

- African Swine Fever (ASF)

Belmonte urges hog owners to voluntarily surrender their pigs

Manila Bulletin · 23 Aug 2024 · 5 · By HANNAH NICOL

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte on Wednesday, August 21, urged backyard hog owners to surrender their pigs to the city government as a city ordinance prohibits pig farming in the city.

The advisory aims to prevent the spread of African Swine Fever (ASF) after discovering that some residents continue to raise pigs for their livelihood despite the prohibition.

“Napagalaman ng lungsod na mayroon pa ring ilang residente na nag-aalaga ng baboy bilang kabuhayan. Pero tayo ay may ordinansa kaya hindi ito pwede. Kaya nananawagan po ako sa mga Qcizen na iturnover ito sa lungsod (The city has found that some residents are still raising pigs for livelihood. However, we have an ordinance prohibiting this. Therefore, I urge all Qcitizens to turn over their pigs to the city),” Belmonte said.

“Sa tulong din ng QC Council, titiyakin namin na mabibigyan ng suporta at maaalayan ang mga apektadong residente (With the support of the QC Council, we will ensure that affected residents receive assistance and support),” she added.

According to the city government, they will offer financial assistance to owners who comply, and the pigs will be handed to the Department of Agriculture.

Penalties will be imposed only on those who fail to follow the directive until August 31, the city government added.

In addition, if the pigs are confirmed to be Asf-free, they will be handed over to the Department of Agriculture to be sold in Kadiwa Stores. However, if they are found to be contaminated, they will be euthanized and buried.

In 2020, the city government along with the QC Council enacted City Ordinance No. 2990, Series of 2020, which prohibits piggeries and poultry farms for food or meat production. The restriction is supported by the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) Resolution No. R-674, Series of 2000.

“As a highly-urbanized city, bawal ang piggery at livestock sa Quezon City kaya pinaigting natin ang inspeksyon. Minabuti nating tumulong sa BAI para matiyak na hindi kumalat ang virus sa ibang lugar para hindi makaapekto at makapaminsala sa kabuhayan ng ating Qcitizens (As a highly urbanized city, pig farming and livestock are prohibited in Quezon City, which is why we are strengthening our inspections. We have decided to assist the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) to ensure that the virus does not spread to other areas, safeguarding the livelihoods of our Qcitizens),” City Mayor Joy Belmonte said.

The ordinance imposes a penalty of ₱2,000 and up to three months in jail, or both, for a first offense. Repeat offenders face a fine of ₱3,000 and up to five months in prison, while

a third violation results in a fine of ₱5,000 and up to one year imprisonment.

Meanwhile, the city government also affirmed the residents that there are no reported cases of ASF in the city, as it strengthened its preventive measures.

Personnel from the City's Veterinary Department (QCVD) and the Department of Agriculture Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) have been conducting thorough inspections to ensure that all livestock entering the city are Asf-free.

The QCVD has inspected 502 deliveries from Batangas and Quezon provinces; 452 were cleared, while 46 were sent back due to missing documents.

Four deliveries were apprehended and the 188 pigs that tested positive for ASF were euthanized and buried in another province, it added.

The QCVD and BAI also held 153 pigs for testing for exhibiting signs of ASF contamination. City Veterinarian Dr. Ana Marie Cabel emphasized that inspections are also being conducted regularly in markets and grocery stores.

“Hindi natatapos sa checkpoints ‘yung assistance natin sa BAI. Pati mga karneng baboy sa mga palengke at grocery, chine-check din natin ‘yung certifications para masigurado talaga na walang Asf-contained pork na makakapasok at maibebenta sa lungsod (Our assistance to the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) doesn't end with the checkpoints. We also inspect pork products in markets and grocery stores, checking certifications to ensure that no Asf-contaminated pork enters and is sold in the city),” she said.

The local government will also provide BAI with a two-hectare property as a holding area for trucks carrying hogs.