

Currently, the local slaughterhouses adopt stringent bio-security measures, including cleansing and disinfection of the slaughterhouses and vehicles entering and leaving the slaughterhouses so as to prevent spreading of ASF virus inside the slaughterhouses or to local pig farms via vehicles. Since live pigs usually will not be kept in the slaughterhouse for more than two days before they are slaughtered while the incubation period of ASF virus is at least 96 hours, the chance of cross infection among pigs is very slim.

Moreover, according to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), it is an offence to import meat into Hong Kong without a health certificate issued by an issuing entity from the place of origin or prior written permission from FEHD. Offenders are liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment.

FEHD and the Customs and Excise Department have stepped up cooperation to crack down on illegal importation of meat by passengers into Hong Kong. Between January and November this year, the Government has brought 294 prosecutions and issued 125 warning letters on the cases concerned. Moreover, FEHD has enhanced publicity by posting posters at control points and

disseminating information via social media to promote the message that it is an offence to carry raw meat into Hong Kong without a health certificate.

### **Information about ASF**

More information about ASF is available at the websites of the Food and Health Bureau, AFCD and FEHD for access by the public.

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## **Hong Kong Customs seizes suspected dangerous drugs (with photos)**

Hong Kong Customs seized a total of about 800 grams of suspected methamphetamine and 1.4 kilograms of suspected liquid cocaine with an estimated market value of about \$1.95 million at Hong Kong International Airport on December 26.

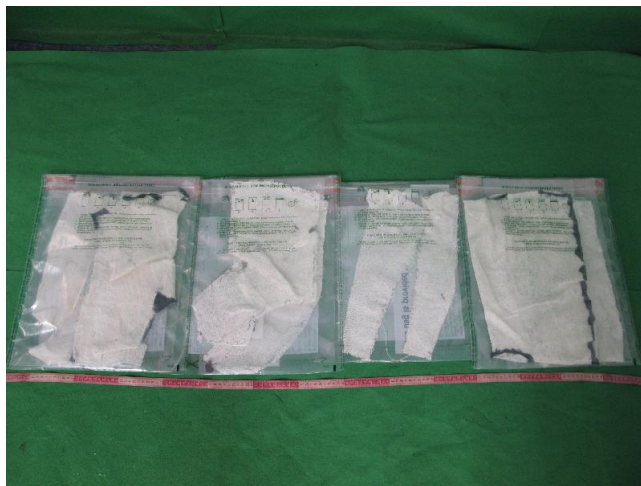
Customs officers inspected an air mail parcel from Malaysia on December 26. Four packets of suspected methamphetamine were found concealed inside the false compartment of the carton box of the parcel. After follow-up investigation, Customs officers yesterday (December 27) arrested a 31-year-old woman suspected to be in connection with the case in Mong Kok.

Also, a 22-year-old female passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Sao Paulo, Brazil via Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in the afternoon on December 26. During Customs clearance, the batch of suspected liquid cocaine was found concealed inside the underwear worn by her. The woman was then arrested.

The two arrested women were each charged with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug. They will appear at West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (December 29).

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)).



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## HAD opens temporary cold shelters

In view of the cold weather, the Home Affairs Department has opened 18 temporary shelters today (December 28) for people in need of the service.

The temporary shelters will remain open during the daytime tomorrow (December 29) when the cold weather warning is still in force.

To ensure that cold shelter users can rest in a quiet and undisturbed environment, members of the public or agencies wishing to make donations to shelter users are requested to register with the staff of the shelter first. Donors will then be directed to place the donation items at a specified indoor location. The staff will help notify the shelter users to collect the items on their own.

Anyone seeking temporary refuge or with any questions about the donation arrangement in the cold shelters may call the department's hotline 2835 1473 for more information.

