

DA's appeal: Don't throw dead hogs in creeks

BusinessMirror · 13 Sep 2019 · A8 · By Cai U. Ordinario @caiordinario

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) appealed to backyard raisers on Thursday not to dump dead hogs in creeks and rivers because there is a “grave danger” that diseases that killed the animals could spread.

DA Spokesman Noel Reyes sounded the appeal following reports that dead hogs were found in a creek in Quezon City and in Marikina River. He reminded the public that there are protocols for disposing of dead animals.

Reyes told the BusinessMirror in an interview that the agency has yet to determine if the hogs were killed by diseases, such as the dreaded African swine fever (ASF).

“If this [disposal of dead hogs in creeks and rivers] is true, may we appeal to the backyard owners not to dump them, especially in the river. Please call your local veterinarians and inform them that the hogs died,” he said.

ASF protocol

THE disposal of the dead hogs came days after the DA confirmed the outbreak of ASF in hog farms in Bulacan and Rizal.

Under the ASF protocol, hog raisers should contact their city or municipal veterinarian. The local veterinarian will then arrange the visit of the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI), an attached agency of the DA.

The BAI will then obtain samples from the hogs and send it for testing. Reyes said it usually takes two weeks for the results from the national laboratory to arrive while the international testing, conducted by the United Kingdom-based Pirbright Institute, will take longer.

“There is a grave danger [of the spread of the disease]. Please refrain from throwing dead hogs in creeks or rivers. even dead ordinary animals can infect others. It's simply unhygienic,” he said.

Dead hogs in QC

THE local government of Quezon City said it will immediately close all piggeries in the city should the BAI confirm that the dead hogs died of ASF.

In a phone interview with the BusinessMirror on Thursday, **Quezon City Veterinary** chief Ana Maria Cabel said piggeries are no longer permitted in any city.

Despite this, Cabel said the local government found piggeries in some barangays during their inspection.

“Initially, our findings showed only nine barangays have piggeries. But when we conducted our rounds, the number went up. We even found piggeries in UP,” she said.

“We did not expect there would be piggeries inside UP. We did not know that. So we really don't have complete statistics. In Barangay Silangan, we know there are 1,000 backyard piggeries,” she added.

Cabel said the Quezon City government is removing all piggeries in the city. Mayor Joy Belmonte, she said, even gave these piggeries six months to leave the city.

Now that there is a possibility that these hogs may be infected by the ASF virus, she said this could hasten the removal of piggeries in Quezon City.

“We need the result of the tests before we act. Our mayor gave them six months to transfer [their piggeries]. But if there is already a disease, this will fast-track the process,” Cabel said.

Cabel added that the results of laboratory tests will be available in two weeks. If the animals are positive for ASF, she said the QC government will have to cull all the pigs in the 1-kilometer radius of the area where the dead hogs were found.

She said the creek where the dead hogs were found passes along places, such as Payatas, the Litex area and even Marikina City.

The dead hogs were found at the lowest point of the creek, which has become a catchment area for debris.