

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)160

(Question Serial No. 3049)

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:

1. With regard to conducting inspections of farms exporting food animals to Hong Kong, please provide information on the manpower required for each inspection, as well as the actual, revised and estimated expenditure for 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16.
2. It is stated that inspection to farms exporting food animals to Hong Kong is subject to the agreement of the relevant Mainland authority taking into account the corresponding risk assessments and actual circumstances. Please advise under what assessed risk level and actual circumstances the Department will deploy staff to conduct inspections to the farms concerned.
3. With regard to the inspections of registered vegetable farms on the Mainland supplying vegetables to Hong Kong, please advise on the manpower required for each inspection, as well as the actual, revised and estimated expenditure for 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16.
4. It is stated that the Department will conduct a comprehensive review of the food safety-related penalties. In this connection, please advise when the review will come to a close.
5. It is stated that the Department will start planning the second Hong Kong Food Consumption Survey. In this connection, please advise on the staff establishment to be engaged, the estimated expenditure for the whole survey, as well as the time of completion of the survey.

Asked by: Hon WONG Pik-wan, Helena (Member Question No. 53)

Reply:

1. An inspection unit comprising three veterinary officers, eight field officers and one fisheries officer is responsible for inspection of food animal farms (including fish farms) outside Hong Kong, including the Mainland and overseas. Normally, a team

of at least two staff would conduct a farm inspection. The actual expenditure for conducting farm inspections outside Hong Kong in 2013-14 was \$8.5 million, the revised estimate in 2014-15 is \$9.2 million, and the estimated expenditure in 2015-16 is about \$10.2 million.

2. A plan for inspecting farms exporting food animals to Hong Kong is drawn up every year using a risk-based approach. The plan is subject to adjustment taking into account the actual circumstances that transpire in the course of time, including the import volume, previous testing laboratory results and frequency of visits.
3. The inspection of registered vegetable farms in the Mainland is carried out by a team led by an Agricultural Officer. The actual line-up for each inspection varies. We do not keep separate breakdown on the resources used for inspection of vegetable farms in the Mainland.
4. The Administration will conduct a comprehensive review of the food safety-related penalties under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Chapter 132) and its subsidiary legislation, as well as the Food Safety Ordinance (Chapter 612) in 2015-16. Depending on the progress of the review, we aim to come up with preliminary findings in 2015-16.
5. \$9.5 million has been earmarked for conducting the second Hong Kong Food Consumption Survey. The manpower required in planning the Survey will be absorbed from within existing resources. It is expected that the pilot study will be conducted in 2016 and the Survey completed in 2018.

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