

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)212**

**(Question Serial No. 2240)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified  
Programme: (4) Public Education and Community Involvement  
Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In the 2018-19 Budget, one of the matters requiring special attention is to “continue to devise and implement a strategic plan for encouraging reduced intake of salt and sugars in food to promote a healthy diet”. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

1. the manpower and expenditure involved in devising and implementing the policy initiatives under the strategic plan. What is meant by a strategic plan? What projects will be included?
2. while the aim of the strategic plan is to encourage the public to reduce intake of salt and sugars in food so as to promote a healthy diet, has the Department considered if there is any functional difference between the strategic plan and the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food set up by the Government in 2015? Will their functions overlap? If yes, how will the Department prevent this from occurring?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 20)

Reply:

The Government attaches much importance to the reduction of salt and sugar intake of Hong Kong people. In this regard, the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) has set up the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food (CRSS) to give advice on priority areas for reduction of salt and sugar in food, and help formulate and oversee the implementation of initiatives on salt and sugar reduction. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) and the Department of Health help implement salt and sugar reduction initiatives along the direction and strategy as recommended by the CRSS.

Since we cannot expect the public to change their dietary habits overnight, the first and foremost task is to promote a culture of low-salt-and-sugar diet. Expenditure incurred by the Food and Health Bureau in the 2017-18 financial year for this purpose is as follows -

<b>Activities / Projects</b>	<b>2017-18 (\$million)</b>
Funding Scheme for Promoting the Culture of Low-Salt-Low-Sugar Diets in the Community	4.50
Organising various competitions, producing short internet videos on “less-salt-and-sugar” dishes and radio programmes on the promotion of salt and sugar reduction	1.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.82</b>

In the coming year, we will continue to work with the CRSS to further cultivate a culture of low-salt-and-sugar diet in the community along the three directions of “starting from an early age”, “enhancing transparency of information”, and “strengthening publicity and education”.

“Starting from an early age”, “enhancing transparency of information”, and “strengthening publicity and education” are merely the first step for the work of the Government and the CRSS, which aims to encourage the public to adopt a relatively healthy diet. Such a change will generate the demand for low-salt-and-sugar food and stimulate proactive response from the food trade. The Government and the CRSS have been discussing with the trade on product reformulation to reduce salt and sugar in food. Such work involves complicated factors including modification of formulation, production technologies, consumers’ receptiveness, market demand and business considerations. This is a longer-term goal of the CRSS which will take more time to achieve concrete results. The Government and the CRSS will continue to strive for the goal.

Encouraging the public to reduce dietary intake of salt and sugar is our ongoing work. As such, the manpower and other recurrent expenses cannot be discretely identified from the overall allocation. Where necessary, additional resources will be provided for the implementation of specific projects.

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