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ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

Ministry of Agriculture & Livestock

Tashichhodzong, Thimphu: Bhutan



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SECRETARY

MoAL/SEC-7/2023-2024/ 715

September 4, 2023

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION

The Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock hereby notifies the general public that the African Swine Fever (ASF) outbreak has been confirmed on September 2, 2023 in a backyard pig farm at Tshogonpa village in Lumang geog under Trashigang Dzongkhag. Feeding of contaminated kitchen wastes is implicated as the source of this outbreak. The outbreak investigation team found that a man had sold illegally imported fresh pork from Darranga, Assam, India to the affected pig farmer, subsequent to which the outbreak had occurred. The offender was fined Nu. 69,000 by Bhutan Food and Drug Authority. Illegal import of pork and pork products and feeding of food wastes contaminated with ASF-infected pork products from hotels/restaurants/households continues to be implicated as the source of almost all the ASF outbreaks in the country so far.

In spite of repeated advocacy and awareness to the pig farmers to enhance pig farm biosecurity including good farm management and pig husbandry practices to protect their farms, the recurrent ASF outbreaks indicate poor farm biosecurity and lack of adoption of good farming practices. The pig farmers within the country shall be solely responsible to protect their pig farms and must demonstrate due diligence and heighten biosecurity in their farms through implementation of the following measures:

- Do not feed kitchen wastes containing pork and pork products to the pigs;
- Ensure other kitchen wastes that are fed to the pigs are properly cooked before feeding;
- Prevent domestic pigs from coming into contact with wild pigs;
- Prevent visitors from entering the farm;
- Immediately report any suspicious pig deaths, both domestic and wild, to the nearest livestock extension center or through toll-free numbers 1244 (DoL).

The Ministry strictly reminds the general public that the import of live pigs, pork and pork products into the country is banned since July 27, 2022. Despite repeated awareness and notifications advising the general public to refrain from importing live pigs, pork and pork products into the country to prevent incursion of ASF virus, there have been multiple incidences of non-adherence and illegal import. Since November 2022 till date, a total of Nu. 4.9 million is collected by BFDA as fines imposed for illegally bringing in fresh pork from across the border. In the event of any violation of the import prohibitions by individuals, business entities or institutions, the offenders shall be subjected to a fine as per the existing laws (*10 times the market value of the seized pork product calculated using the market rate of pork*) including suspension of license of business entities. Furthermore, any person proven to have introduced the ASF virus into a farm or locality through the practice of illegal import of live pigs and pork products shall bear all the costs incurred in responding to the outbreak, including compensation of the affected farmers.

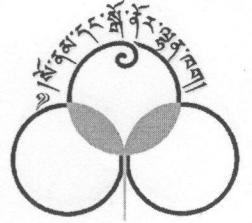


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In view of the above, Ministry earnestly requests all citizens to immediately report illegal import of pork or pork products; or any illness or suspicious deaths in domestic or wild pigs to the nearest livestock extension centers or Bhutan Food and Drug Authority (BFDA) office or through toll-free numbers 1244 (DoL) or 1555 (BFDA), as mandated by Livestock legislation.

Any person found not adhering to this notification shall be firmly dealt in accordance with the relevant laws of the country.

Issued for information and strict compliance.

(Thinley Namgyel)

Chair, National Incident Command Committee

Cc:

1. H.E. Hon'ble Lyonchen, PMO, Gyalyong Tshokhang, Thimphu for kind information.
2. Hon'ble Minister, all Ministries, for kind information.
3. Dasho Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, for kind information.
4. Dasho Secretary, all Ministries, for kind information.
5. Chief of Police, Royal Bhutan Police for kind information and necessary support.
6. Dasho Dzongdag, 20 Dzongkhags for kind information and support.
7. Dasho Thrompon, Four Thromdes for kind information and support.
8. Director, DPBP, MoF for kind information.
9. Director, BFDA, MoH, for kind information and support.
10. Director, DoFPS, MoENR, for kind information and support.
11. Director, DDM, MoHA for kind information and support.
12. HoDs, MoAL, Thimphu for information.
13. NICC members for information.
14. DLOs/PDs/Specialist Heads/Farm Managers for information, strict vigilance and continued advocacy on ASF to the pig farmers.
15. General Manager, Advertisement Section, BBSCL, Thimphu with a request to air this notification [in BBS TV: three consecutive days starting today both in Dzongkha and in English; BBS Radio: 3 consecutive days starting today in Dzongkha, English, Tshangla and Lhotsham Kha].
16. Media Focal, Department/Agencies under MoAL to upload this notification on the respective websites.
17. Technical Working Group for necessary follow-up action and records.