

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)235

(Question Serial No. 2769)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In recent years, rodent infestation was reported in many districts in the territory. The problem was especially serious in some districts, causing great disturbance to the residents. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. the number of related complaints or requests for assistance received by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in 2017-18, with a breakdown by District Council district;
2. the number of staff of the Department deployed to handle the cases mentioned in Q1 above, whether manpower will be increased in 2018-19 and the expenditure involved;
3. details of the key measures on rodent control adopted by the Department in the past, and whether review(s) of these measures has/have been conducted to assess their effectiveness; if yes, the results of the review(s); and
4. whether the Department will deploy resources and manpower in 2018-19 to implement targeted measures, including the application of innovative technology, to curb the rodent problem effectively. If yes, what are the details of the measures and the manpower and expenditure involved? If no resources and manpower will be deployed for such purpose, or no targeted measures will be implemented, how can the Department ensure that the residents will be better protected?

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 66)

Reply:

1. The information sought is provided as follows –

District	Number of rodent infestation complaints received in 2017
Central & Western	871
Eastern	765
Southern	189
Wan Chai	691
Islands	331
Kowloon City	865
Kwun Tong	477
Wong Tai Sin	343
Sham Shui Po	1 181
Yau Tsim Mong	1 247
Sha Tin	530
Tai Po	346
North	306
Kwai Tsing	254
Tsuen Wan	347
Tuen Mun	354
Yuen Long	795
Sai Kung	358
Total	10 250

2. The revised estimated expenditure in 2017-18 and estimated expenditure in 2018-19 in rodent prevention and control is \$172.6 million and \$194.3 million respectively. In addition to about 700 departmental staff deployed to pest control (including rodent control), the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (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. The increase in expenditure is mainly due to the increase in the number of roving teams and increase in contracts value.
3. The Department has been adopting an integrated approach in the prevention and control of rodents through cleansing, rodent elimination, enforcement as well as publicity and public education. Such an approach is premised on the recommendations and technical guidelines of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and is in line with that adopted by the Mainland and other countries, like Malaysia, Singapore as well as countries in Europe and North America.

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. 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.

4. The Department will continue to keep in view the methods of disease vector surveillance recommended by WHO and adopted by 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. The Department will also continue to enhance rodent control work and launch district-specific rodent control measures, including publicity and educational programmes to promote greater community involvement, in addition to the regular pest control work and annual territory-wide publicity campaigns.

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