

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)088

Question Serial No.

2438

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What are the specific plans for prevention of avian influenza in 2011-12? Subsequent to the substantial decrease in the number of blood samples taken from poultry for testing in 2009, an increase is noted in the numbers taken/to be taken for the two consecutive years of 2010 and 2011. Please advise on the reasons for the increase, and whether this reflects an increase in the risk of avian influenza. Please also advise on the financial provision earmarked for the work.

Asked by: Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply:

Regarding the control of imported live poultry, the measures taken by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) to prevent the outbreak of avian influenza in Hong Kong include: inspection of poultry farms and liaison with the Mainland authorities to ensure compliance with the requirements of animal health, quarantine and farm conditions; inspection of every consignment of imported poultry including verification of animal health certificates; and collection of blood samples and cloacal swabs for laboratory testing of avian influenza H5 at the import level. At the retail level, FEHD has implemented various measures including enforcement of no overnight stocking of live poultry at retail outlet, comprehensive surveillance by engaging a local university to take environmental swabs for analysis, and regular checks on retail outlets to ensure compliance with the relevant licensing conditions or tenancy requirements.

According to the Administration's scientific assessment conducted in late 2009/early 2010, the risk of avian influenza to Hong Kong associated with the live poultry trade has been significantly reduced in recent years. To strengthen our surveillance programme on avian influenza, the Administration implemented a basket of enhanced surveillance and control measures at all levels of the live poultry supply chain in 2010. At the import control level, the number of blood samples collected and tested per consignment was increased by 10% since May 2010. The full-year impact of such increase will be reflected in 2011.

The direct expenditure on surveillance over avian influenza in imported live poultry is about \$6.8 million for 2011-12.

Signature _____

Name in block letters CLEMENT LEUNG

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 16.3.2011