

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1180/18-19

(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 8 January 2019, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Chairman)
Hon SHIU Ka-fai (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon HUI Chi-fung
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho
Hon AU Nok-hin
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH
Hon CHAN Hoi-yan

Members attending : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

Member absent : Hon HO Kai-ming

Public Officers attending : Item IV

Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Gilford LAW Sun-on
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2

Miss Diane WONG Shuk-han
Deputy Director (Environmental Hygiene)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr FORK Ping-lam
Assistant Director (Operations) 3
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr LEE Ming-wai
Pest Control Officer-in-charge
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item V

Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Bill WONG Kwok-piu
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 3

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP
Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Mr Peter MA Wai-chung
Assistant Director (Agriculture) (Acting)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Mr LAW Man-tim
Deputy Project Manager (North)
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Item VI

Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Bill WONG Kwok-piu
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 3

Dr Thomas SIT Hon-chung
Assistant Director (Inspection and Quarantine)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr Shirley Veronica CHUK Sheung-ying
Senior Veterinary Officer (Animal Health)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr Philip HO Yuk-yin, JP
Controller, Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr FORK Ping-lam
Assistant Director (Operations) 3
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Clerk in attendance : Miss Josephine SO
Chief Council Secretary (2) 2

Staff in attendance : Ms Wendy LO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 2

Mr Clement HAU
Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Cally LAI
Legislative Assistant (2) 2

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes
(LC Paper No. CB(2)521/18-19)

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2018 were confirmed.

II. Information paper issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)528/18-19(01) and (02))

Special meeting on 18 January 2019

3. The Chairman reminded members that a special meeting had been scheduled for Friday, 18 January 2019, at 9:00 am to receive deputations' views on issues relating to the proposed arrangements for re-allocation of vacant hawker pitches.

(Post-meeting note: The special meeting was subsequently re-scheduled to Monday, 28 January 2019, from 2:15 pm to 4:45 pm.)

Regular meeting in February 2019

4. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 12 February 2019, at 2:30 pm:

- (a) Application of new technologies in enhancing environmental hygiene and pest control;
- (b) Registration of fishing vessels under the Fisheries Protection Ordinance (Cap. 171); and
- (c) Policies on promoting the development of the fisheries industry.

5. Members agreed to extend the February meeting by half an hour to end at 5:00 pm to allow sufficient time for discussion of all items on the agenda.

(Post-meeting note: Members were informed vide LC Paper No. CB(2)726/18-19 issued on 28 January 2019 that the Chairman had acceded to the Administration's request to rephrase the title of the discussion item as referred to in paragraph 4(c) above as "Development of mariculture".)

IV. Survey results and control strategy against biting midges

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)528/18-19(03) and (04))

6. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Food and Health ("USFH") briefed Members on the survey results of a one-year study on biting midges undertaken by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") and the Administration's control strategy having regard to the situation in Hong Kong, as detailed in its paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)528/18-19(03)). Members noted the background brief prepared by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat on the measures taken by the Administration for preventing and controlling biting midges (LC Paper No. CB(2)528/18-19(04)).

Monitoring the infestation of biting midges

7. Mr CHAN Han-pan, Dr Elizabeth QUAT and Mr Kenneth LAU called on the Administration to draw reference to the way of detecting the larval breeding rate of *Aedine* mosquitoes under the dengue vector surveillance programme (i.e. by compiling the Area Ovitrap Index and the Monthly Ovitrap Index) and formulate relevant indicators for monitoring the infestation of biting midges. To enhance public awareness about the problem and to alert members of the public to take preventive measures in response to index changes, they hoped that the Administration would regularly announce the surveillance results of biting midges in various districts.

8. USFH responded that biting midges found in Hong Kong were not vectors of mosquito-borne diseases (such as dengue fever and Japanese encephalitis). Given that targeted environmental measures could reduce breeding of biting midges and effectively contain their infestation, the Administration considered that it might not be necessary to introduce a specific indicator reflecting the extensiveness of biting midges throughout the territory for the time being.

9. Mr CHAN Han-pan said that although no disease-carrying species of biting midges had been identified so far, formulating relevant indicators would help assess the infestation/activity of biting midges in different districts, and relevant departments would stay alert and monitor the situation closely, especially in areas where the infestation was particularly serious. Mr Andrew WAN shared a similar view.

10. Mr Steven HO said that even if the Administration maintained its position not to introduce a specific indicator reflecting the extensiveness of biting midges for the time being, it should still inform the public which districts or areas had problem of infestation. Mr POON Siu-ping asked whether the Administration would conduct further surveys on biting midges.

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11. Deputy Director (Environmental Hygiene)/FEHD ("DD(EH)/FEHD") responded with the following points:

- (a) in light of public concern about nuisances caused by biting midges in recent years, FEHD had invited a renowned biting midges expert from Mainland China to visit Hong Kong in 2016 and 2018 respectively to provide advice and recommendations on the control strategy. FEHD had also conducted a territory-wide survey on biting midges between July 2017 and July 2018;
- (b) the expert considered that there was yet a need to introduce an index for long-term surveillance particularly for biting midges in Hong Kong, as the biting midges found locally were not disease vectors;
- (c) complaint figures relating to biting midges had been kept since mid-2016 to facilitate timely adjustment of the control strategy. It should be noted that the complaint figures had decreased gradually over the past few years (with 564 complaints received in 2016, 206 complaints in 2017, and 162 complaints during the period from January to September 2018). This showed that the nuisances caused by biting midges in public places had been alleviated;
- (d) while the Administration noted Members' views over the formulation of indicators for biting midges, it also observed that the World Health Organization had not published any guidelines for systematic surveillance targeted at biting midges. Other places including Mainland China, Singapore as well as some countries in America and Europe had not formulated any index for the surveillance of biting midges. From the public health perspective and with reference to international practices, the Administration considered that there was yet a need to introduce an index for long-term surveillance particularly for biting midges in Hong Kong at this stage; and
- (e) the Administration would continue to keep in view the situation of biting midges in the territory, and would consider conducting another round of territory-wide survey to look into the change of the situation, if necessary.

12. Dr Helena WONG held the view that since biting midges commonly found in Hong Kong were not disease vectors, the Administration should, instead of formulating indicators for biting midges, dedicate more resources on monitoring the infestation of mosquitoes and rodents.

