

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)288

(Question Serial No. 5561)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Subhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expenses
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 food safety tests in the past year, please provide information on the following:

- 1) the number of food samples taken for testing and, among them, the number of those from the Mainland; if there is no such classification of samples, the reason(s);
- 2) the number of fruit and vegetable samples found to be unsatisfactory and, among them, the number of those from the Mainland;
- 3) the number of prosecutions instituted pertaining to the fruits and vegetables in question, as well as the maximum and minimum penalties imposed; and
- 4) whether there will be an increase in the manpower and expenditure in 2017-18, as well as the details of the post(s) to be created; if not, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando (Member Question No. 4552)

Reply:

- 1) About 65 500 food samples were taken for testing by the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in 2016 (not including the about 73 700 samples taken from imported Japanese food for testing of radiation levels in 2016). There is no specific breakdown on the number of samples in terms of places of origin. Source tracing was only conducted for unsatisfactory samples.
- 2) In 2016, a total of 30 800 samples of fruit/fruit products and vegetable/vegetable products were tested. 73 of them were found to be unsatisfactory, of which 56 came from the Mainland. In interpreting this figure, it is important to note that the Mainland remained the main source of food supply for Hong Kong in 2016, and over 90% of the vegetables imported to Hong Kong came from the Mainland. From a risk assessment perspective, Hong Kong's overall food safety standards remain high and

normal consumption of the foods concerned would unlikely pose adverse health effects.

- 3) There were 12 prosecution cases against unsatisfactory fruit/fruit products and vegetable/vegetable products in 2016. The level of penalties ranged from \$1,800 to \$8,000.
- 4) The Food Import and Export Section and the Food Surveillance and Complaint Section of the CFS are responsible for carrying out food surveillance work, including collection of food samples for testing at the import, wholesale and retail levels. With an estimated establishment of 376 staff members in 2017-18, the estimated expenditure of the two Sections in 2017-18 is about \$255 million. Apart from food surveillance, both Sections are involved in other duties. There is no separate breakdown on the expenditures incurred by the two Sections on food surveillance. The current manpower and resources are able to meet the operational requirements.

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