

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)216

(Question Serial No. 1632)

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:

Mosquito and rodent problems are serious in Hong Kong. District councillors in some areas in East Kowloon have filed complaints about the Department's inadequate efforts to tackle the rodent and mosquito problems. Several members of the Kwun Tong and Wong Tai Sin District Councils, who are members of the district organisation "Positive Synergy", and I have especially held a meeting with Dr CHUI Tak-yi, the Under Secretary for Food and Health, to reflect our views. In this connection, please advise this Committee on:

- (1) the number of meetings held so far by the inter-departmental Pest Control Steering Committee led by the Secretary for Food and Health, and the details of the new anti-rodent and anti-mosquito measures or proposals that have been formulated;
- (2) the effectiveness of the new rodent control devices (such as guns and infrared devices for killing rodents) employed by the Department on a trial basis. Will the use of these devices be extended to all districts in Hong Kong as soon as possible? If yes, the details and the expenditure involved; and
- (3) the details of the measures to be implemented in 2019-20 to enhance pest control services, as well as the additional manpower and estimated expenditure required for these enhanced services.

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

- (1) The Pest Control Steering Committee (PCSC) was upgraded from the Anti-mosquito Steering Committee in July 2018 and chaired by the Under Secretary for Food and Health. 3 regular meetings and 2 ad-hoc meetings in response to local dengue fever cases have been held since the PCSC's establishment. The PCSC has mapped out the focus of pest control work for members in 2019 with objectives in 3 areas, namely strengthening prevention, coordination and surveillance. For 2019, Members have

commenced mosquito prevention measures before the rainy season and will conduct fogging operations once the rainy season arrives. The PCSC provides a platform for members to grasp the latest situation of pest problems, report on their progress, work plan and difficulties encountered as well as to enhance co-ordination and effectiveness of such work, including promoting joint pest control operations (e.g. the anti-rodent operation at designated target areas), sharing best practices and strengthening contract management.

- (2) Since November 2018, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) has been carrying out 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. 15 traps, at a total cost of around \$60,000, were procured for the trials at different settings inside market complex in order to test its attractiveness and effectiveness in controlling rodents as well as comparing its effectiveness with traditional wire cage traps. The trials will be completed by April 2019 tentatively.
- (3) Pest control work, such as the control of mosquito, rodent and other disease vectors, is carried out by the Department. The Department carries out a series of operations including removal of water accumulation, as well as mosquito prevention and control work at potential breeding places over the territory. Emphasis will be placed on locations in close proximity to human residences, schools, construction sites, public housing estates, hospitals, illegal cultivation sites, waterfront public and private cargo working areas, cross boundary check points, typhoon shelters and cross boundary ferry terminals. The Department adopts multi-pronged strategies for rodent disinfection in designated target areas through elimination of the survival conditions of rodents, namely food, harbourage and passages, by improving environmental hygiene, stepping up rodent disinfection and enforcement actions. Emphasis will be placed on locations at markets, municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, typhoon shelters, lanes adjacent to food premises and other problematic spots as well as their surroundings. For effective control of other disease vectors, the prevention and control measures will be targeted at sites where the pest frequents.

The Department carries out vector surveillance programmes to monitor the distribution and seasonal variation of vector mosquitoes and rodents including vector surveillance of dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis and malaria as well as rodent infestation surveys, rat-flea surveys and ad hoc surveys on other insect pests. In response to vector-borne diseases, the Department also conducts vector surveys in surrounding areas of all locations visited by the patients. The Department will continue to step up public education and publicity as well as provide support and technical advice to other departments on mosquito and rodent prevention and control. It also provides training to staff of other departments to enhance their knowledge and skills in pest control.

The Department has been proactively applying technologies in the provision of pest control services. Dedicated staff will be assigned to explore technologies for trial use with a view to assessing their applicability and effectiveness before putting them to use in the territory.

The estimated expenditure on pest control services for 2019-20 is \$681 million. About 700 departmental staff and 1 800 contractors' staff are deployed to pest control services.

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