Prevention and control of biting midges

13. Many Members expressed concern about the Administration's control strategy against biting midges. Mr Kenneth LAU and Mr SHIU Ka-chun considered that the Administration should stay vigilant in the prevention and control of biting midges. Mr LAU, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok and Mr Andrew WAN suggested that specific measures should be taken to prevent the proliferation of biting midges, particularly in areas where the infestation problem was serious, e.g. in rural environment and areas with wet soil and dense vegetation. Mr WAN further asked whether FEHD had issued any guidelines on how to tackle the problem for reference of relevant departments. Mr POON Siu-ping requested the Administration to provide information on the strategies and measures, including the allocation of manpower and resources, for preventing proliferation of biting midges as recommended by the Pest Control Steering Committee ("PCSC").

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14. USFH and DD(EH)/FEHD responded that:

- (a) to prevent the proliferation of biting midges, the most effective measures were environmental control, reduction of potential breeding places and enhancing public awareness of adopting self-protection measures through health education;
- (b) the Administration attached great importance to the prevention and control of biting midges and had stepped up inter-departmental co-ordination. Under the co-ordination of PCSC, which had planned ahead for the overall strategy of pest control work throughout the year, some departments had been allocated additional resources to enhance pest control work;
- (c) with reference to the survey results and expert advice, the Administration had developed targeted control strategies against biting midges by taking into account their habitual behaviours as well as their seasonal and localized activity patterns;
- (d) FEHD had formulated technical guidelines on the prevention and control of biting midges for general reference, with a view to tackling the issue at source by reducing the potential breeding sites; and
- (e) FEHD would continue to monitor the biting midges situation in public places through routine inspections, district feedbacks and complaints follow-up, as well as continue to provide training and technical support to various departments.

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The Chairman and Dr Helena WONG requested the Administration to provide after the meeting a copy of the technical guidelines formulated by FEHD and the survey report on the territory-wide study on biting midges conducted by FEHD between July 2017 and July 2018.

15. Dr Elizabeth QUAT, Mr POON Siu-ping and Dr Helena WONG expressed views on the Administration's control measures against mosquitoes and biting midges. Expressing concern about the effectiveness of the measures, Dr QUAT and Mr POON considered that different measures should be adopted in the control of mosquitoes and biting midges. For example, more insect trapping devices should be installed in parks for capturing biting midges. Dr WONG held the view that the Administration's work on the prevention and control of biting midges could be performed concurrently with its anti-mosquito work. The publicity and education work for the two types of insects might share a common goal with different emphases on the health risks posed by them.

16. DD(EH)/FEHD said that anti-mosquito and environmental improvement measures taken by departments could help reduce potential breeding places of biting midges. Relevant departments would closely monitor the biting midges situation in venues under their purview. Apart from regular plant pruning and clearance of decaying and broken branches, they would enhance control of biting midges where necessary, including the engagement of professional pest control contractors to carry out fogging, to apply residual insecticides in places where biting midges were prevalent and to install insect trapping devices in outdoor venues where biting midges were frequently found.

17. The Chairman, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok, Dr Elizabeth QUAT and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan expressed concerns about the health risks posed by biting midges. Although the biting midges species found in Hong Kong were not disease vectors, their bites could still cause discomfort and irritation. The Chairman and Ir Dr LO were concerned whether the bites of midges and dust mite would trigger allergic reaction or eczema. Dr CHIANG enquired whether the public could prevent the bites of midges by applying insect repellent. Dr QUAT said that the public, especially parents, were worried that children would easily be bitten by midges when they played at parks. Observing that the application of insect repellent alone might not be able to prevent bites by midges, she enquired what health advice could be provided to the public.

18. USFH said that according to the results of the survey, the main breeding sites of the biting midges that caused nuisances were parks, which were frequented by the public. FEHD would liaise with the relevant departments on the preventive work carried out in venues under their

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respective purview including parks, by removing dried leaves on soil surface and applying larvicide if necessary, in order to prevent the breeding of biting midges at public places. DD(EH)/FEHD added that to enhance the general public's knowledge on biting midges and raise their awareness of adopting self-protection measures, FEHD would step up its health education through the use of posters and leaflets. The Administration would advise the public to wear light-coloured, long-sleeved clothes and trousers and apply insect repellent when having outdoor activities. They should also clear potential biting midges breeding grounds at home, e.g. removing fallen leaves, decaying materials as well as silt in sand traps and surface channels. Regarding the question on the use of insect repellent, Pest Control Officer-in-charge/FEHD ("PCOic/FEHD") said that owing to the warm and humid weather of Hong Kong, and since sweat would lower the effectiveness of insect repellent, DEET-containing insect repellent had to be applied every one to two hours when people were engaging in outdoor activities.

19. Mr SHIU Ka-chun asked whether FEHD had continued to use trapping stickers for capturing biting midges in public places. According to his understanding, trapping stickers could kill beneficial insects and should not be used. In his view, FEHD should adopt or explore other measures (e.g. installing insect trapping devices) to tackle the biting midges problem. Mr SHIU also expressed concern about the clearance of fallen trees and other debris after the passage of super typhoon Mangkhut, as areas with fallen leaves and decaying materials were prone to infestation of biting midges. Dr Elizabeth QUAT shared a similar concern.

20. PCOic/FEHD responded that FEHD had not used trapping stickers for capturing biting midges, as these stickers would indiscriminately capture insects, including butterflies, moths and other beneficial insects. To enhance control of biting midges, FEHD would carry out control work in public places by means of environmental methods with a view to reducing the breeding places for biting midges. He added that some mosquito traps could be modified for capturing biting midges. In response to Members' concern about the clearance of typhoon debris, DD(EH)/FEHD advised that relevant departments had worked closely in conducting the clearance work, by cutting trees and removing branches and twigs on the roads and venues under their respective purview. FEHD had also drawn the attention of the relevant departments to the need for early clearance of uprooted tree stumps arising from the typhoon. The completion of the clearance work could help address environmental hygiene concerns, which included reducing the breeding places for biting midges.

