

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)128

(Question Serial No. 0640)

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. In the first half of 2015, the RIR remained at 3.2%. Two years ago, the Audit Commission also criticised the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for using the same 41 areas for rodent surveillance in the past 10 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. given the rodent infestation problem, whether new measures have been implemented having regard to the practices of other countries/regions (such as distributing rodent cage traps to the residents of the old buildings where the problem is more serious) for rodent control.

Asked by: Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun (Member Question No. 6)

Reply:

1. The actual expenditure on rodent control work for 2013-14 and 2014-15 was \$151.6 million and \$156.2 million respectively. The revised estimate for 2015-16 is \$160.9 million.
2. The Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) in 2013, 2014 and 2015 was 3.1%, 3.2% and 3.0% respectively. At such a level, the RIR suggests that the rodent problem in public areas remains generally under control. The RIR is not the only factor that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) considers when assessing

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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.

3. The Department will continue to keep in view the methods of disease vector surveillance recommended by the World Health Organisation and adopted by other cities. We keep an open mind on adopting or trying out methods that are suitable for use in local circumstances for further improving the effectiveness of our rodent infestation survey. The Department will also 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.

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