

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

FHB(FE)234

Question Serial No.

5385

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:

The indicator for "food complaints handled" increased from 4 265 in 2011 to 5 261 in 2012. Please provide information on the following:

- (a) the reason(s) for the increase in number; and
- (b) the number of food complaints handled and the expenditure involved, with a breakdown by year and type of complaint, for the past five years (i.e. in 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012).

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The information sought is provided as follows -

- (a) 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 which 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.
- (b) The number of food complaints handled by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department from 2008 to 2012 with breakdown by nature is provided as follows -

Nature of complaints	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Unwholesome food	2 545	2 115	2 059	2 152	2 790
Foreign substances in food	1 476	1 127	1 018	1 017	1 342
Chemicals in food	645	558	393	647	474
Labelling issues	285	227	176	208	393
Fake/counterfeit food	84	160	53	167	124
Others	51	40	38	74	138
Total number of cases	5 086	4 227	3 737	4 265	5 261

The actual expenditure on food surveillance work and the handling of food complaints for 2008-09, 2009-10, 2010-11 and 2011-12 was \$45.2 million, \$48.7 million, \$51.4 million and \$51.6 million respectively. The estimated expenditure for 2012-13 is \$53.4 million. Separate breakdown on expenditure involved in handling food complaints is not readily available.

Name in block letters: Clement LEUNG

Post Title: Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date: 8.4.2013