

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)159

(Question Serial No. 3223)

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:

Under Programme (1), it is stated that in addition to the 64 387 and 64 219 food samples taken by the Department for testing in 2013 and 2014 respectively, another 56 382 samples and 61 459 samples have been taken from imported Japanese food for examination of radiation level in 2013 and 2014 respectively in connection with the Japan nuclear power plant incident in March 2011. Please provide information on the manpower and expenditure involved in the past two years for the testings mentioned above; the number of unsatisfactory food samples detected in 2013 and 2014 respectively; the number of samples of imported Japanese food detected with unsatisfactory radiation level; and the estimated number of imported Japanese food samples to be taken for radiation testing, as well as the manpower and expenditure to be involved, in the coming year.

Asked by: Hon WONG Kwok-kin (Member Question No. 30)

Reply:

The expenditure on food surveillance in 2012-13 and 2013-14 was \$54.7 million and \$57.3 million respectively. The revised estimate for 2014-15 is \$60.4 million, and the estimated expenditure for 2015-16 is \$71.3 million. The manpower establishment of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) in carrying out the above work in 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 was 112, 115, 115 and 115 respectively. The number of unsatisfactory food samples is kept on a calendar year basis. In 2013 and 2014, the number of food samples found to be unsatisfactory were 57 and 139 respectively.

No sample of imported Japanese food was detected with unsatisfactory radiation level in the past two years. The estimated number of samples taken from imported Japanese food for examination of radiation level in 2015 is about 62 000, which is similar to the actual number of 2014. The manpower for carrying out radiation examination work for Japanese food imported by sea in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15 were 38 staff (including 24 non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff), 37 staff (including 23 NCSC staff) and 35 staff (including 21 NCSC staff) respectively. In 2015-16, 35 staff (including 21 non-civil service contract staff) would be designated for carrying out radiation examination work for Japanese food

imported by sea. The radiation examination work for Japanese food imported by air would continue to be conducted by the Airport Offices of CFS. In 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15, there were 51, 57 and 57 staff in the Airport Offices respectively. In 2015-16, there will be 57 staff in the Airport Offices. Separate breakdown on the manpower resources spent on radiation examination work for Japanese food imported by air is not readily available.

The expenditure on radiation testing at import level will be covered by the expenditure on food import and export control by CFS. The expenditure on the latter in 2013-14 and 2014-15 are \$138.4 million and \$144.6 million respectively, and the estimated expenditure in 2015-16 is \$145.2 million. We do not keep separate breakdown on the expenditure for taking Japanese food samples for examination of radiation levels.

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