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21. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide the following information after the meeting:

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- (a) the follow-up actions to be taken by FEHD and relevant departments against the infestation of biting midges, particularly at locations where biting midges were prevalent according to the survey results;
- (b) whether consideration would be given to placing light traps for catching biting midges at parks and rural areas where the presence of biting midges was higher and, if yes, details of the plan; and
- (c) whether FEHD would consider issuing guidelines on the safety perspective relating to the use of insect repellent (e.g. DEET-containing insect repellent) for public reference.

(*Post-meeting note:* The Administration's response was circulated vide LC Paper No. CB(2)808/18-19 on 15 February 2019.)

Motion proposed by member

22. Mr CHAN Han-pan indicated an intention to move a motion under this discussion item. The Chairman ruled that the proposed motion was directly related to the agenda item under discussion and members present agreed that the motion should be dealt with. Mr Steven HO proposed amendments to the motion moved by Mr CHAN. Since there was a lack of quorum at this point of time, the Chairman ordered that the quorum bell be rung to summon members before proceeding to deal with the motion. A quorum was subsequently present.

Motion

23. The Chairman put the following motion moved by Mr CHAN Han-pan, as amended by Mr Steven HO, to vote:

(議案中文措辭)

本事務委員會要求政府設立監察機制，加強對本港蠓患情況進行定期跟蹤調查，並公布蠓患指數或等同措施，以提高市民的認識和防範，而政府亦可就各區指數情況作出適當跟進。

(English translation of the motion)

This Panel requests the Government to establish a surveillance mechanism for biting midges, enhance its efforts in conducting regular tracking surveys on the infestation of biting midges in Hong Kong, and

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publish a surveillance index on biting midges or take equivalent measures, so that the public will have better understanding of and take preventive measures against the problem, while the Government may also, in response to the indices in various districts, take appropriate follow-up actions.

24. The Chairman invited members to vote for or against the motion by a show of hands. Seven members voted for the motion, no member voted against it or abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response to the motion was issued vide LC Paper No. CB(2)721/18-19 on 25 January 2019.)

V. Establishment of an Agricultural Park (Phase 1) in Kwu Tung South

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)528/18-19(05) and (06))

25. At the invitation of the Chairman, USFH briefed Members on the Administration's proposal to upgrade part of PWP Item 471RO, entitled "The Establishment of an Agricultural Park (Phase 1) in Kwu Tung South" to category A in the Public Works Programme, as detailed in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)528/18-19(05)). Members noted an updated background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat on the subject (LC Paper No. CB(2)528/18-19(06)).

Accommodation arrangements

26. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan and Mr CHU Hoi-dick noted that the Agricultural Park ("Agri-Park") sought to accommodate the following groups of the farming sector: (a) existing farmers operating within the area of the Agri-Park prior to its establishment; (b) farmers displaced by government development projects implemented within the same timeframe of the Agri-Park and who accepted the Agri-Park's tenancy terms and conditions; and (c) farmers who could meet the Agri-Park's admission criteria. They asked about the estimated numbers of farmers respectively under categories (a) and (b) who would be relocated to the Agri-Park. Dr CHIANG also sought details about the Agri-Park's admission criteria.

27. Mr CHU Hoi-dick wondered if the Agri-Park, in its proposed scale, had sufficient capacity to accommodate farmers displaced by the North East New Territories New Development Areas ("NDAs") Planning, which covered development projects in Kwu Tung North and Fanling North NDAs and would be implemented in phases over a long period of time. He was also concerned that government development projects might not be taken forward

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concurrently with the commissioning of the Agri-Park. In case there was a time gap between the displacement of farmers and the commissioning of the Agri-Park, the affected farmers might not be able to be relocated to the Agri-Park in a timely manner.

28. Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation ("DAFC") responded that for the development of the Agri-Park (Phase 1), three households (about 12 people) and about 13 farms operating within the area would be affected by the proposed road works. To minimize the impact on these farmers, the Administration would endeavour to relocate them to other farmland in the Agri-Park prior to commencing the proposed road and other construction works in their affected farmland. A timetable for this purpose would be worked out to ensure a seamless relocation of the affected farmers. DAFC further said that farmland in the Agri-Park would also be leased to farmers who were affected by government land development projects at the same time and intended to resume farming. The rest would be put up for application and leased to farmers who intended to grow crops (e.g. vegetables and flowers) for commercial production. To meet the overall objectives of the Agri-Park and ensure reasonable production output, applicants would be required to submit an annual production plan to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") for assessment of the farming modes and overall productivity.

29. Mr CHU Hoi-dick hoped that representatives from AFCD and the Development Bureau would meet with farmers affected by the government development projects in Kwu Tung North and Fanling North NDAs to listen to their views and concerns over various issues, including the proposal of relocating these farmers to the Agri-Park. DAFC responded that he would follow up the matter with the relevant bureau. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that the Administration should also meet with owners of soy sauce factories operating in Kwu Tung to understand their relocation need arising from the development of the Agri-Park.

Proposed road works for the Agri-Park Phase 1

30. While expressing support for the proposed establishment of the Agri-Park, the Chairman, Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, Mr CHU Hoi-dick, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan, Mr AU Nok-hin and Mr Tony TSE were concerned about the impact of the proposed road works for the Agri-Park Phase 1 on existing farmland and the environment. Referring to the submission from 蕉徑長瀝關注組 which was tabled at the meeting, Dr CHEUNG and Mr CHU said that they shared the concerns of the deputation and queried the need of constructing a 7.3 metres wide single two-lane carriageway (as gazetted on 3 and 10 November 2017) connecting the Agri-Park with Tsiu Keng Road and Fan Kam Road.

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(*Post-meeting note:* The submission from 蕉徑長瀝關注組 was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)559/18-19 on 9 January 2019.)

31. Mr CHU Hoi-dick recalled that the Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD") had, in 2016, engaged a consultant to carry out an engineering feasibility study for the Agri-Park project. To his understanding, the Administration had included in the relevant consultancy brief a road alignment proposal for the establishment of the Agri-Park, which ran along Sheung Yue River without cutting across active farmland. However, when the Administration consulted stakeholders in late 2017, upon completion of the engineering feasibility study, on the infrastructure works of the Agri-Park Phase 1 and the land resumption arrangements, many parts of the study report provided by the Administration were redacted. It was not until late December 2018 that the full study report, including the alignment of the road now proposed which ran across a large amount of active farmland, was made available to farmers and local villagers. Mr CHU expressed disappointment that the Administration did not adopt the road alignment proposal as originally stated in the consultancy brief. He criticized the Administration for failing to thoroughly consult Members and relevant stakeholders during the planning stage of the proposed carriageway. The Chairman, Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr Tony TSE expressed similar concerns.

32. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr Tony TSE considered it necessary for the Administration to clearly explain to the public the justifications for constructing the proposed two-lane carriageway. The Chairman asked whether there was flexibility in revising the alignment of the proposed carriageway. Noting that a total of 57 objections had been received during the statutory objection period for the proposed road works, of which 55 remained unresolved, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan and Ms YUNG Hoi-yan asked whether the Administration would discuss and negotiate with stakeholders concerned to iron out the differences.

33. Referring to the Conservancy Association's submission to the Panel for the special meeting on 5 October 2018 (LC Paper No. CB(2)2057/17-18(01)), Mr AU Nok-hin echoed the Association's view that the construction of the proposed carriageway might turn the farmland in the vicinity into low-lying land and disrupt the hydrological regime of the area surrounding the Agri-Park in the future. He noted with concern that the formation works for the establishment of the Agri-Park Phase 1 would affect 7.5 hectares ("ha") of land. He asked whether the Administration had conducted an in-depth assessment of the impact of the road construction and formation works on

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existing farmland and whether consideration would be given to reducing the scope of the said works.

34. DAFC and Deputy Project Manager (North)/CEDD ("DPM(N)/CEDD") gave the following responses:

- (a) the road alignment presented in the consultancy brief was merely a preliminary conceptual alignment but not a proposal. The consultant engaged by CEDD to carry out the engineering feasibility study for the Agri-Park assessed that the abovementioned conceptual alignment would necessitate the building of a number of feeder roads to connect with the main carriageway, which in turn would affect more farmland in the vicinity. Therefore, the consultant had proposed a road alignment as set out in its study report for the Administration's consideration, which was adopted as the conceptual alignment for consulting stakeholders in late 2017;
- (b) in March 2017, CEDD engaged another consultant to carry out the detailed design and site investigation for the Agri-Park project. After considering the views of stakeholders and carefully examining the technical feasibility, the consultant had carried out the overall design and infrastructure support of the Agri-Park, including reviewing the design of the proposed carriageway put forward by the previous consultant, in order to minimize the impact of the road and other construction works on existing structures, private land and the local community. The modified road alignment proposal (i.e. the current proposal) was set out in Annex 1 to the Administration's paper under discussion;
- (c) in working out the current road alignment proposal, the Administration had taken into account the overall objectives and long-term operational needs of the Agri-Park. To fulfill the need of traffic demand and safety requirement, the proposed road would be designed to a "Rural Road" type standard of 7.3 metres wide single two-lane carriageway in accordance with the Transport Planning and Design Manual issued by the Transport Department. Under the current design, the proposed carriageway would connect the main parts of the Agri-Park, allowing access of large vehicles to facilitate the transportation of farming machinery, equipment and agricultural produce. The road would also be open to the public and visitors for participating in farming-related educational activities, sharing sessions and experimental programmes;

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- (d) the road scheme for the proposed works under the Roads (Works Use and Compensation) Ordinance (Cap. 370) was gazetted on 3 and 10 November 2017. During the statutory objection period, a total of 57 objections had been received. The objectors were concerned about the necessity and the alignment of the proposed road, the impact of the construction works on existing farmers, farmland and the environment, as well as the planning of the entire Agri-Park. After the Administration had arranged objection resolving meetings and provided written responses to the objectors, two objections were withdrawn while 55 remained unresolved. The Chief Executive in Council had authorized the proposed road scheme and approved the resumption of land for the establishment of the Agri-Park Phase 1 on 27 November 2018. The Administration had no plan to modify the current road alignment proposal. That said, efforts would be made to minimize the impact of the construction works on the environment; and
- (e) as mentioned earlier, the Administration would endeavor to relocate affected farmers to other farmland in the Agri-Park prior to commencing the proposed road and other construction works in their affected farmland so as to minimize the impact on them. AFCD would also provide technical support to help the affected farmers rehabilitate as soon as possible after the relocation.

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35. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide, the Panel and in its paper to be submitted to the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC"), more detailed information on the following:

- (a) the reasons for not adopting the road alignment in the consultancy brief for establishment of the Agri-Park; and
- (b) the justifications for and necessity of the proposed construction of a 7.3 metres wide single two-lane carriageway; the considerations taken into account by the Administration in proposing the road works; and the estimated impact of the construction works on existing farmers, farmland and the environment.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)915/18-19 on 4 March 2019.)

36. The Chairman further asked whether the Administration had assessed the difference in construction costs between (a) the current road alignment proposal and the alignment in the consultancy brief; and (b) the proposed

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two-lane carriageway and the alternative road alignment option put forward by a deputation as set out in LC Paper No. CB(2)2065/17-18(06).

37. DPM(N)/CEDD said that while the Administration had not made such an assessment, it had taken into account the cost factor in working out the road alignment and the scale of the road works. As mentioned earlier, if the conceptual alignment in the consultancy brief was adopted, a number of feeder roads had to be built to connect with the proposed carriageway, which would have implication on the construction cost. It was noteworthy that according to the consultant's assessment, the area of land to be affected by the alternative option of a single one-lane carriageway with passing bays was only 20% less than that of the current road alignment proposal. To fulfill the need of traffic demand and safety requirement, the Administration considered it more appropriate to adopt the current road alignment proposal.

38. Mr Steven HO pointed out that one of the objectives of the establishment of the Agri-Park was to promote the modernization and sustainable development of the local agricultural industry. He understood that there had been calls from the local farming industry for a comprehensive road network in the Agri-Park which would facilitate the transportation of farming machinery and agricultural produce. Mr HO hoped that the Administration could show its determination in enhancing the potential of the local agricultural industry through the establishment of the Agri-Park and provision of sufficient supporting facilities.

39. The Deputy Chairman and Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that Members belonging to the Liberal Party were supportive of the establishment of the Agri-Park to promote local agriculture, balance the development of an urban city and provide good quality agricultural produce for local consumption.

