

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)115

(Question Serial No. 0845)

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 Diane WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the wholesale of live pigs, please advise this Committee of:

- (a) the total quantity and weight, the average daily quantity and weight, as well as the highest and the lowest daily wholesale numbers of live pigs supplied to Hong Kong in each of the past 3 years (i.e. from 2018-19 to 2020-21);
- (b) the monthly average, the highest and the lowest prices of live pigs supplied to Hong Kong in each of the past 3 years (i.e. from 2018-19 to 2020-21);
- (c) the total expenditure and average expenditure per head of pig by the Government in handling live pigs (such as the arrangements for slaughterhouses and quarantine management), as well as the manpower involved;
- (d) the number of fresh provision shops eligible for selling fresh pork in the past 3 years (i.e. from 2018-19 to 2020-21);
- (e) the number of registered Mainland pig farms supplying live pigs to Hong Kong, the change in that number and the up-to-date list of the farms, in each quarter since August last year;
- (f) (i) the total quantity of import of chilled and frozen pork, (ii) the top 10 regions that supplied the largest quantities of chilled and frozen pork to Hong Kong, (iii) the number of fresh provision shops eligible for selling chilled and frozen pork, and (iv) the number of cases uncovered by the Department pertaining to these shops selling chilled and frozen pork disguised as fresh pork, in the past 3 years (i.e. from 2018-19 to 2020-21).

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 1)

Reply:

- (a) The number of live pigs imported in the past 3 years is as follows:

| Year | Total number of live pigs imported | Daily number of live pigs imported | | |
|------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------|--------|
| | | Average | Highest | Lowest |
| 2018 | 1 468 150 | 4 022 | 7 049 | 1 188 |
| 2019 | 843 422 | 2 311 | 5 586 | 805 |
| 2020 | 638 138 | 1 744 | 2 219 | 222 |

There is no record on the weight of live pigs supplied to Hong Kong.

- (b) All imported live pigs are sold through auctions. The average auction prices of live pigs imported in the past 3 years are as follows:

| Year | Auction prices per picul of imported live pigs (HK\$) | | |
|------|---|-----------------|----------------|
| | Average | Average Highest | Average Lowest |
| 2018 | 1,211 | 1,571 | 1,053 |
| 2019 | 2,387 | 2,897 | 1,953 |
| 2020 | 3,149 | 3,588 | 2,710 |

- (c) The revised estimate of expenditure on inspection of live food animals in slaughterhouses in 2020-21 was \$48.3 million, which included the expenditure incurred for 92 staff posts of the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). In the year, the average expenditure on inspection of live food animals (including pigs, cattle and goats) admitted for slaughtering was about \$62.4 per head. The staffing and expenditure for handling live pigs cannot be separately quantified.
- (d) The number of fresh provision shops eligible for selling fresh pork in the past 3 years is as follows:

| Year (As at 31 December) | Number |
|-----------------------------|--------|
| 2018 | 1 244 |
| 2019 | 1 237 |
| 2020 | 1 236 |

- (e) The number of Mainland pig farms supplying live pigs to Hong Kong (registered pig farms) since August 2020, with a breakdown by quarters, is as follows:

| Quarter | Number of registered pig farms | Number of newly added registered pig farms (compared with the previous quarter) | Number of registered pig farms removed (compared with the previous quarter) |
|---|--------------------------------|---|---|
| 2020 3 rd quarter | 113 | 9 | 17 |
| 2020 4 th quarter | 110 | 2 | 5 |
| 2021 1 st quarter (as at 3 March) | 111 | 1 | - |

The updated list of registered pig farms is available on the website of the General Administration of Customs of the Mainland.

- (f)(i) According to the figures provided by the Census and Statistics Department, in 2018, 2019 and 2020, the total quantities of imported chilled pork were about 9 809 tonnes, 15 850 tonnes and 30 746 tonnes respectively, and those of imported frozen pork were about 240 581 tonnes, 184 760 tonnes and 197 591 tonnes respectively.
- (ii) In 2018, 2019 and 2020, the top ten regions that supplied chilled pork to Hong Kong were Thailand, Mainland China, Brazil, Australia, the United States, the Netherlands, Canada, Spain, Japan and the United Kingdom. As for frozen pork, the top ten supplying regions were Brazil, Mainland China, the United States, the Netherlands, Poland, