

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)138

(Question Serial No. 1147)

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:

As mentioned in Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2019-20 under this Programme, the Department will “follow up proactively the recommendations in the Audit Reports released in November 2018 and the Public Accounts Committee reports concerned to strengthen the functions of the Centre for Food Safety in food safety management and food import control”. Please advise this Committee on:

- (a) the additional expenditure and manpower involved in implementing the recommendations in the reports; and
- (b) the specific plans or measures adopted by the Department in putting forward the recommendations in the reports, and the timetable for implementation.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has set up a task group, led by the Controller, CFS, to take forward the recommendations of the Audit Commission and the Legislative Council Public Accounts Committee concerning the work of CFS in food safety management and import control. The task group has commenced comprehensive reviews on CFS' operational manuals and guidelines, staff management and supervision arrangements, training requirements, and manpower and resource requirements. CFS has started to roll out concrete and effective short, medium and long term measures to enhance its effectiveness by phases, including updating guidelines where there were inadequacies or ambiguities, enhancing training and supervision of frontline staff, and strengthening staff's law enforcement mindset and the keeping of data and records. In 2019-20, 35 additional civil service posts will be created in CFS along with an additional provision of \$25 million to implement the reviews and the enhancement measures.

In addition, CFS already put in place a dedicated team in end 2017 to look closely at its operational workflow, revamp its information technology (IT) systems for higher efficiency, and enhance its mode of operation through IT to support the work of its frontline staff and reinforce its capability in food import control, surveillance, incident management, risk assessment and traceability. Phased improvements to the IT systems of CFS will start from end 2019.

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