

Belmonte: Pork sold in QC safe from ASF

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Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte maintained yesterday that pork and other meat products being sold in the city are safe from African swine fever (ASF) virus.

Belmonte urged the public to exercise caution when buying pork in the markets following confirmation of ASF cases in the city.

She said consumers should always look for meat inspection certificates from vendors.

Buyers must also look for stamps from slaughterhouses as proof that the pork meat is fit for human consumption, Belmonte said.

The mayor asked the residents to report stores and outlets selling meat products without certifications for immediate confiscation and disposal.

“Kailangan ng lungsod ang tulong ng mga mamimili para matiyak na walang naibebentang karne sa mga palengke na may

ASF. Huwag kayong mag-atubiling isumbong sa amin ang mga nagbebenta nang walang kaukulang papel,” Belmonte said.

She assured the public that the local government is undertaking safeguards against ASF.

Belmonte said round-the-clock checkpoints have been set up in major markets and slaughterhouses to ensure that pork and meat products are safe from ASF.

The city government has ordered the culling of sick pigs in Barangays Silangan and Payatas to prevent the possible spread of the virus.

A funding of P10-million has been allotted by the local government to provide financial assistance to hog raisers who voluntarily turned over live pigs for culling at P3,000 each.

‘Belmonte just doing her job’

Councilor Winston Castelo defended Belmonte amid criticism against the top local executive for announcing an outbreak of ASF in the city.

Castelo said Belmonte was only doing her job when she reported to the public the cases of ASF.

“The health of the people is of paramount importance. So nobody can blame the mayor if she was looking after her constituents,” Castelo said.

He said Belmonte exercised her foresight as a leader to uphold public welfare.

“The way I see it, the mayor should be commended for promoting transparency while pursuing the safety of the people,” Castelo said.

Earlier, the Department of Agriculture said ASF cases should only be announced by the DA to avoid confusion.

The DA said Belmonte announced an outbreak of ASF in the city without consulting the agency.

Belmonte said she made the announcement after the tests on the pig carcasses found floating in a creek in Bagong Silang showed they were positive for ASF.

She said the Bureau of Animal Industry, which is an attached agency of the DA, confirmed that the pigs had tested positive for ASF.

“With the mayor’s report, people can take precautionary measures to protect themselves from ASF,” Castelo said.

The DA, Castelo said, should work hand in hand with the Quezon City government to inform the people how to deal with the ASF.