40. In response to the enquiries of the Chairman and Mr Tony TSE, Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 3 ("PASFH(F)3") said that the proposed carriageway was about 900 metres long and would cover about one ha of land. The carriageway would connect with a main road of a similar scale in the Agri-Park Phase 2.

41. Mr Tony TSE further asked whether the Administration had encountered difficulties during the land resumption process for the establishment of the Agri-Park Phase 1. PASFH(F)3 advised that the area of the Agri-Park covered both government land and privately-owned land. As the Administration would make the most use of government land in the area for the establishment of the Agri-Park Phase 1, the amount of private agricultural land that had to be resumed for the project was less than originally estimated. The Administration had obtained the support of the North District Council ("DC"), Sheung Shui District Rural Committee and

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other local stakeholders for the project, including the land resumption and compensation arrangements.

Design of the Agri-Park

42. Mr SHIU Ka-chun enquired how the farmland within the Agri-Park would be demarcated to accommodate various types of farming operations (e.g. conventional, organic, floriculture and modern technological farming). DAFC responded that it was the Administration's preliminary plan to allocate farmland in the northern part of the Agri-Park for organic farming. The other parts of the Agri-park would be set aside for conventional, floriculture and modern technological farming, taking into account factors such as soil texture and water supply.

43. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan called on the Administration to provide the Panel with more information about the design and associated facilities of the Agri-Park (e.g. whether farmers' markets would be available). DAFC responded that taking into consideration its proposed scale, the Agri-Park was planned to be implemented in two phases. Phase 1 would be developed in a relatively small-scale (with an area of about 11 ha), with a view to enabling commissioning for use as early as possible. AFCD had already briefed stakeholders on specific details of the entire project and issues relating to the establishment of the Agri-Park Phase 1, which comprised related infrastructures including drainage, sewerage, irrigation, water supply, utilities and street lighting as well as associated park facilities such as basic lodging and storage units. The consultant was working on the detailed design. Relevant information would be made public in due course.

44. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen noted with concern that the basic lodging units in the Agri-Park Phase 1 only aimed to provide a resting place for farmers to carry out duties of managing the farm and produce, but were not meant for residential purpose. Mr CHAN and Mr CHU Hoi-dick asked how the Administration would define "residential purpose" and allocate the lodging units among farmers. They also sought information on the number of permanent lodging units to be constructed in the Agri-Park Phase 2. Mr CHU further enquired about the number of farmers and amount of farmland to be affected by the construction of the basic lodging and storage units for the Agri-Park Phase 1; and whether the Administration had identified alternative sites for providing the lodging and storage units so as to avoid affecting existing farmers operating within the area.

45. DAFC responded that basic lodging and farming storage facilities would be provided in the Agri-Park so that tenants could stay close to their farms to take care of their crops as necessary. People who stayed in those facilities had to participate in farming activities. To dovetail with the commissioning of the Agri-Park Phase 1, about 40 temporary lodging units

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of about 15 square metres in size would be provided in Phase 1. AFCD would consult the farming sector in determining the sites for providing the facilities, the structures of which would be compatible with the environment and would be scattered in clusters around the Agri-Park, with their footprint to be kept to a minimum. Upon completion of the permanent lodging units in Phase 2, the temporary units in Phase 1 would be removed. The Administration would later work out the number of permanent lodging units to be built in Phase 2.

46. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan asked whether the lodging and storage units were designed and built to protect farmers from severe weather conditions, especially from typhoons. Assistant Director (Agriculture) (Acting)/AFCD replied that the facilities would be fitted with waterproof design. During inclement weather, farmers could stay in the lodging and storage units or the visitor centre/other common facilities in the Agri-Park.

Operation and management of the Agri-Park

47. Mr SHIU Ka-chun noted that the Administration would set up an advisory committee to provide independent advice to DAFC on the overall development and management of the Agri-Park and that the advisory committee would comprise members including representatives of the agricultural industry, professionals, academics and government officials. He enquired about (a) the length of tenure of the members on the advisory committee; (b) whether the advisory committee would comprise LegCo Members and DC members; (c) the criteria for selecting representatives from the agricultural industry for appointment to the advisory committee; and (d) whether the advisory committee would submit reports to this Panel on a regular basis to update members on the implementation progress of the Agri-Park.

48. DAFC responded that the Administration would determine the terms of reference and membership of the advisory committee at a later stage. Having considered that the Agri-Park would be implemented in two phases and its proposed scale, the Chairman requested the Administration to regularly report to the Panel on the progress of the works project in relation to the establishment of the Agri-Park.

(Post-meeting note: An item "Establishment of the Agricultural Park" had been included in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.)

49. Mr SHIU Ka-chun and Mr Tony TSE expressed concern that the proposed five-year term standard tenancy agreements for prospective tenants in the Agri-Park might not be able to give certainty to tenants to make long-term investment in their farms. Mr SHIU added that it might be difficult

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for small farmers with limited resources to meet the output targets as set out in their production plans that would form part of the tenancy agreements. He asked whether the Administration would provide assistance to small farmers in continuing their operations in the Agri-Park.

50. DAFC responded that to meet the overall objectives of the Agri-Park and ensure reasonable production output, each tenant would be required to submit an annual production plan to AFCD for assessment of the farming modes and overall productivity. All tenants who had fulfilled the agreed tenancy conditions would be considered for tenancy renewal. The Administration believed that the proposed length of tenancy period was reasonable and would give the prospective tenants sufficient certainty. Whenever necessary, AFCD would provide technical support and advice to tenants to help them meet the targets.

51. Mr Kenneth LAU declared that he was the Chairman of Heung Yee Kuk and he owned businesses in Yuen Long engaging in crops growing by hydroponics production. He expressed support for the establishment of the Agri-Park and enquired about the measures to be taken by AFCD to promote adoption of new farming techniques in the Agri-Park and branding of local produce. DAFC replied that local farming could stand to make a huge gain in efficiency if farmers could adopt small farm machinery and various degrees of farm automation, such as the use of automated irrigation system and greenhouse technology. The Administration would assist farmers in applying modern technology in agricultural production in the Agri-Park and strengthening marketing of local agricultural products through the provision of infrastructural facilities and training. It would also consider organizing seminars or conferences to promote the development of the agricultural industry in collaboration with local tertiary institutions.

