

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)095

(Question Serial No. 2814)

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:

At present, live pigs imported from the Mainland must go through customs clearance at the Man Kam To Control Point and undergo inspection at the Man Kam To Animal Inspection Station. In this regard, please advise this Committee on:

- (a) the number of permits that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) issued to importers or import agencies of live pigs under the Rabies Ordinance (Cap. 421A) as at the end of 2019; and
- (b) the conditions for compliance by importers or import agencies of live pigs for issuance of such permits.

With respect to quarantine of live pigs,

- (c) what are the procedures for verifying an original Animal Health Certificate issued by the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) and how its authenticity can be confirmed?
- (d) does the Department verify with GACC on a regular basis the admission record of live pigs, such as the complete record from their departure from Mainland farms to their arrival to Hong Kong?
- (e) were there any cases with the lead seals on live pig conveying vehicles found not intact in the past 3 years (please provide the information with a breakdown by month)? What will the Department do with a pig consignment if the lead seal on its conveying vehicle is not found intact?
- (f) did the Department spot any irregularities concerning the tattoo marks on pigs in the past 3 years? If yes, please provide the information with a breakdown by month. How does the Department verify the authenticity of the tattoo marks?
- (g) please provide a list of clinical signs of diseases that must be checked.

- (h) what were the number of pigs imported from the Mainland and detected with clinical signs of diseases, the number of samples sent to AFCD laboratory for post-mortem examination and the relevant test results in the past 3 years? Please provide the information with a breakdown by month.
- (i) please set out the staff establishment and salaries involved in the work mentioned in (h) above, with a breakdown by department (AFCD and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department);
- (j) what were the expenditures incurred in quarantine of live pigs in the past 3 years apart from salaries?

Asked by: Hon CHU Hoi-dick (LegCo internal reference no.: 2034)

Reply:

- (a) In 2019, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) issued 37 permits to importers or import agencies of live pigs under the Rabies Ordinance (Cap. 421A) for import of live pigs from the Mainland.
- (b) To import breeding pigs, an importer or import agency must obtain a valid farm licence issued by AFCD for keeping of pigs. The pig farm concerned must be assessed by AFCD and confirmed with the provision of suitable quarantine facilities before a permit for import of breeding pigs can be granted. As for Mainland pigs imported for slaughter, at present the 3 import agencies appointed by the Ministry of Commerce for importing live pigs to Hong Kong are issued with the permit by AFCD.
- (c) to (h)

All live pigs supplied to Hong Kong must originate from registered farms approved by the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China and undergo inspection by the Mainland quarantine authorities for the provision of animal health certificates before they are delivered from the farm. The pigs will be transported to the Qingshuihe transfer house for monitoring and inspection by the Shenzhen Customs before release to Hong Kong.

Officers of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will inspect live pigs imported from the Mainland at the Man Kam To Animal Inspection Station (MKT AIS). Every pig consignment must be accompanied by a valid animal health certificate issued by the Mainland authorities attesting that the pigs are clinically healthy and originate from a registered farm. Each animal health certificate is individually numbered and contains information of the registered farm supplying live pigs to Hong Kong, the official stamp and the signature of a veterinary officer. In inspecting a pig consignment, CFS officers will check whether the animal health certificate provides full particulars of the above and whether the tattoo marks on pigs are identical with the information of the registered farm shown on the certificate. The intactness of the lead seal of the conveying vehicle will also be inspected. If the origin of a pig consignment and the information in the documents cannot be ascertained, CFS officers will immediately seek clarification with the Mainland

authorities prior to the release of the consignment. In the past 3 years, no impairment of intactness of lead seals or irregularities of tattoo marks of pigs were identified.

In addition, veterinary officers of CFS will monitor the health conditions of each pig consignment delivered to Hong Kong. CFS found two dead pigs in two pig consignments arriving at MKTAIS in December 2018 and June 2019 respectively. The pig carcasses were tested for African Swine Fever virus by AFCD and the test results were negative.

(i) to (j)

In 2017-18 and 2018-19, the expenditure on quarantine of live food animals at the boundary control points was \$13.4 million and \$15.0 million respectively. The revised estimate for 2019-20 was \$16.5 million, involving the expenditure for 42 staff. The expenditure for handling pigs as food animals cannot be separately quantified.

AFCD does not have a separate breakdown on the staff establishment and expenditure for the related testing work. The quarantine of pigs imported not as food animals at the Man Kam To Control Point is part of AFCD's quarantine work for import control at the border. Therefore, we do not have a separate breakdown on the staff establishment and expenditure incurred.

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