4 QC barangays cleared of ASF – Belmonte

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Four of the five barangays in Quezon City with confirmed cases of African swine fever (ASF) have been cleared of the disease following the culling of all pigs in the affected areas, according to Mayor Joy Belmonte.

She said Barangay Bagong Silangan was the latest to be cleared of ASF after the culling of the last batch of pigs yesterday.

Other cleared barangays were Tatalon, Tandang Sora and Pasong Tamo, where cases of ASF were earlier confirmed by the Bureau of Animal Industry of the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Belmonte said the only barangay that is yet to be cleared is Payatas, where barangay officials underestimated the number of pigs to be culled.

"This is causing us some problems with regard to financial assistance because at the moment, the local government is the one that is providing financial assistance because we have not yet received any (financial) support from the DA," she said in Filipino.

"What we budgeted for Barangay Payatas was for 1,500 (pigs) because that was the report to us by the barangay captain. But at the moment we have already culled more than 2,000... we were told that there are another 2,000 that needs to be culled," she added.

The city government has allocated P3,000 per pig as financial assistance to hog raisers.

Belmonte said they already ran out of money due to the discrepancy in figures in Payatas.

She also cited issues such as the burial of the culled pigs, ensuring that the affected areas are properly disinfected and that no affected pig is brought to a different area.

The mayor said they will meet with the DA to clarify its policy on financial assistance to hog raisers affected by ASF, noting that those in other areas have already received the P5,000 per pig assistance from the national government.

"Now that their additional budget request has been approved, we hope that they will also be able to give the full amount to our hog raisers who were affected, similar to those received by those in other provinces," Belmonte said.