

DA tells LGUs to fortify border controls vs ASF

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THE Department of Agriculture (DA) on Tuesday confirmed a new outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) in Barangay Tatalon, Quezon City, bringing to three the number of outbreaks recorded in the city.

The total number of ASF outbreaks in the Philippines has reached 14 even as the DA has yet to name some of the areas that have confirmed cases as efforts to control and contain the spread of the virus are ongoing.

ASF is a highly contagious viral disease that is fatal to hogs but is not harmful to humans. The DA said it has started implementing quarantine measures, particularly depopulation, in Barangay Tatalon to prevent the spread of ASF.

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte said 62 out of the 82 pigs in the area have already been culled. Appeal to LGUs

AS this developed, the DA appealed to local government units (LGUs) to strengthen their border controls to ensure that illegally transported pigs will not enter their areas.

The DA reminded LGUs to refuse hogs that do not have proper documents from relevant government agencies.

The department said the illegal transport of pigs is one of the causes of the spread of the ASF, such as the case in Pangasinan, where infected pigs from Bulacan were transported.

The DA also warned truckers transporting pigs from affected areas that the “full force of the law will descend upon them” should they continue their illegal practice.

“How it is spreading now...the transport [of pigs] from one affected area to an area that is clean. Eventually, because the pigs being transported are infected with the virus, the animals will spread the virus,” Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar told reporters in an interview on Tuesday.

“We hope that the [traders will] cooperate. Let’s not trade those pigs from affected areas already, you’re spreading the virus to other areas,” Dar added.

The DA reminded anew local hog raisers to inform the government if they notice an increase in mortality in their farms or have information about suspected ASF cases.

The Philippines has confirmed ASF outbreaks in four provinces (Pangasinan, Pampanga, Bulacan and Rizal) and one city (Quezon City).

ASF outbreaks were recorded in Rodriguez, Rizal (Brgys. San Isidro, San Jose, Macabud, Geronimo, San Rafael, Mascap, San Mateo Slaughterhouse); Antipolo (Brgy. Cupang and another new area); Quezon City (Brgys. Silangan, Payatas and Tatalon); and Guiguinto, Bulacan.