

Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene

Multi-storey Livestock Farm

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the Government's initiative to promote sustainable development of the livestock industry by facilitating the trade to construct and operate multi-storey livestock farms in Hong Kong.

BACKGROUND

2. Livestock keeping and related activities are governed by the Public Health (Animals and Birds) (Licensing of Livestock Keeping) Regulation (Cap. 139L). Livestock farms are required to operate within designated Livestock Waste Control Areas, primarily situated in the North District and Yuen Long District.

3. Livestock farming is one of the key components of local agriculture industry. Currently, there are 43 licensed pig farms with a total maximum rearing capacity of approximately 74,600 pigs and 29 licensed chicken farms with a total maximum rearing capacity of around 1.3 million chickens. In 2024, the local livestock production accounted for 9% of live pigs and 100% of live chickens consumed in Hong Kong.

4. Recently, the Government has been advancing various public development projects under the Northern Metropolis Development Strategy, and a number of livestock farms are located within the project areas. This presents an opportunity to consolidate livestock farms, in particular those affected by public projects, to pursue modernisation, intensification and sustainable development through the use of multi-storey, environmentally friendly and enclosed buildings (MSBs) for livestock farming.

ADVANTAGES OF MSB LIVESTOCK FARMING

5. The use of MSBs for livestock farming offers the following advantages:

(a) Optimise the use of limited land resources

With the considerable land constraints in Hong Kong, livestock farming in MSBs offers a sustainable option to optimise and maximise the use of scarce and limited agricultural land resources while retaining or even increasing the rearing output.

(b) Enhance operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness

The use of MSBs for livestock farming could not only standardise and streamline existing farming practices to improve operational efficiency and cost-effectiveness, but also mitigate the adverse impacts of variations in weather and external environmental factors that may compromise productivity. Through the integration of advanced computerised monitoring systems, MSB farm operators could precisely control the temperature, humidity and ventilation of the farm, thereby ensuring optimal rearing conditions for livestock. Coupled with reduced manpower need, the quantity and quality of livestock products could be raised with reduced operation cost.

The use of MSBs also underpins the targets set out in the Blueprint for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Fisheries to increase local livestock production by 10% and production value by 30% over 15 years.

(c) Enhance biosecurity

The centralised and enclosed design of MSB livestock farms could reduce logistical demands for personnel, animals and materials within the farm throughout the breeding process. It could also ensure effective separation of the farm from the external environment, hence preventing cross-contamination and enhancing biosecurity. The incorporation of computerised monitoring systems would also allow real-time and continuous surveillance of animal health and biosecurity measures on

farm which will facilitate early detection of potential disease outbreaks.

6. The Mainland Government has been providing policy support for the livestock industry to use MSBs for livestock farming since 2019 and numerous pig farms in the Mainland have adopted this mode over the past few years. Many of them have showcased successful use of MSBs in enhancing production efficiency with reduced biosecurity risks. We are confident that the use of MSBs could also benefit local livestock industry.

FACILITATION MEASURES

7. To promote the sustainable development of the livestock industry and provide support for livestock farms being affected by government development projects, the Government has reserved a number of government sites in the Sheung Shui area as well as the Northern Metropolis for the trade to develop MSB livestock farming.

8. Funding and technical support have also been rendered to the trade through the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund (SADF). In particular, SADF has provided funding to an agricultural organisation to formulate architectural design guidelines for MSB livestock farms and conduct a feasibility study on the construction of the first MSB pig farm on a site in Lo Wu, Sheung Shui. The study results were shared with the trade in May 2024.

9. To help the trade to gain first-hand knowledge of the operation of MSB pig farms, AFCD has accompanied interested local livestock trade members to visit MSB pig farms in the Mainland with different scales and business models. Encouraged by the successful experience of Mainland's MSB pig farms, the trade is positive towards the development of Hong Kong's first MSB pig farm which will serve as a model for bringing about modernisation and intensification of local livestock industry.

10. For the first site reserved for MSB pig farm in Lo Wu, Sheung Shui, the Government is currently conducting site formation works which are expected to be completed by 2026. AFCD plans to invite open application from interested parties (including agricultural organisations and companies) on 30 May 2025 for the construction and operation of the MSB pig farm. A briefing session and site visit was held on 27 May 2025 to introduce the project details

and application requirements. A suitable organisation will be selected in an open and fair manner based on objective criteria such as intensification capacity, financial viability and technical assessment results. One of the criteria is that the organisation needs to collaborate with existing licensed pig farms, especially those affected by development projects, to carry out modern intensive livestock production to enhance their overall productivity and quality. The first MSB pig farm is expected to be completed by around 2032.

11. In terms of financial support, the selected organisation may apply for matching grants from SADF for the construction of the MSB pig farm. Furthermore, AFCD will provide technical support for the organisation to introduce modern technologies and automation equipment in the farm.

ADVICE SOUGHT

12. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

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