Visit to the potential site for establishing the Agri-Park

52. Mr CHU Hoi-dick suggested that arrangements be made for Panel members to visit the potential site in Kwu Tung South identified for establishing the Agri-Park, to facilitate members' better understanding of the project scope and nature, the impact of the proposed road works and other construction works on the environment and the local community. As no member raised objection to Mr CHU's suggestion, the Chairman directed the Clerk to liaise with the Administration for arrangements of the site visit.

(Post-meeting note: The Panel conducted a visit to the proposed site for establishing the Agri-Park on 28 February 2019.)

53. Concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that despite concerns expressed about the project details, members in general were supportive of

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the policy objective of establishing the Agri-Park. Members noted that the Administration planned to submit the proposal for upgrading the works of 471RO (as detailed in paragraph 2 of the Administration's paper under discussion) to category A to PWSC for consideration.

Motion proposed by member

54. Mr CHU Hoi-dick indicated an intention to move a motion under this discussion item. The Chairman ruled that the proposed motion was directly related to the agenda item under discussion and members present agreed that the motion should be dealt with. Since there was a lack of quorum at this point of time, the Chairman ordered that the quorum bell be rung to summon members before proceeding to deal with the motion. A quorum was subsequently present.

Motion

55. The Chairman put the following motion moved by Mr CHU Hoi-dick to vote:

(議案中文措辭)

本事務委員會要求食物及衛生局及漁農自然護理署以盡量減少破壞蕉徑活躍耕地及民居為原則，重新檢視農業園第一、二期的道路走線和其他基礎設施的位置。

(English translation of the motion)

This Panel requests the Food and Health Bureau and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to, on the principle of minimizing the damages that may be caused to the active farmland and residential premises in Tsiu Keng, examine afresh the alignment of roads and the locations of other infrastructure facilities for Phases 1 and 2 of the Agricultural Park.

56. The Chairman invited members to vote for or against the motion by a show of hands. Five members voted for the motion, 10 members voted against it and no member abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the motion was negated.

(At this juncture (4:58 pm), the Chairman ordered that the meeting be suspended for five minutes. The meeting resumed at 5:03 pm.)

VI. Government's strategy towards prevention of African Swine Fever
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)528/18-19(07) and (08))

57. At the invitation of the Chairman, USFH briefed Members on the Administration's preventive measures and contingency plans in response to African Swine Fever ("ASF"), as detailed in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)528/18-19(07)). Members noted the information note prepared by the LegCo Secretariat on the subject (LC Paper No. CB(2)528/18-19(08)).

Preventive measures against ASF

Imported pigs and boundary checkpoints

58. Dr CHENG Chung-tai expressed concern that some unscrupulous traders on the Mainland might use pigs infected with ASF to make chilled/frozen or processed/preserved pork products. He enquired about the measures to be taken by the Administration to prevent contaminated pork products from entering the local food supply chain. The Chairman asked whether the Centre for Food Safety ("CFS") would enhance inspection and testing of samples of pork products at the boundary checkpoints.

59. Controller/CFS responded that CFS would ensure that all live pig consignments and imports of chilled/frozen pork products from the Mainland were accompanied by valid health certificates. He stressed that ASF was not a zoonotic disease and would not be transmitted to human, hence posing no food safety risk. Pork and pork products would be safe for human consumption if they were well cooked. PASFH(F)3 added that over the past few months, the Administration had been maintaining close liaison with relevant Mainland authorities to keep abreast of the development of the outbreak of ASF on the Mainland and the latest measures in place. The Administration noted that the Mainland authorities had implemented a series of measures to help minimize the risk of ASF infection in live pigs and prevent the spread of ASF to Hong Kong. According to the Administration's understanding, pigs infected with ASF on the Mainland would be culled and pig farmers could get compensation for culling of live pigs. It was believed that pig farmers would not have much incentive to sell ASF-infected pork products. As explained in the Administration's paper, the Administration had, among others, enhanced the biosecurity in various areas (including local pig farms, boundary checkpoints and slaughterhouses) and stepped up surveillance to guard against ASF.

60. The Chairman and Dr Helena WONG expressed concern about the food safety risk caused by tourists' illegal importation of raw or half-cooked pork meat. They asked about the enforcement actions taken against such activities. In the Chairman's view, the Administration should step up

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publicity to remind the public that it was an offence to carry raw meat into Hong Kong without a health certificate.

61. Controller/CFS responded that the Administration had strengthened relevant publicity work at the border control points. FEHD and the Customs and Excise Department had also stepped up cooperation to crack down on illegal importation of raw meat (including half-cooked pork) by passengers into Hong Kong. Between January and November 2018, the Administration had brought 294 prosecutions and issued 125 warning letters on the cases concerned. Under the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK), no person should import meat or poultry without an official health certificate issued by an issuing entity from the place of origin which certified that the meat or poultry concerned was fit for human consumption, or otherwise a prior written permission from a health officer of FEHD would be required. Offenders were liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment. Controller/CFS added that at present, importation of processed/preserved pork products by passengers was not subject to the above regulatory control.

62. In response to Dr Helena WONG's follow-up enquiries, USFH and Controller/CFS said that depending on the storage environment, ASF virus could survive for a long time (more than 1 000 days) in contaminated meat. The virus could generally be killed after cooking, although traces of ASF virus might still be detected in contaminated pork under DNA testing. Dr WONG expressed concern that given the long survival time of ASF virus in meat, some fresh or chilled/frozen pork products for sale in the local market could have been contaminated. In her view, the Administration should take samples of pork products from the local food markets for testing and remind the public to cook the pork thoroughly before consumption. Mr Steven HO held a similar view, and suggested that AFCD or relevant departments should conduct more sampled testing to monitor the situation.

63. Controller/CFS reiterated that ASF was not a zoonotic disease and would not be transmitted to human, hence posing no food safety risk. To reduce the risk of ASF incursion into local farms, the Administration had enforced strict biosecurity measures at local pig farms and slaughterhouses. CFS had also stepped up its monitoring on all live pigs imported from the Mainland.

64. Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned about the impact of the suspension of the importation from the Mainland of breeding pigs on local pig farmers. Assistant Director (Inspection and Quarantine)/AFCD ("AD(IQ)/AFCD") responded that AFCD had been assisting pig farmers in the sourcing and importation of breeding pigs from other places (e.g. Taiwan, European countries and the United States of America) to address their needs.

