

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**FHB(FE)370****(Question Serial No. 5209)**Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not specifiedProgramme: (1) Food Safety and Public HealthControlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and HealthQuestion:

- (a) What was the amount of fresh vegetables supplied from the Mainland to Hong Kong through the Man Kam To Control Point (MKTCP) in each of the past 5 years?
- (b) Further to part (a), in connection with fresh vegetables imported from the Mainland via MKTCP in each of the past 5 years, what was the respective amount of vegetables directly delivered to the wholesale vegetable market managed by the Vegetable Marketing Organization (VMO) and the wholesale food markets operated by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)? What was the amount of vegetables distributed by the wholesale markets of VMO and AFCD to retail outlets of supermarkets? What was the respective amount of vegetables directly supplied to wet markets for sale, and to food processors and caterers, without going through VMO and AFCD?
- (c) How frequent were samples of imported vegetables collected for testing from the wholesale market of VMO, wholesale markets of AFCD, retailers at the market level and restaurants in each of the past 5 years?
- (d) Please set out in the table below the number of cases in which vegetables imported from the Mainland to Hong Kong were detected with pesticides, heavy metals or toxic substances exceeding the prescribed limits over the past 5 years:

	Number of unsatisfactory vegetable samples					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Nature of test failure						
Metallic contaminants						

Pesticide residues						
Total						

- (e) Further to part (d), over the past 5 years, how many vegetable samples detected with pesticides, heavy metals or toxic substances exceeding the prescribed limits were collected from MKTCP, the wholesale market of VMO, the wholesale markets of AFCD, retailers at the market level and restaurants?
- (f) What mechanism is in place for the examination of Mainland vegetables directly supplied to restaurants via Man Kam To?
- (g) The media has reported that vegetables from non-registered farms were affixed with fake quarantine labels and posed as vegetables from registered farms for supply to Hong Kong. Alternatively, vegetables from non-registered farms were mixed with vegetables from registered farms (i.e. vegetables from improper sources under the guise of proper labels) to save costs. What was the amount of vegetables from improper sources under the guise of proper labels seized by the Department over the past 5 years? What mechanism is in place to combat this problem?

Asked by: Hon TAM Man-ho, Jeremy (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 603)

Reply:

- (a) According to the data provided by the Census and Statistics Department, the amount of fresh vegetables supplied from the Mainland to Hong Kong in the past 5 years is as below –

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Fresh vegetables from Mainland to Hong Kong (tonnes)	761 636	756 685	765 533	789 345	821 781

Under the existing administrative arrangements, all Mainland fresh vegetables for supply to Hong Kong are imported via Man Kam To Control Point.

- (b) The amount of Mainland vegetables distributed through government wholesale food markets and the Vegetable Marketing Organization (VMO) over the past 5 years is set out below. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the VMO do not keep information and statistics on the distribution of vegetables leaving the wholesale markets.

Year	Mainland vegetables distributed through government wholesale food markets (tonnes)	Mainland vegetables distributed through VMO (tonnes)
2013	247 579	134 928
2014	242 842	127 020
2015	232 446	120 426
2016	224 971	105 229
2017	226 896	97 633

In respect of (c), (f) and (g), the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department 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 different means, regardless of whether they are distributed through wholesale markets or are for direct retail sale. CFS regularly reviews the food surveillance programme, taking into account factors such as past food surveillance results, food incidents in Hong Kong and in other places, and relevant risk analyses.

CFS maintains close liaison with the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and exchange intelligence on import of vegetables. CFS and C&ED conduct joint operations from time to time. C&ED would refer any suspicious cases of import of vegetables to CFS for investigation.

In respect of (d) and (e), details of unsatisfactory vegetable samples are tabulated below –

Testing Parameter	Number of unsatisfactory vegetable samples					
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Total
Metallic Contaminants	3	1	0	0	2	6
Pesticide Residues	2	24	71	40	13	150
Total	5	25	71	40	15	156

The number of vegetable, fruit and related product samples tested in 2013-2017 is tabulated below –

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
No. of samples tested	26 981	26 567	29 711	30 841	29 911

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