

**Handling of wild pig nuisance by  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department  
Investigation Report**

On 14 February 2020, the complainant complained to us against the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (“AFCD”).

**The Complaint**

2. Allegedly, AFCD has done very little to contain the population of wild pigs in Hong Kong. The complainant repeatedly saw wild pigs wandering in the Peak area and on roads near his residence on Mount Kellet Road (“Estate X”) on various occasions. Those wild pigs tried to get food from the household garbage and even ate flowers at lawns in Estate X. The estate management office complained to AFCD about the problem repeatedly. In response, AFCD advised the residents not to feed wild pigs and not to grow plants that the wild pigs eat. The complainant considered AFCD’s action ineffective.

**Our Findings**

3. Having examined the information and explanation provided by AFCD, we obtained further information from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (“FEHD”). Our findings follow.

***Prevailing Practice on Managing Wild Pig Nuisance***

4. Wild pigs are native wild animals which feed primarily in the countryside. In recent years, wild pig nuisance has become an emerging issue in Hong Kong, especially in urban areas. AFCD has completed a comprehensive review on the strategy for management of wild pigs, which was discussed at the Legislative Council in January 2019. As opposed to hunting, AFCD currently adopts multi-pronged and non-lethal approach to manage wild pig nuisance.

5. In handling complaints about wild pig nuisance, AFCD would identify the anthropogenic food sources that attract wild pigs to the urban or residential areas. In its opinion, the most effective measure to reduce wild pig nuisance is to eliminate the food sources. As long as the food source remains, removing the visiting wild pigs will

not be effective since other wild pigs would soon fill the gap. Once the food source is removed or blocked from wild pigs' access, the wild pigs would quickly give up visiting the area. In the event that wild pigs are accustomed to visit the area even when the food source was removed, AFCD would consider capture and relocation of the concerned wild pigs to countryside. If the conditions permit, AFCD would provide contraceptive treatment to captured wild pigs in order to control the number of wild pigs in urban areas.

### ***AFCD's Follow-up Actions***

6. In the past three years, AFCD received a total of four complaints about wild pig nuisance from the Estate Management Office of Estate X and the Chairman of the Management Committee of Estate X. These complaints were received from 23 October 2019 to 23 January 2020.

7. According to the complainants, wild pigs strayed into Estate X to search household garbage and to dig lawns for food. Besides, wild pigs were attracted to Mount Kellett Road due to large amount of food waste left at a lay-by near Estate X. After investigation, AFCD recommended to the residents and the estate management office such measures as erecting fences and proper management of household garbage. Between 28 October 2019 and 13 March 2020, AFCD conducted 16 inspections on the lay-by concerned at different time slots as suggested by the complainants. However, neither feeders nor food residues were found. AFCD displayed a banner at the lay-by and issued letters to residential estates and schools in the area, reminding them not to feed wild pigs.

8. To discourage the scavenging of refuse by wild animals, AFCD has commissioned a consultancy study to develop refuse collection facilities for reducing raids by wild animals. The prototype and improved models of wildlife-proof refuse bins produced under the study were provided to FEHD for trial use. Considering that wild pigs were accustomed to raid the refuse collection point ("RCP") located at the junction of Mount Kellett Road and Homestead Road, AFCD arranged an operation on 5 November 2019 during which an adult wild pig was captured and relocated. Preventive measures were also recommended to FEHD to improve the other refuse collection facilities and procedures in the Peak area which might have contributed to the presence of food source for wild pigs.

### ***FEHD's Follow-up Action***

9. FEHD has been working along with AFCD to handle wild pig nuisance in Central and Western District, particularly the Peak area. In August 2019, AFCD has provided 24 wildlife-proof refuse bins and litter containers to FEHD for trial. Those bins and containers were placed in the Peak area, including Gough Hill Path, Barker Road, Mount Austin Road and Homestead Road. For other parts of the Peak where FEHD's refuse bins were placed, FEHD fixed the bins to some street furniture and water-filled barriers to avoid being overturned by wild pigs. In July 2020, AFCD will provide 10 more wildlife-proof refuse bins and litter containers to FEHD for use in the Peak area.

10. Besides, FEHD has increased the frequency of refuse collection since May 2019 at some RCPs, including the one located at the junction of Mount Kellett Road and Homestead Road. FEHD considered the situation of RCPs in the Peak area to be generally in order. From November 2018 to May 2020, FEHD arranged 4 joint operations with AFCD in the mid-level and the Peak area to detect any irregularities. Two fixed penalty notices were issued to the offenders who were found causing dirtiness in public places while feeding animals.

### ***AFCD's Response***

11. Many parts of the Peak are located in the countryside area. In particular, Estate X is enclosed by the Pok Fu Lam and Aberdeen Country Parks where wild pigs live. The number of complaints of wild pig nuisance concerning Estate X is low and AFCD has closely followed up on the cases reported. According to AFCD's observation and the feedback from the Estate Management Office of Estate X, the situation of wild pig nuisance has improved a lot at the site recently. No complaint of wild pig nuisance has been received from the Estate Management Office of Estate X since February 2020. Although wild pigs were still seen during AFCD's site visits, they were more secretive than before. This suggests that the wild pigs at Mount Kellett Road are gradually reverting back to their natural instinct and staying away from human being. This process takes time and it is important for all stakeholders to continue their efforts on maintaining the preventive measures.

### **Our Comments**

12. The Peak area is near the country parks which is a natural habitat for wild pigs. It is inevitable that wild pigs may appear at times.

13. The Government adopts a multi-pronged and non-lethal approach to tackle the problem of wild pig nuisance. Such approach is based on the results of a comprehensive review on the strategy for managing wild pigs and was discussed at the Panel on Environmental Affairs of the Legislative Council in early 2019 (**paragraph 4** above).

14. Having examined the information, we find that AFCD has taken appropriate actions to abate the wild pig nuisance in the Peak area, including eliminating food sources, educating the public not to feed wild animals, relocating wild pigs to countryside, advising FEHD to use wildlife-proof refuse bins to prevent raids by wild pigs, and joining operations with FEHD to combat animal feeding activities. We are pleased to learn that the situation has improved (**paragraph 11** above). We agree that the process takes time and we urge AFCD to continue community education as well as its efforts with FEHD on combating animal feeding and improving refuse collection facilities.

15. With the above, The Ombudsman considers this complaint **unsubstantiated**.

**Office of The Ombudsman**  
**June 2020**