

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2399)

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:

With regard to the wholesale of live cattle, please advise on the following:

- (a) the total number, the average daily number, as well as the highest and lowest daily wholesale number of live cattle supplied to Hong Kong in each of the past three years (i.e. from 2013-14 to 2015-16);
- (b) the monthly average, highest and lowest price of live cattle supplied to Hong Kong in each of the past three years (i.e. from 2013-14 to 2015-16);
- (c) the total expenditure and average expenditure per head of cattle by the Government in handling live cattle (such as the arrangements for slaughterhouses, quarantine management, etc), as well as the manpower involved; and
- (d) the expenditure and manpower involved in setting up a joint working group with the Mainland last year to conduct surveys and studies on the supply of live cattle to Hong Kong.

Asked by: Hon Steven HO Chun-yin (Member Question No. 45)

Reply:

- (a) Information on the number of live cattle admitted to the slaughterhouse in the past three years is tabulated as follows –

Calendar Year	Total number of live cattle admitted	Daily number of live cattle admitted		
		Average	Highest	Lowest
2013	19 156	52	116	8
2014	18 602	51	110	9
2015	17 911	49	97	8

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

Calendar Year	Wholesale prices per picul of live cattle imported from the Mainland (HK\$)*					
	Marbled Meat Cattle			Beef Cattle		
	Average	Highest	Lowest	Average	Highest	Lowest
2013	4,497	4,690	4,310	4,093	4,105	4,070
2014	4,690	4,690	4,690	4,070	4,070	4,070
2015	4,690	4,690	4,690	4,070	4,070	4,070

* The wholesale price of live cattle is determined by the wholesale agent. The wholesale prices of marbled meat cattle and beef cattle were last adjusted to HK\$4,690 / picul and HK\$4,070 / picul respectively on 6 May 2013.

- (c) The expenditure on live food animal inspection in the slaughterhouses in 2013-14 and 2014-15 was \$30.3 million and \$32.3 million respectively and the revised estimate in 2015-16 is \$35.3 million, involving 85 staff posts in each of these three years. Pigs, cattle and goats are slaughtered in the slaughterhouses. The average expenditure of live animal inspection on each live food animal slaughtered is \$17.8, \$18.6 and \$20.9 (based on revised estimate) in the same period. The cost for handling live cattle cannot be separately identified.
- (d) In 2013, in view of the concerns articulated in the community about the supply and price of fresh beef, the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) had initiated discussion with the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) concerning the supply of live cattle to Hong Kong. Taking into account the shortage of beef supply in the Mainland market itself and the Central Government's development plan for beef production to realise the effect of stabilising the supply of live cattle, the two sides agreed to revisit the issue at a future date. The progress of FHB's deliberations with MoC was reported to FSEH Panel on 10 June 2014 (please refer to LC Paper No. (CB (2) 1676/13-14 (03)). There was no survey or study conducted in relation to the supply of live cattle to Hong Kong in the past year.

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