

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)179

(Question Serial No. 0132)

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:

The financial provision on Programme (1) Food Safety and Public Health in 2019/20 is estimated at \$1,432.4m, with an increase of 9.3% compared to 2018/19. It is also stated that 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 (CFS) in food safety management and food import control”. In this connection, will the Administration inform the Committee:

1. of the funding allocated to CFS in each of the past 5 years and this year;
2. of the details and additional resources to be deployed in respect of the recommendations; and
3. of the current progress on the implementation of “re-engineering of workflow and overhaul of information technology systems for more effective data management in the Centre for Food Safety”.

Asked by: Hon SHEK Lai-him, Abraham (LegCo internal reference no.: 15)

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. Specifically, a Food Trader Portal will be set up to provide a platform for electronic communication between CFS and food traders. The existing Food Import Control System will be replaced by a new IT system which will support the streamlined workflow and procedures on import control and the issuance of food export certification. There will be a newly developed Food Incident Management System to strengthen the management of food safety incidents. The above systems will interface with each other to provide a well-connected network of information in support of risk profiling and risk-based inspection to enhance food safety control.

The expenditure of CFS from 2014-15 to 2019-20 is set out as follows –

Financial year	Expenditure (\$ million)
2014-15	487
2015-16	504
2016-17	551
2017-18	592
2018-19 (revised estimate)	674
2019-20 (estimate)	752

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