The 18 temporary cold shelters are located at:

Hong Kong Districts:

Central and Western –

Sai Ying Pun Community Complex Community Hall

3/F, Sai Ying Pun Community Complex, 2 High Street, Sai Ying Pun

Eastern –

Causeway Bay Community Centre

7 Fook Yum Road, Causeway Bay

Southern –

Lei Tung Community Hall  
Lei Tung Estate, Ap Lei Chau

Wan Chai –  
Wan Chai Activities Centre  
LG/F, Wan Chai Market, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai

Kowloon Districts:

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Kowloon City –  
Hung Hom Community Hall  
1/F, Kowloon City Government Offices, 42 Bailey Street, Hung Hom

Kwun Tong –  
Lam Tin (West) Estate Community Centre  
71 Kai Tin Road, Lam Tin

Sham Shui Po –  
Nam Cheong District Community Centre  
1 Cheong San Lane, Sham Shui Po

Wong Tai Sin –  
Tsz Wan Shan (South) Estate Community Centre  
45 Wan Wah Street, Tsz Wan Shan

Yau Tsim Mong –  
Henry G Leong Yaumatei Community Centre  
60 Public Square Street, Yau Ma Tei

New Territories:

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Islands –  
Tung Chung Community Hall  
G/F, Tung Chung Municipal Services Building,  
39 Man Tung Road, Tung Chung

Kwai Tsing –  
Tai Wo Hau Estate Community Centre  
15 Tai Wo Hau Road, Kwai Chung

North –  
Cheung Wah Community Hall  
Cheung Wah Estate, Fanling

Sai Kung –  
Hang Hau Community Hall  
G/F, Sai Kung Tseung Kwan O Government Complex,  
38 Pui Shing Road, Hang Hau, Tseung Kwan O

Sha Tin –  
Lung Hang Estate Community Centre  
Lung Hang Estate, Sha Tin

Tai Po –  
Tai Po Community Centre  
2 Heung Sze Wui Street, Tai Po

Tsuen Wan –  
Lei Muk Shue Community Hall  
G/F, Hong Shue House, Lei Muk Shue Estate, Tsuen Wan

Tuen Mun –  
Butterfly Bay Community Centre  
Butterfly Estate (near Tip Sum House), Tuen Mun

Yuen Long –  
Long Ping Community Hall  
Long Ping Estate, Yuen Long

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## **Latest test results of opening-up investigation in second stage of holistic assessment strategy for Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link Project**

The latest test results of an opening-up investigation in the second stage of the holistic assessment strategy for Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link (SCL) Project (as at December 28) are now available at the Highways Department's website for the SCL project ([www.hyd.gov.hk/en/road\\_and\\_railway/railway\\_projects/scl/index.html](http://www.hyd.gov.hk/en/road_and_railway/railway_projects/scl/index.html)) for reference by the public.

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## **Lands Department's response on short**

## term tenancy information on the GeoInfo Map

In response to media reports on short term tenancy (STT) information on the GeoInfo Map, the spokesman for the Lands Department (LandsD) gave the following reply today (December 28):

The LandsD announced yesterday (December 27) that it uploaded information on those STTs granted since January 1, 2018, and those with rent reviewed during the same period, onto the GeoInfo Map, with updates on a quarterly basis. This initiative supports a major direction of the Development Bureau in recent years to gradually enhance the transparency of land information, and is also a continuation of a number of initiatives adopted by the LandsD in recent years to open up information access (including the online promulgation in 2017 of the list of vacant school premises and vacant government sites available for letting).

Currently, there are around 5 500 valid STTs with a total area of approximately 2 500 hectares. In terms of area, around 90% of the STTs are being used for public, community and commercial purposes to meet the various needs of the society, including works sites or works area for projects such as railway, public housing and airport construction works; commercial uses such as carparks and workshops; non-profit-making uses such as social welfare and religious uses; and public utilities related uses. Relatively speaking, the around 1 950 tenancies for private garden use account for less than 2% (around 43 hectares) of the total area of all STTs.

The LandsD has all along considered STT applications in accordance with the established mechanism, including STT applications for private garden use. Applications for STT involving private garden use must fulfill certain basic criteria, including that the subject government land can hardly be leased on its own to persons other than the applicant due to factors such as its location, topography, area, planning use, etc., and that the government land does not have any other use in the short term. By letting out such vacant government land, the Government can optimise the utilisation of land resources on one hand and save public resources for managing this type of vacant land on the other. When considering an STT application, the LandsD does not take account of the applicant's background.

Applicants with STT granted have to pay full market rent, which will be assessed by professional surveyors of the LandsD who will make professional consideration of factors such as land use, location, topography, area, and market demand and supply. As this type of garden tenancy sites can only be used for garden purpose and have limited development potential, their rental assessment is not the same as that of general residential sites, rendering a direct comparison between the two inappropriate.