

## QC keeps watch on small meat retailers over ASF virus

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THE QUEZON City government is keeping an eye on small meat retailers since they are more at risk of selling African Swine Fever (ASF)-tainted meats. “The meat supply chain is not just the supermarkets. [There are] small retailer shops [also], so [they are still included in the] food chain and therefore as long as they are in Quezon city, we need to look into them,” Emmanuel F. Velasco, action officer of the city’s ASF Task Force, said in an interview. He said small-scale meat retailers are more likely to purchase from suppliers who usually do not obtain the necessary permits. clear sourcing [They do not have clear sourcing]. Unlike [the] large ones, accredited suppliers.” On January 10, Quezon City Mayor Maria Josefina G. Belmonte said she will be issuing an executive order to ensure that meat being sold in supermarkets in the city are ASF-free. The announcement came after two supermarkets were found to be selling ASF-tainted meat, with one being supplied by North Star Meat Merchants, Inc., which has operations at Cherry Congressional grocery in Quezon City. The supermarket operators were given until this Friday to submit their documents, and additional recommendations, which will be used by Ms. Belmonte’s legal team in coming up with the order.—