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65. Mr Kenneth LAU expressed appreciation of the Administration's effort in formulating measures and contingency plans to prevent the spread of ASF to Hong Kong. He asked whether the Administration would consider providing subsidy to local institutions/organizations for developing drugs/vaccines against ASF or collaborating with relevant Mainland organizations in this regard. AD(IQ)/AFCD responded that ASF was a serious, highly contagious, viral disease in pigs, which was caused by ASF double-stranded DNA virus. The virus could cause massive infection and death in pigs within a very short period of time. As neither vaccine nor treatment against ASF was currently available, the only means to control the disease was by culling as currently adopted in other places such as the European Union. According to the experts from the World Organization for Animal Health, it was unlikely that vaccine or treatment could be successfully developed in a short time given the epidemiological characteristics of ASF.

Measures taken at local pig farms and slaughterhouses

66. The Chairman and Dr Helena WONG expressed concern about the risk of spreading ASF virus to local pig farms by personnel who had come into contact with pork products that had been contaminated. They enquired whether any preventive measures had been implemented in this regard.

67. Senior Veterinary Officer (Animal Health)/AFCD ("SVO(AH)/AFCD") responded that AFCD had requested local pig farms to implement proper biosecurity measures, including strictly controlling the access of vehicles and personnel to pig farms, enhancing cleansing and disinfection (e.g. setting up disinfection pools for use by personnel before entering and upon leaving the farms) as well as handling excrement carefully. Besides, relevant workers were required to wear protective clothing at all times while working in the pig farms. AD(IQ)/AFCD supplemented that the ASF virus could only attach to and enter specific cells in pigs, but not cells in the human body. Personnel working in pig farms would not transmit the virus to the live pigs in the farms even if they had consumed contaminated pork products. Since the discovery of ASF, there had so far been no evidence of mutation causing cross-species transmission to humans in the past century. These apart, AFCD had 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 12 January 2019, so as to minimize the risk of spreading ASF virus to pigs via swill feeding. To mitigate the chance of cross infection, personnel were advised not to enter any pig farm within a specific time period after visiting a slaughterhouse or another pig farm.

68. The Chairman asked how the Administration monitored local pig farms' compliance with the amended licence conditions. SVO(AH)/AFCD responded that veterinary surgeons of AFCD would observe the use of feed in pig farms during inspections. If non-compliance with licence conditions

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was found, AFCD might consider cancelling the licence of the pig farm concerned. Moreover, pig farms were required to obtain prior approval of AFCD for the type(s) of feed to be used for pig rearing.

69. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry concerning the cleansing and disinfection work in slaughterhouses, PASFH(F)3 said that the two local slaughterhouses located in Sheung Shui and Tsuen Wan had strengthened the cleansing and disinfection work to prevent the spread of ASF virus, including installation of a disinfection pool at Sheung Shui slaughterhouse and vehicle cleansing facilities in both slaughterhouses. FEHD was also liaising with the three live pig importers on the feasibility to improve the configuration of pig-carrying trucks with a view to preventing leakage of pig excreta.

70. Mr Steven HO noted with appreciation that through the concerted efforts made by the Administration and the trade, a package of preventive measures against ASF had been implemented over the past few months, including the enhanced biosecurity as well as cleansing and disinfection work in local pig farms, slaughterhouses and boundary checkpoints as well as the pig culling arrangements and contingency plans devised in response to different scenarios in case of ASF outbreak in Hong Kong. In respect of the disinfection work, Mr HO suggested that consideration should be given to installing automated equipment in slaughterhouses for spraying disinfectant on pig-carrying trucks and deploying FEHD's staff to monitor the disinfection process.

71. PASFH(F)3 responded that since the start of ASF outbreaks on the Mainland, the Administration had enforced strict biosecurity measures in slaughterhouses to reduce the risk of ASF incursion into local farms. To reduce the chance of ASF virus entering and leaving the slaughterhouses, upon arrival, live pigs were subjected to more stringent ante-mortem examinations including monitoring of animals in lairages with increased vigilance for signs of ASF and abnormal mortalities. Slaughtered carcasses must also pass post-mortem inspections by health inspectors to ensure that they were fit for human consumption before discharging to the market. PASFH(F)3 further said that to prevent the spread of disease to local farms, cleansing and disinfection within the slaughterhouses and of the livestock conveying trucks had been strengthened. Additional equipment and facilities, such as pressurized water pumps and hot water high-pressure jets, had been installed to enhance the cleansing effectiveness. The cleansing and disinfection work was performed by the truck drivers. FEHD and slaughterhouse operators would deploy staff to monitor the cleansing work to ensure that vehicles could leave the slaughterhouse only after they were thoroughly cleansed and disinfected.

72. Mr Steven HO said that due to space constraint, it was not feasible for some pig farms in Sai Kung to install disinfection pool for use by

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pig-carrying trucks. He hoped that the Administration could explore the feasibility of setting up such facilities on Government land nearby for pig-carrying trucks to conduct disinfection or to transfer the pigs to other trucks which had been disinfected. AD(IQ)/AFCD responded that the Administration would consider the suggestion.

73. Ms CHAN Hoi-yan suggested that the Administration should consider segregating live pigs raised at local pig farms from those imported from the Mainland and sending them to different slaughterhouses for slaughtering (i.e. slaughtering local pigs at Tsuen Wan Slaughterhouse and imported pigs at Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse). In Ms CHAN's view, this would help prevent cross infection if live pigs imported from the Mainland were infected with ASF. Dr Helena WONG made a similar suggestion, adding that the segregation arrangement could, in case of ASF outbreak in Hong Kong, help prevent a total suspension of the two local slaughterhouses and ensure a basic supply of live pigs for consumption by the public in Hong Kong.

