

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)133

(Question Serial No. 2322)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health
Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health
This question originates from: Estimates on Expenditure Volume I Page 249 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 52):

Under this programme, the target number of food samples tested for food surveillance purpose has all along remained at 8 per 1 000 population, although the actual number of samples tested has attained 9 per 1 000 population. In view of the frequent occurrence of food safety issues in recent years, please advise whether the Department has considered allocating additional resources to increase the number of food samples to be tested with a view to safeguarding public health; if yes, the details; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

In 2014, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) will take a total of about 65 000 samples for testing under its Food Surveillance Programme (the Programme) i.e. about nine samples per 1 000 population. This is a relatively high testing rate when compared with other overseas economies.

CFS takes food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels. It adopts a risk-based approach in determining the types of samples to be collected, the frequency and the number of samples to be taken for testing, and the types of laboratory analysis to be conducted. CFS keeps the sampling programme under regular review, taking into account factors such as past food surveillance results, local and overseas food incidents as well as relevant risk analysis. CFS will consult the Expert Committee on Food Safety and obtain its endorsement before food surveillance projects under the Programme are implemented.