

(Translation)

Ms. Josephine SO
Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attention Ms. Josephine SO)

1 April 2019

Dear Ms. SO,

**Review of the Procedures for Handling Illegal Imported Animals by the
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department**

Our response to the follow-up enquiry of the captioned by Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, member of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene, is as follow:

This is an unprecedented and unique case with no specified importer, different from any illegal animal import cases handled by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) in the past. While AFCD will endeavour to safeguard public health and prevent and control rabies, having regard to the public's views on the handling of this case, AFCD will review the procedures for handling special cases that are different from general cases of illegal animal importation. Factors that will be taken into consideration include identification of the animal's place of origin and whether there is disease outbreak therein; if there is a keeper for the animal or if it is a lost or stray animal; if the animal has shown any clinical signs indicating rabies infection or infections of other zoonotic diseases; and its risk of spreading transmissible diseases etc. In case a keeper can be identified, his/her intention and the feasibility of repatriating the animal will also be considered. The general handling arrangements adopted by other countries or places will be referenced, and legal and expert advice will be sought. We will complete the review in order to optimise the relevant procedures as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

(Bill WONG)
for Secretary for Food and Health