

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY****FHB(FE)068****(Question Serial No. 1803)**

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 number of food complaints handled by the Department under this Programme decreased substantially to 5 126 in the year, far lower than 6 000 as estimated last year.

- I. What is/are the main reason(s) for the decrease?
- II. Please set out the number of food-related complaints received by the Department in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by type of complaints;
- III. Please set out the manpower and expenditure involved in handling food-related complaints in the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hoi-yan (LegCo internal reference no.: 19)

Reply:

- I. & II. The number of food complaints handled by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department each year is related to the actual number of food complaints received by the Department in the respective calendar year. The number of food complaints dealt with by the Department in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by type of complaints, is as follows:

<b>Type of complaints</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Unwholesome food	2 669	2 430	2 354
Excreta/body parts of animals or insects in food	752	776	764
Foreign substances in food	595	604	464
Deteriorated food	769	663	448
Mouldy food	165	154	130
Chemicals in food	289	240	150
Fake/counterfeit food	157	36	20
Food labels	392	444	356
Sale of food beyond the expiry date	155	241	199

Packaging of food	8	13	13
Adulteration of food	5	7	7
Inadequately cooked food	115	113	120
Improper handling of food	20	13	31
Improper storage of food	14	7	11
Others	73	60	59
Total	6 178	5 801	5 126

III. Food complaints received by the Department are first handled by Health Inspectors (HIs) of the respective district environmental hygiene offices (DEHOs), and then referred to the Food Complaint Unit of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Department for follow-up investigation. There are about 320 HIs in the DEHOs. Apart from processing food complaints, they also undertake other duties relating to environmental hygiene. Therefore, we do not have a separate breakdown on the manpower and expenditure for handling food complaints. The manpower and expenditure of the Food Complaint Unit of CFS in the past 3 years are set out below:

<b>Year</b>	<b>Manpower</b>	<b>Expenditure (\$ million)</b>
2017-18	23 officers	11.3
2018-19	23 officers	11.2
2019-20	24 officers	12.5 (estimate)

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