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PRESS RELEASE

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**Sonowal holds meeting with Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department**

**Culling of affected pig population should be completed before Puja: CM**

**Directs department for adequate compensation for the loss of pig farmers**

**Dispur, September 23:** In view of the prevailing African Swine Fever which afflicted the state, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal today directed Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department to complete culling of the infected swine population before the ensuing Durga Puja.

Chairing a meeting with Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department at Assam Administrative Staff College here today, Chief Minister Sonowal said that in compliance with the guidelines of the Central and State governments and adhering to experts' opinion, culling of the infected swine population in all the affected districts should be completed before Durga Puja. As a result of the culling operation, the loss incurred by the farmers will be adequately compensated, Sonowal added. He also asked Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Department to sanitize the affected areas to avert transfer of infection to healthy animals. Sonowal also said that Central government has already released the first instalment of the fund and the State government will immediately release its share for the compensation as well as for other measures to deal with the pestilence. The meeting also discussed on supply of pigs to Assam from different parts of the country. In the aftermath of the African Swine Fever outbreak though supply of pigs to Assam from other parts of the country are put on hold, as per the directions of the Central government and order of the court, Sonowal asked the senior officers of the department to ensure that no encumbrances creep in while transporting pigs to other states of North East through Assam.

During the meeting, Chief Minister Sonowal also asked the department to conduct survey on all the government farms across the state. He also said that in a move to involve more youths in the piggery sector, the government farms may be operated and managed on public-private partnership to encourage self-employment. In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, Chief Minister Sonowal asked the functionaries of the department to prepare investment policy into the sector from private investors. The meeting also discussed on the implementation of Centre's flagship scheme of saving the livestock population from foot and mouth disease.

Agriculture Minister Atul Bora, Chief Minister's Media Advisor Hrishikesh Goswami Commissioner and Secretary, Finance and Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Shyam Jagannathan, Director of the department Ashok Kumar Barman and senior officers were present at the meeting.

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