

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**FHB(FE)173****(Question Serial No. 1571)**Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (000) Operational expensesProgramme: (1) Food Safety and Public HealthControlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and HealthQuestion:

With regard to prevention and control of rodents in Hong Kong, please advise this Committee on:

1. the number of rodent infestation complaints received by the Department in each of the past 3 years, with a breakdown by District Council district;
2. the manpower and expenditure involved in prevention and control of rodents by the Department in each of the past 3 years and in the coming year; among the expenditure, the amount used for engaging service contractors;
3. the details and effectiveness of the anti-rodent operations in designated target areas in the past year; and
4. the details and effectiveness of the new measures on prevention and control of rodents adopted by the Department in recent years.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

1. The number of rodent infestation complaints received with breakdown by District Council district in the past 3 years is provided as follows -

District	2016	2017	2018
Central and Western	881	871	992
Wan Chai	534	691	909
Eastern	650	765	884
Southern	145	189	171

District	2016	2017	2018
Yau Tsim Mong	1 235	1 247	1 199
Sham Shui Po	996	1 181	1 381
Kowloon City	810	865	1 128
Wong Tai Sin	277	343	338
Kwun Tong	490	477	487
Kwai Tsing	215	254	336
Tsuen Wan	354	347	376
Tuen Mun	361	354	411
Yuen Long	550	795	892
North	275	306	387
Tai Po	268	346	352
Sha Tin	382	530	696
Sai Kung	337	358	381
Islands	278	331	343
Overall	9 038	10 250	11 663

2. The expenditure of the pest control services as a whole (in-house and outsourced) for 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 was \$544 million, \$569 million and \$637 million respectively. The expenditure of the pest control service contracts for 2016-17, 2017-18 and 2018-19 was \$268 million, \$277 million and \$321 million respectively. Total workforce of in-house staff of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) for 2016, 2017 and 2018 was 702, 702 and 699 respectively. Total workforce of outsourced pest control services for 2016, 2017 and 2018 was about 1 680, 1 740 and 1 860 respectively. There is no separate breakdown on manpower and expenditure involved in prevention and control of rodents.

3. 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 April and October 2018, 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. The Department placed poisonous baits and traps at 5 350 and 8 459 locations respectively, and destroyed 343 rat holes, with 630 dead rodents collected and 476 live rodents caught in traps in the first operation. In the second operation, the Department placed poisonous baits and traps at 12 328 and 14 016 locations respectively, and destroyed 460 rat holes, with 1 006 dead rodents collected and 829 live rodents caught in traps.

The 2 anti-rodent operations at designated target areas conducted in 2018 were considered effective. A total of 1 636 dead rodents collected and 1 305 live rodents caught in traps while the total numbers of dead rodents collected and live rodents caught in traps were increased from 41 038 in 2017 to 44 378 in 2018. Disinfestation operations by the Department at public places alone cannot solve the problem. It is important that members of the public should work closely with the Department in rodent control by eliminating rodents in their own premises. To this

end, it is part of the Department's anti-rodent operations to provide health education on prevention and control of rodent infestation to the public and to offer technical support.

4. The Department will continue to keep in view the methods of vector prevention and control recommended by the World Health Organization and adopted by the Mainland and other countries, like Malaysia, Singapore as well as those in Europe and North America. 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 is now carrying out trials on a non-poisonous bait for use in Rodent Infestation Survey (RIS) to improve its sensitivity. If it is found to be more effective, it will be deployed for use in all districts for the RIS. Besides, the Department is also carrying field trials on an automatic rodent trapping device using compressed carbon dioxide gas to drive a striker for killing rodents that touch the trigger when trying to access the lure set inside the device. The effectiveness of the device in controlling rodents is being monitored and assessed.

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