

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)314**

**(Question Serial No. 6340)**

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:

Please advise on the estimated expenditure for amending the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation in Hong Kong. Given that tea leaves imported into Taiwan have been detected with “fipronil” and “triazophos”, please also advise whether the Department will consider extending the coverage of the Regulation to these two pesticides for the protection of public health.

Asked by: Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Member Question No. 260)

Reply:

The Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM) (“the Regulation”) regulates the level of pesticide residues in food. It specifies in Schedule 1 to the Regulation a list of maximum residue limits (MRLs)/ extraneous maximum residue limits (EMRLs) for certain pesticide-food pairs, i.e. the maximum concentrations of specified pesticide residues permitted in specified food commodities. For pesticide residues with no specified MRLs/EMRLs in Schedule 1, the Regulation stipulates that import or sale of food containing such pesticide residues is only allowed if the consumption of the food concerned is not dangerous or prejudicial to health. In 2015, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) tested tea leaves samples for “fipronil” and “triazophos”, two pesticides with no corresponding MRLs. Risk assessment<sup>1</sup> conducted by CFS on the level of pesticide residues detected

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<sup>1</sup>Risk assessment is a science-based method which has been well-recognised in the international arena. The acceptability of the potential risks upon consumption of a food sample containing pesticide residues is judged on the basis of comparison of safety reference values (e.g. acceptable daily intakes for long-term exposure, or acute reference dose for short-term exposure), with dietary exposure estimates as determined by appropriate exposure studies, i.e. on the outcome of risk assessment process. CFS conducts risk assessment on the detected level of pesticide residues in a food sample based on local food consumption pattern and the available safety reference values.

suggested that it was unlikely to pose adverse effect on consumers upon normal consumption.

The Regulation has been devised in a manner capable of embracing the evolving challenges brought by scientific development. As application of new pesticides to crops emerges, CFS will continue to monitor the latest international development, conduct risk assessment and consider amendments to the Regulation as necessary. The relevant expenditure of such work is absorbed from within the existing resources and manpower of CFS.

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