

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)116**

**(Question Serial No. 1839)**

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:

In connection with the work of “conducting risk assessment on pests affecting public health”, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. the resources allocated for the related work in 2018-19 and the specific details of the work, whether assessment has been made on the conditions of the rural areas where rodent infestation was frequently reported in the past and what measures have been implemented to tackle the problem;
2. details of the follow-up actions taken in the past after completing the analysis of rodent problem in Hong Kong, as well as the expenditure and manpower involved in taking the follow-up actions; and
3. besides the conventional baiting and trapping of rodents, whether resources have been allocated to explore other methods or technologies that can help tackle the rodent problem.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han-pan (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 34)

Reply:

1. The estimated expenditure in 2018-19 on rodent prevention and control is \$194.3 million. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) has been conducting the Rodent Infestation Survey (RIS) to detect the presence of rodent activities within the survey areas for assessing the rodent problems. RIS reflects the rodent problems of public places within the survey areas during the surveillance period. Frontline staff of the Department also take into account 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 work in both rural and urban areas.

2. The RIR for 2017 was 3.5%, slightly lower than the figure recorded in 2016 (4.0%), suggesting that the rodent problem in public places within the survey areas remained generally under control. Targeted at districts with relatively high RIR, the Department has implemented a series of rodent prevention and control measures. Specific rodent disinfestation actions, including poisoning, trapping of rodents and destroying rat burrows have been conducted. Besides, street cleansing has been stepped up to improve the general hygiene condition to deplete food and harbourages for rodents. Publicity and education programmes have also been intensified to encourage the active participation of the public in anti-rodent work. In addition to routine anti-rodent work, the Department also takes the lead in organising annual territory-wide interdepartmental anti-rodent campaigns to strengthen rodent prevention and control at target areas and remind the public of the importance of rodent prevention and control.

To intensify district rodent prevention and control work, the Department launched 2 two-month anti-rodent operations in designated target areas in all districts in May and September 2017, and adopted multi-pronged strategies to combat the rodent problem, including elimination of food sources and hiding places of rodents, as well as blocking their passages, so as to work for a clean and hygienic community. The Department also stepped up public education and publicity during the operation and arranged health talks for building management offices of private buildings, persons-in-charge of food premises, and market and hawker stall operators to provide information and technical advice on rodent prevention and control. Anti-rodent operations in designated target areas will continue in 2018 in which public education and publicity will also be stepped up.

In addition to about 700 departmental staff deployed to pest control (including rodent control), the Department engages service contractors to provide pest control services in the territory through some 290 roving teams with a workforce of about 1 740.

3. In 2017, staff of the Department attended international pest control conferences organised by the Federation of Asian and Oceania Pest Managers Associations and the International Conference on Urban Pests to share experience and exchange ideas in pest control with experts from around the world. The Department will continue to keep in view the methods of disease vector surveillance, prevention and control recommended by the World Health Organisation and adopted by the Mainland and other countries. 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, as well as prevention and control work.

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