

Press Release

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Response to cases of deaths due to unknown causes in Sichuan

In response to press enquiries regarding cases of deaths due to unknown causes in Sichuan, a spokesman for the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau said today (July 25) that all the pork previously exported to Hong Kong had passed through stringent inspection and quarantine procedures and was certified to be safe and hygienic.

The spokesman said the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) had contacted the State General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) which affirmed after investigation that registered export pig farms under the supervision of Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine bureaux had not been affected by the epidemic and none of their staff had come down with infection.

All pork imported from the Mainland must be accompanied by health certificates issued by the AQSIQ or relevant Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine bureaux to certify that the pork is safe and fit for human consumption. The health certificate must also certify that the pigs had passed through inspection and were certified to be clear of infectious diseases before slaughtering. The spokesman noted that the authorities concerned would step up the inspection and quarantine work for imported pigs and meat.

As a precautionary measure, the Mainland authorities had temporarily suspended the export of all pork products from the cities of Ziyang and Neijiang. They would also step up surveillance of the registered export pig farms.

According to FEHD, Hong Kong imports frozen pork but not live pigs from Sichuan province.

The Centre for Health Protection of Hong Kong had contacted the Ministry of Health to obtain the latest information about the incident.

In view of the recent incident in Sichuan province, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had advised pig farmers to monitor their own health conditions and that of their pigs. Farmers should notify the Department of Health if they fall ill. If their pigs appear to be unwell, they should notify AFCD.

The spokesman said the relevant government departments would closely monitor the incident and liaise with the Mainland authorities to keep abreast of the latest developments.

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