

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)334

(Question Serial No. 5069)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

1. Please set out the number of unlicensed hawkers arrested by the Department in each of the past 5 years.
2. Please set out the number of unlicensed hawkers prosecuted by the Department in each of the past 5 years.
3. Please set out the number of complaints against illegal hawking received by the Department in each of the past 5 years.
4. Please set out the number of food poisoning cases reported as a result of patronising unlicensed cooked food hawkers in each of the past 5 years.
5. Please set out the number of complaints about obstruction by unlicensed hawkers received by the Department in each of the past 5 years.
6. Will the Department re-issue hawker licences in 2019-20? If yes, what are the details and expenditure involved?
7. Will the Department designate new hawker areas at suitable locations in the territory in 2019-20? If yes, what are the details and expenditure involved?
8. Will the Department conduct studies on providing new public markets at suitable locations in the territory in 2019-20? If yes, what are the details and expenditure involved?
9. Will the Department carry out comprehensive improvement works for public markets, including full installation of air-conditioning and ventilation systems, improvement of hygiene, widening of passageways, upgrade of lighting, etc. in 2019-20? If yes, what are the details and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Tanya (LegCo internal reference no.: 104)

Reply:

- 1-3. The information sought is provided at Annexes I-III.

4. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) has over the years been taking stringent enforcement actions against unlicensed hawking activities involving the sale of cooked food. In the past 5 years, the Department has not received any reports of food poisoning cases as a result of patronising unlicensed cooked food hawkers.
5. Please refer to Annex III for the number of complaints against unlicensed hawking and obstruction. A further breakdown on obstruction is not available.
6. As at 31 December 2018, there were a total of 425 vacant hawker pitches suitable for allocation to eligible persons. The Department proposes to allocate the vacant pitches equally among 4 categories of applicants, namely (i) licensed newspaper hawkers; (ii) licensed itinerant hawkers; (iii) registered assistants with 5 years or more experience at the same hawker pitch; and (iv) members of the general public satisfying certain basic criteria. The allocation exercise is expected to commence in 2019 after consulting relevant District Councils. The work is performed by the Department with a team of 12 staff at an estimated annual expenditure of about \$6.7 million.
7. The Department's priority task is to re-allocate vacant pitches in existing fixed-pitch hawker areas to respond to the stakeholders' aspirations upon conclusion of the Hawker Assistance Scheme. We have no plan to set up new hawker areas at the moment.
- 8.&9. As announced in the 2018 Policy Address, the Government plans to build 2 new public markets in Tin Shui Wai and Tung Chung Town Centre. The Government has also initially identified suitable sites in the east of the Tung Chung New Town Extension Area as well as in the southwest of the Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area (NDA) for public markets. We are also looking for locations in Tseung Kwan O and the Kwu Tung North NDA to build new markets. These projects are at different stages of planning. We are working with relevant departments in delivering these new markets which will give the public more choices in purchasing fresh food.

In considering whether to build new public markets, the Government will take into account a host of factors, including demographic mix of the area, community needs, availability of market facilities and number of fresh provision retail outlets in the vicinity. On the suitability of any potential sites for a new public market when the need for it is confirmed, consideration will be given to their geographical location, existing and planned uses, usable area and ancillary transport facilities nearby, in order to ensure that, upon completion, the markets will be of a substantial scale and viability and that public finances and land resources can be optimised.

Separately, having regard to a preliminary assessment of existing markets and views gathered from the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Public Markets under the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene, the Department has proposed that, in the first phase of the Market Modernisation Programme (MMP), a fundamental overhaul for 4 markets and refurbishment and minor improvement works for at least another 3 will be taken forward. The

pioneering project of the MMP will be the overhaul of Aberdeen Market. We have been actively liaising with the tenants there and other stakeholders with a view to reaching a consensus on the way forward as soon as possible. The overhaul arrangements for Aberdeen Market will set a model for future similar projects. After the details of the Aberdeen Market project are finalised, we will kick-start other first phase projects progressively from 2019 onwards.

The Department has set up a dedicated team to take forward, among other duties, the planning of new markets and the planning and implementation of MMP projects with the support of 37 staff. The estimated expenditure to be incurred in 2019-20 is \$33.9 million. The capital works expenditure and recurrent costs of new market and MMP projects can only be determined when the scope of works is finalised, and upon completion of technical feasibility studies and cost-effectiveness assessment.

- End -

Number of arrests taken out against unlicensed hawkers

Calendar year	No. of arrests
2014	7 424
2015	6 945
2016	4 420
2017	1 766
2018	1 435

Number of prosecutions taken out against unlicensed hawkers

Calendar year	No. of prosecutions
2014	26 025
2015	23 054
2016	15 310
2017	6 402
2018	5 564

Number of complaints against unlicensed hawking and obstruction

Calendar year	No. of complaints
2014	16 468
2015	13 428
2016	10 512
2017	10 729
2018	10 031