

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)143

(Question Serial No. 1149)

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

Question:

The overall Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) for 2014 was 3.2%, marking the highest rate since 2010. The Audit Report has also criticised the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for using the same 41 areas for rodent surveillance in the past ten years and considered that the insufficient geographical coverage might undermine the representativeness of the RIR for a district, thus rendering the public doubtful about the effectiveness of the rodent control work of the Department. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. the resources allocated by the Department for rodent control work in the past three years;
2. whether the Department has assessed the effectiveness of the anti-rodent measures; if yes, the findings of the assessment; if not, the reason(s); and
3. in view of the infestation of rodents, whether new measures will be implemented (such as distributing rodent cage traps to the residents of the old buildings where the rodent problem is more serious) to help the residents catch rodents.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla (Member Question No. 4)

Reply:

1. The actual expenditure on rodent control work for 2012-13 and 2013-14 was \$141.0 million and \$151.6 million respectively. The revised estimate for 2014-15 is \$156.2 million.
2. The Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) in 2012, 2013 and 2014 was 2.4%, 3.1% and 3.2% respectively. Whilst the RIR in 2014 went up slightly from the low levels in the previous two years, it remained at a low single digit, suggesting that the rodent problem in public areas remains generally under control. The RIR only assesses the

rodent problem in the public places of the surveyed area in the surveillance period. It is one of the factors that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) considers when assessing the actual situation of rodent infestation in a district. In addition to the RIR, frontline staff of the Department also take into account the trails left by rodents, complaint figures and the views of the local community and the public in identifying problematic locations for rodent prevention and control actions. The Department will continue to keep in view the methods on disease vector surveillance recommended by the World Health Organization and adopted by other cities. Methods which are suitable for use locally would be adopted for improving the effectiveness of the rodent infestation survey.

3. The Department will continue to enhance rodent control work and launch district-specific rodent control measures in districts with a higher RIR, including publicity and educational programmes to promote greater community involvement in rodent control and prevention, in addition to its regular pest control work and annual territory-wide publicity campaigns.

- End -