

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)417**

**(Question Serial No. 6310)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to African Swine Fever (ASF), please advise this Committee of the following:

- (1) Since the outbreak of ASF, how many food samples have been taken for ASF virus testing? Please provide tabulated information by food types on the number of food samples taken, the places of origin of the food products sampled, the number of unsatisfactory samples detected, the quantity of food products recalled and the number of days required for conducting tests on food samples.
- (2) Please list the number of cases involving seizure of smuggled pork by the Department at various border control points since the outbreak of ASF. Has manpower been stepped up to combat pork smuggling at border control points? Please advise on the departments involved and the manpower situation.
- (3) What are the Department's corresponding actions for the ASF epidemic? Please advise on the department(s) and the manpower and expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ka-ki (LegCo internal reference no.: 83)

Reply:

- (1) African Swine Fever (ASF) is not a zoonotic disease and there are no food safety concerns. As at 28 February 2019, 54 samples of pig organs and tissues were collected in slaughterhouses for ASF testing for prevention of possible spread of ASF, results of which were all negative.
- (2) From August 2018 to February 2019, the Customs and Excise Department had referred 131 cases of suspected illegal import of pork to the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) at border control points and more than 500 kg of pork had been seized for disposal. CFS has ensured that proper manpower was deployed at border control points to safeguard food safety at import level. As at February 2019, there are 99 staff posts at various border control points under the Food Import and Export Section of the CFS.

(3) The CFS has enhanced the publicity programme on ASF through various channels, including broadcasting messages at radio, posters displayed at all border checkpoints, MTR trains and escalators, and advertisements in newspaper and internet, posts on social media such as Facebook. At the border level, food pigs are subject to import inspection upon arrival. Pig consignment must accompany a valid animal health certificate issued by the Mainland authority, attesting that the animals are clinically healthy and originated from a registered farm. In case there are pigs showing clinical signs suggestive of ASF, the consignment of interest would be detained for further investigation. Besides, transportation trucks are disinfected before admission to the animal inspection station. All pigs admitted into the licensed slaughterhouse must pass ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection before supplying the market. CFS collects samples in the slaughterhouse for ASF testing as and when required.

The revised estimate of expenditure on live food animal inspections and quarantine detector dog services at boundary control points and in slaughterhouses in 2018-19 is \$61.6 million, involving 142 staff posts. The revised estimate of expenditure on managing slaughterhouses and providing meat inspection services in 2018-19 is \$71.7 million, involving 66 staff posts. The cost for handling ASF cannot be separately identified.

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