74. In response, PASFH(F)3 advised that the Administration considered the segregation arrangement worth exploring. Nevertheless, the operators of the slaughterhouses, due to their own commercial considerations (such as the differences in slaughtering capacities of the two slaughterhouses and delivery arrangements for pork/pork products etc.), had reservations about the arrangement. While segregation of pigs for slaughtering was one of the possible options, the Mainland authorities had all along been exercising proper management and control at source, striving to maintain a steady supply of live pigs to Hong Kong. So far, there had been no ASF outbreak in any Mainland registered pig farms which supplied live pigs to Hong Kong. PASFH(F)3 stressed that as part of the Government's efforts to prevent the disease from spreading to Hong Kong, CFS had stepped up its monitoring plan to all live pigs imported from the Mainland. For each consignment of the imported pigs, there would be a documentary check to ascertain that the consignment was accompanied with a valid health certificate which attested that the pigs did not show clinical signs of ASF, and that the animals were not originated from ASF affected farms/regions. In addition, AFCD and FEHD would inspect pigs at the border control point and slaughterhouses to ensure that all pigs were physically healthy and did not show clinical signs suggestive of ASF.

75. In response to the Chairman's follow-up enquiry, PASFH(F)3 said that the Administration might revisit the segregation proposal with the trade if there was an outbreak of ASF in Hong Kong. Mr Steven HO said that to his understanding, livestock agents, buyers and meat transportation companies had concerns about the delivering arrangements of pork to pork stalls and the additional costs to be incurred if local and imported pigs were segregated for slaughtering in different slaughterhouses. Mr HO, Dr Helena WONG and

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Ms CHAN Hoi-yan hoped that the Administration would continue to discuss with the trade to identify possible improvement measures.

Pig culling arrangements and compensation mechanism

76. Mr SHIU Ka-chun said that according to media reports, when ASF virus was found in a pig farm on the Mainland, the farm concerned would be declared as infected places and all pigs in that farm would be culled. This apart, the area within a radius of three kilometres from the index farm would be declared as infected area and culling operations would be carried out at farms within the infected area depending on the results of laboratory tests. The area within 10 kilometres radius outside the infected area would be declared as affected area where movement of live pigs would be prohibited. Mr SHIU asked whether the preventive measures adopted by the Administration were on par with or less stringent than those implemented by the Mainland authorities.

77. AD(IQ)/AFCD responded that according to the contingency plan for local pig farms, in the event of ASF infection, all pigs in that farm would be culled, and the farm would be cleansed and disinfected thoroughly. Re-stocking of pigs for business resumption could only take place upon inspection to the satisfaction of veterinary surgeons. AFCD would also suspend and prohibit the movement of pigs of other farms within three kilometres of the infected farm, and closely monitor the situation. If any pigs in those farms were found to be infected with ASF, all pigs therein would also be culled. This arrangement was generally in line with that adopted by the Mainland authorities. AD(IQ)/AFCD further advised that all the 43 existing pig farms in Hong Kong were required to obtain a farm licence for pig farming and to comply with the relevant licence conditions. AFCD would conduct regular inspections to the farms to ensure that biosecurity measures were in place.

78. Mr SHIU Ka-chun was also concerned that some trade representatives had criticized the culling arrangements proposed by the Administration for being too lax, and had threatened not to cooperate with the Government by refusing to have dialogues with the government officials when the latter inspected the pig farms. Mr SHIU asked whether the industry's concerns had been addressed. AD(IQ)/AFCD advised that the Administration had reached a consensus with the local pig farming industry on issues relating to the pig culling arrangements, and the pig rearing sector had subsequently called off their "non-cooperative" actions. AD(IQ)/AFCD assured Members that the Administration would work closely with the industry to prevent ASF. If, unfortunately, there was an outbreak, relevant information would be disseminated to the public instantly.

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79. The Deputy Chairman and Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that the pig rearing sector and the relevant trade were concerned about when the local slaughterhouses could resume operation, if pig culling was required upon detection of ASF virus in the slaughterhouses. Mr CHEUNG also asked when the supply of live pigs from the Mainland could resume under such situation. In his view, the Administration should clearly explain to the trade the detailed procedures and arrangements for culling.

80. USFH responded that the Administration had devised contingency plans in response to different scenarios in case of ASF outbreak in Hong Kong, especially the pig culling arrangements. If ASF virus was found in a slaughterhouse, AFCD would trace the source of infection and ascertain the mode of transmission, arrange the culling of pigs, handle the carcasses and carry out thorough cleansing and disinfection in the slaughterhouse after clearance. The slaughterhouse concerned could only resume operation upon inspection to the satisfaction of veterinary surgeons.

81. The Deputy Chairman and Mr Tommy CHEUNG sought details about the compensation arrangements for pig culling. AD(IQ)/AFCD responded that for culling operations conducted in pig farms, each pig culled would be compensated according to the relevant market price of its type (i.e. porkers, breeding pigs and piglets) and compensation would be made available to the farmers. Regarding culling operations conducted in slaughterhouses in respect of pigs imported from the Mainland, FEHD would discuss with stakeholders (including slaughterhouse operators, livestock agents and buyers) and work out with them the amount for compensation.

82. The Chairman considered that the Administration should provide more assistance and support to the local pig rearing sector. PASFH(F)3 responded that while the Administration had no plan to issue pig farming licences to newcomers, AFCD had all along been providing support and technical advice to the industry in pig rearing and product branding. Funding support was also available under the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund for undertaking pilot projects for the provision of veterinary services to food animal production farms by the non-government veterinary sector.

Publicity and public education

83. The Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Dr CHENG Chung-tai and Ms CHAN Hoi-yan said that members of the public were concerned about the outbreak of ASF on the Mainland and the possible threat to Hong Kong. Many of them might not know that ASF did not pose a food safety concern nor a threat to human health. They called on the Administration to step up publicity and disseminate through various channels that (a) a number of measures had been taken by the Administration to prevent the spread of ASF to Hong Kong; (b) ASF would not be

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transmitted to human, hence posing no food safety risk; and (c) fully cooked pork and pork products were safe for consumption. USFH responded that the Administration would consider stepping up publicity to disseminate relevant messages about ASF through various media channels.

84. Mr Steven HO and Mr Kenneth LAU expressed concern about the potential risk of ASF that might be spread by wild pigs to live pigs raised in pig farms. Mr HO suggested the Administration remind the public to handle the food waste carefully and not to dispose of pork products/food waste in the countryside. USFH responded that the Government had required pig farms to adopt stringent biosecurity measures to prevent wild animals (including wild pigs) from entering the farms. It was believed that there would be minimal direct contact between wild pigs and live pigs raised in farms.

VII. Any other business

85. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:27 pm.