

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)165**

**(Question Serial No. 0446)**

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:

Regarding the indicator “vehicles carrying vegetables inspected at Man Kam To Food Control Office”, please provide information on the following:

- the reason(s) for the decrease in the number of vehicles inspected from 33 643 in 2016 to 28 004 in 2017;
- whether the Department is aware that uninspected vegetables have been brought into the territory by individuals via the passenger channels at boundary control points other than those at Man Kam To for sale in markets; if yes, the details and the measures against such activities; and
- the quantity of uninspected vegetables seized when smuggled into the territory in each of the past five years.

Asked by: Hon HO Kai-ming (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 42)

Reply:

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) takes food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels and adopts a risk-based principle in determining the types of samples to be collected, the sampling frequency, the sample size, and the types of laboratory analysis to be conducted. Of note is that samples collected at the retail level would cover vegetables imported through not only Man Kam To but also other channels. For vegetables and fruits, the total number of samples taken at these levels for testing remained generally around 30 000 in the past few years, with the satisfaction rate over 99.5%.

The Government exercises vigilance over vegetables that are brought, in the name of self-consumption, into Hong Kong by travellers via the passenger channels at boundary control points other than the Man Kam To Control Point, but are subsequently sold in the market. CFS maintains close liaison with the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and exchanges intelligence on activities of importing vegetables through the other control points. To intercept these imports, C&ED and CFS conduct joint operations from time to

time. If travellers are found to have brought into Hong Kong vegetables which are suspected not to be for self-consumption, C&ED will refer the cases to CFS for follow up. From January 2015 to December 2017, C&ED referred 34 such cases to CFS. CFS had initiated prosecutions in 3 cases suspected to have contravened the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap. 612). Prosecution could not be initiated in the remaining cases due to insufficient evidence. In all cases, the travellers concerned had voluntarily surrendered the vegetables to CFS for disposal. The quantity of vegetables surrendered and destroyed was about 600 kg in 2015, 100 kg in 2016 and 300 kg in 2017. No such statistics were kept for 2013 and 2014.

- End -