

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 0386)**

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:

Regarding the supply of livestock and poultry, please advise:

- (a) on the average, highest and lowest daily number of live pigs, live cattle and live chickens imported from the Mainland and supplied locally in each of the past three years (2012, 2013 and 2014), with a breakdown by year and source of supply;
- (b) on the monthly average price of live pigs and live cattle supplied by the Mainland to Hong Kong in each of the past three years (2012, 2013 and 2014); and
- (c) whether the Department will consider the proposal to separate local live chickens from those imported from the Mainland; if yes, the details and the estimated expenditure involved; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok-hing (Member Question No. 33)

Reply:

- (a) Information on the number of live pigs, live cattle and live chickens imported from the Mainland in the past three years is tabulated as follows –

Year	Daily number of live pigs, live cattle and live chickens imported from the Mainland								
	Pigs			Cattle			Chickens		
	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest
2012	4 210	5 960	1 513	71	161	12	6 751	9 000	3 400
2013	4 317	5 565	1 942	52	116	8	6 307	9 600	2 300
2014	4 452	6 298	2 597	51	110	9	2 499	10 200	1 500

Information on the number of live pigs, live cattle and live chickens supplied from local farms in the past three years is tabulated as follows –

Year	Daily number of live pigs, live cattle <sup>(Note)</sup> and live chickens supplied from local farms					
	Pigs			Chickens		
	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest
2012	266	644	31	11 151	62 157	3 900
2013	264	529	24	10 546	69 956	2 000
2014	240	432	43	10 961	36 675	4 100

Note: Local farms are not engaged in rearing cattle as food animals.

- (b) Information on the monthly auction or wholesale prices of live pigs and live cattle imported from the Mainland in the past three years is tabulated as follows –

Year	Monthly average auction/wholesale prices per picul of live pigs and live cattle imported from the Mainland		
	Monthly Average Auction Price of Pig (HK\$)	Monthly Average Wholesale Price of Cattle (HK\$)	
		Marbled Meat Cattle	Beef Cattle
2012	1,329	3,601	3,291
2013	1,350	4,497	4,093
2014	1,253	4,690	4,070

- (c) Over the past decade or so, the Government and the local live poultry industry, as well as the Mainland inspection and quarantine authorities and the farms supplying Hong Kong, have collaboratively built up a resilient and stringent system for the surveillance and control of avian influenza (AI), for the purpose of reducing the AI risks in Hong Kong. All live poultry supplied to Hong Kong markets, whether locally reared or imported, are subject to stringent inspection and quarantine procedures. Health certificates will be issued only if the testing results are satisfactory. Prior to leaving the farm, the poultry are put under quarantine for five days and are required to pass Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and serology tests for AI. In other words, before the imported live poultry are delivered to Hong Kong, they have passed the testing by relevant inspection and quarantine authorities and are granted health certificates with satisfactory testing results. When the live poultry arrive in Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will collect swab and blood samples from the live poultry at the Man Kam To Animal Inspection Station and pass the samples to the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)'s Veterinary Laboratory for testing. The imported poultry are then sent to the wholesale market and held there. They would not be released to the retail outlets until after the testing results are known. The testing system is designed to provide an additional safeguard to reduce the risk of infected poultry entering our retail markets.

In the light of the detection of H7 AI virus in certain samples in a consignment of imported live chickens on 27 January 2014, there were suggestions that we should segregate the imported and local live poultry and hold the imported poultry at a suitable location until the AI testing results are available before releasing them to the wholesale market.

After assessing various proposals, the Government decided to set up a check-point for local live poultry at the Government farm in Ta Kwu Ling (TKL). The TKL

Check-point was put to use for the first time in January 2015 following another AI incident involving imported live poultry on 30 December 2014.

The Government has been looking for an appropriate site for relocating the Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market but this has met with difficulties. It is impracticable to expect that we would be able to identify an additional site solely for the holding of imported live poultry. Indeed, contact with infected live poultry is the main source of risk insofar as human infection by AI is concerned. The Government is commissioning a consultancy study on the future of the live poultry trade in Hong Kong.

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