

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

FHB(FE)207

Question Serial No.

3438

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

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please advise whether the Department will allocate resources to review and consult stakeholders on the number of newspaper stall licences, and the scope of business and size of licensed newspaper stalls in 2013-14; if yes, please give the plan and timetable of the work as well as the estimated expenditure to be involved; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Ka-lok, Kenneth

Reply:

As at 31.12.2012, there were 513 licensed newspaper hawkers in Hong Kong. The Government reviewed its hawker licensing policy in 2008 and 2009 and consulted the Legislative Council, District Councils, hawker associations and relevant stakeholders. As a result of the review, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) issued a limited number of hawker licences, including licences for vacant fixed hawker pitches and for itinerant (frozen confectionery) hawkers (commonly known as "small ice-cream vendors"). Given the growing number of newspaper and magazine retail outlets in recent years, as well as concerns about obstruction and nuisance, the Government has no intention of issuing new newspaper hawker licences.

To improve the business environment of licensed newspaper hawkers, the Department expanded the list of additional commodities permitted for sale from eight to 12 items in September 2009. On top of the eight commodities already approved (i.e. tissue paper, cigarettes, cigarette lighters, sweets, chewing gums, preserved fruits, battery cells and pens), four more types of items, namely bottled distilled water, lai-see packets, trinkets and cell phone cards, have been added to the commodity list. The Department has also relaxed the restriction on the total space by expanding the limit from not more than 25% to not more than 50% of the stall area used for the sale of additional commodities.

Moreover, licensed newspaper hawkers can display within the confines of their stalls promotional materials in relation to the promotion of the commodities approved to be sold under the licence. The Department will continue to communicate with representatives of the newspaper hawkers in order to improve their operating environment.

Name in block letters: Clement LEUNG

Post Title: Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date: 28.3.2013