

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)145**

**(Question Serial No. 2448)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified  
Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services  
Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Rodent infestation was serious in Kwun Tong and Wong Tai Sin in the past 2 financial years. I, together with some local organisations and District Councillors, have met with Dr CHUI Tak-yi, the Under Secretary for Food and Health, to reflect the situation. Owing to the current outbreak of Wuhan pneumonia in the territory, public awareness of environmental hygiene has been enhanced. However, rodent activities are still detected in various districts. Members of the public are concerned that rodent infestation may lead to the spread of diseases in the community. In this connection, please advise this Committee on the following:

- (1) How many anti-rodent operations were conducted in the 18 districts in the territory in the past 3 financial years?
- (2) What were the manpower and financial resources allocated by the Department in tackling the rodent problem in each of the 18 districts in the territory in the past 3 financial years?
- (3) Many citizens complained that the rodent problem is still serious in Kwun Tong and Wong Tai Sin and were doubtful about the effectiveness of the rodent control measures. Has the Department assessed whether the current manpower and financial resources are sufficient in tackling the rodent problem, and whether the rodent control measures are out-dated?
- (4) What are the manpower and financial resources to be allocated by the Department in tackling the rodent problem in the new financial year? Will the Department consider expanding the existing establishment or setting up a dedicated section in tackling the rodent problem? If yes, please provide the details, including the manpower and estimated expenditure.

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chun, Paul (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

- (1) In the past 3 calendar years, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department conducted a “territory-wide anti-rodent campaign” in two phases annually in various districts, with a view to enhancing public awareness on the importance of rodent control and encouraging active public participation in anti-rodent work. To step up rodent control in various districts, the Department launched the “anti-rodent operations in designated target areas” in various districts lasting about 8 weeks after the two phases of the “territory-wide anti-rodent campaign”. Multi-pronged strategies, including environmental hygiene improvement, rodent disinfestation and enforcement actions, were adopted to strengthen rodent prevention and control.
- (2) The overall expenditure on the provision of pest control services by in-house and outsourced staff in 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20 was \$569 million, \$630 million and \$647 million respectively (revised estimate). In 2017, 2018 and 2019, the total number of in-house staff responsible for pest control work was 702, 699 and 727 respectively and the total number of outsourced staff providing pest control services was about 1 740, 1 860 and 1 970 respectively. The Department does not have a separate breakdown on the manpower and expenditure involved in rodent prevention and control.
- (3) The Department has all along adopted an integrated approach to rodent prevention and control through cleansing, disinfestation, enforcement, publicity and public education. Such approach is premised on the recommendations and technical guidelines of the World Health Organization and is in line with the anti-rodent approach adopted by the Mainland and other countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, as well as those in Europe and North America. The direct disinfestation approach adopted by the Department mainly includes the setting of rodent cage traps and the application of poisonous baits that have been tested and proved effective. The Department invited an expert in rodent control, via the World Health Organization, to visit Hong Kong in November 2019 and to give advice on rodent control in the territory, including ways to improve the effectiveness of baits and traps. The Department is following up on the expert’s advice and will continue to promote rodent prevention and control in the community. In addition, the application of various technologies on baits and traps will be explored. Moreover, the Department exchanges experience in rodent control work with the relevant organisations and experts of other countries/cities from time to time.
- (4) In 2020-21, the Department’s estimated expenditure on pest control services is \$667 million. About 740 in-house staff and 2 040 staff engaged by the contractors will provide pest control services.

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