

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**FHB(FE)257****(Question Serial No. 5999)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

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 252 (if applicable)

Question (Member Question No. 130):

The high vacancy rate, poor environment and improper management of public markets and cooked food stalls have all along been the subjects of criticism. In recent years, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) has allocated resources to upgrade these facilities and enhance their competitiveness.

In this connection, please advise on the works and measures carried out by the Department other than retrofitting air-conditioning systems to improve the hardware and software of the markets and the details of the evaluation (such as patronage survey, business volume survey and questionnaire survey) done, if any, on the effectiveness of these improvement works.

Please also provide information on the operating expenditure on markets and cooked food stalls in the table below:

(\$ million)	Expenditure	Expenditure on market improvement works	Vacancy rate (%)
2010-11			
2011-12			
2012-13			
2013-14			
2014-15			

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply:

In addition to regular maintenance and daily management of markets, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) will carry out improvement works in specified markets. The works include improvement to the drainage, ventilation, lighting, fire services, signage and lavatory provisions, replacement of floor tiles, and provision of barrier free access.

At the same time, as an on-going initiative, the Department will continue to conduct promotional activities to enhance patronage of public markets. These include thematic exhibitions and workshops, festive celebration activities, display of multi-language recipes as well as publication of booklets and quarterly newsletters to provide updated market information.

The Department will continue to let out long-standing vacant stalls at reduced upset auction prices and introduce more service trade stalls to enhance the occupancy rate of public markets.

In 2009, the Department conducted a survey on its public markets to assess their patronage and collect views on market patrons and tenants on the usage of and possible improvement measures for the markets. In December 2013, the Food and Health Bureau commissioned a consultant for developing proposals to improve the operating environment of public markets thereby enabling them to fulfil the functions expected of them. The consultant is expected to comprehensively analyse all relevant factors affecting the operating environment of public markets such as consumer profile (e.g. income and age), their shopping preferences, the mode of market operation, as well as the state of transport network in the vicinity etc. and formulate recommendations. The consultant is expected to submit preliminary study findings in mid-2014 if the study progresses smoothly.

The information sought is provided as follows-

	Operating expenditure (\$million)	Expenditure on market improvement works (\$million)	Vacancy rate* (as at 31 December)
2010-11	555.5	5.3	15.9%
2011-12	575.0	4.0	12.4%
2012-13	628.8	5.1	10.5%
2013-14	643.5 (Revised estimate)	22.2 (Revised estimate)	9.6%
2014-15	717.7 (Estimate)	Note	Not yet available

Note : The estimated cost of projects that are to commence in 2014-15 is \$31.5 million

* Including the number of vacant stalls that are frozen for reasons such as forthcoming improvement works.