

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

FHB(FE)137

Question Serial No.

1976

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:

Under this programme, it is mentioned the number of food complaints handled by the Department in 2012 was 5 261, which was higher than the corresponding figure of 4 265 in 2011. Please advise on the following:

- (a) the type and nature of food complaints handled in the past three years (i.e. in 2010, 2011 and 2012), as well as the examination results and outcomes of these complaints;
- (b) whether the Department has assessed the reason(s) for the significant increase in the number of food complaints; and
- (c) in view of the rising number of food complaints, whether additional manpower and resources will be deployed or special measures be taken to handle the complaints.

Asked by: Hon. HO Chun-yin, Steven

Reply:

The information sought is provided as follows -

- (a) The number of food complaints handled by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department from 2010 to 2012 with breakdown by nature is provided in the following table -

Nature of complaints	2010	2011	2012
Unwholesome food	2 059	2 152	2 790
Foreign substances in food	1 018	1 017	1 342
Chemicals in food	393	647	474
Labelling issues	176	208	393
Fake/counterfeit food	53	167	124
Others	38	74	138
Total number of cases	3 737	4 265	5 261
Number of warnings issued	809	774	761
Number of prosecutions taken out	122	132	178

- (b) The increase in the number of food complaints in 2012 was attributed to growing public awareness of food safety and food labelling issues as well as the occurrence of a number of food incidents in 2012. Examples include the case of low iodine content in infant formulae that came to light in August, the case of aquatic products suspected to be tainted with plastic pellet in August, and the case of suspected substandard cooking oil in December.

- (c) As the estimated number of food complaints in 2013 is similar to the number of food complaints in 2012, the manpower and funding provided for handling food complaints will remain the same.

Name in block letters: Clement LEUNG

Post Title: Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date: 5.4.2013