

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)345

(Question Serial No. 3953)

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:

- (a) What are the method(s) and instrument(s) used by the Department for taking samples from vegetables imported from the Mainland for testing at the Man Kam To Food Laboratory? Please also advise on the pesticides that can be detected, the time required for each test and the maximum number of samples that can be tested each day (i.e. total capacity).
- (b) Apart from the import level, how many vegetable samples are collected by the Department at the wholesale and retail levels? Where are these samples sent for testing?
- (c) Further to the previous question, what are the method(s) and instrument(s) used for collecting and testing fresh vegetable samples at the wholesale and retail levels? Please also advise on the pesticides that can be detected, the time required for each test and the maximum number of samples that can be tested by the relevant laboratory each day (i.e. total capacity).
- (d) What is the quantity of vegetables available in the market each year? What is the Department's target rate of testing (in terms of percentage)? What is the percentage of vegetables to be tested so that the result can be considered statistically significant?

Asked by: Hon CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando (LegCo internal reference no.: 1057)

Reply:

According to the information from the Census and Statistics Department, about 850 000 tonnes of vegetables were imported into Hong Kong in 2018. The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department took about 23 950 samples of vegetables and their products for testing in that year, of which 16 970, 1 730 and 5 250 were collected from the import, wholesale and retail levels respectively.

While some of the vegetable samples collected at CFS' Man Kam To Food Control Facilities are sent to Man Kam To Food Laboratory (MKTFL) for testing of pesticide residues, the remaining samples of vegetables and their products collected at the import level, as well as those collected at the wholesale and retail levels, are sent to the Government Laboratory (GL) for comprehensive chemical analysis, including residues of pesticides covered under the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM), metallic contamination, preservatives, etc., and to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch (PHLSB) of the Department of Health for microbiological testing. The number of samples which the aforementioned laboratories can handle each day and the time required for each test vary, depending on various factors including the complexity of the tests and the types of samples involved. MKTFL, GL and PHLSB strive their best to complete testing all types of samples within the shortest possible time.

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