

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)180

(Question Serial No. 1468)

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:

Regarding the mosquito breeding places eliminated, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. Hong Kong saw an outbreak of dengue fever last year with a record high number of local cases, but no enhanced preventive measures are taken this year. What are the reasons for that?
2. In the face of chemical resistance developed among mosquitoes, will new technologies be applied in mosquito control? If yes, the details; if no, the reason(s).

Asked by: Hon SHEK Lai-him, Abraham (LegCo internal reference no.: 46)

Reply:

1. In view of the 29 local dengue fever cases recorded in Hong Kong last year and that the disease is highly prevalent in neighbouring areas, government departments have stepped up their mosquito prevention and control work in venues under their purview.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has enhanced preventive measures in 2019. These include launching the Anti-mosquito Campaign in early 2019 to enhance public awareness on the potential risks of mosquito-borne diseases, encourage community participation and promote coordination among government departments in anti-mosquito work; as well as territory-wide Thematic Mosquito Prevention and Control Special Operation in March 2019 and July 2019 to sustain the momentum of the mosquito control work.

To enhance coordination among departments, the inter-departmental Pest Control Steering Committee (PCSC) chaired by the Under-Secretary for Food and Health met in January and March 2019 to discuss how to improve the Government's overall surveillance and to map out the focus of pest control work and work plan for the year.

The overall objectives are to strengthen prevention, co-ordination and surveillance. FEHD will arrange All-out Anti-mosquito Operations tentatively starting from early April 2019 and invite other concerned departments and members of public to take parallel action to intensify the mosquito control measures, including carrying out fogging in the scrubby areas within a 100-metre radius of residences every week to kill adult mosquitoes, removing stagnant water weekly, applying larvicides, disposing of abandoned water containers every week, and trimming of grass to remove the potential mosquito habitats.

In addition, FEHD invited property management associations in early March 2019 to remind their members to take early mosquito preventive measures with focus on eliminating potential mosquito breeding places, carrying out inspection at least once a week and removing possible places that will lead to water accumulation. For control work, they are also reminded to use larvicide to kill the mosquito larvae in water bodies and to conduct fogging operations as necessary to reduce adult mosquito density.

The Food and Health Bureau issued a letter to 18 District Councils in early March 2019 to solicit local community support and encourage the public to carry out early mosquito prevention work in private areas.

Community support is vital to the successful implementation of anti-mosquito work. FEHD will make use of a wide range of promotional channels, such as broadcast of Announcements in the Public Interests on television, radio and MTR's in-train TV, display of posters at MTR stations and bus stops, as well as advertisements on bus bodies and tram bodies to raise public awareness of mosquito prevention and control. Relevant messages are disseminated through FEHD's website and the Keep Clean Ambassador Ah Tak's Facebook and Instagram page to encourage community participation in anti-mosquito activities. FEHD will also organise a variety of events and activities, such as roving exhibitions at major shopping malls of housing estates, outreaching health talks, as well as games and exhibitions at the Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre.

2. FEHD adopts an integrated approach in its mosquito prevention and control work with focus on elimination of mosquito breeding places. Pesticides would be used when biological or environmental control measures are considered not feasible or ineffective. FEHD carries out tests on pesticides used by FEHD itself and its contractors to ensure their effectiveness in controlling the target pests.

FEHD is also actively exploring the application of suitable technologies in its mosquito control work. We would keep in view mosquito prevention and control measures 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. Currently, FEHD is carrying out pilot tests on a mosquito control product that utilises female mosquito itself as a carrier for disseminating insect growth hormones to different water bodies, thereby preventing larvae from hatching into adults. Technologies or products tested to be effective would be applied across the territory. FEHD will keep an open mind in adopting or trying out measures that are

suitable for use in the local circumstances to further improve the effectiveness of its mosquito prevention and control work.

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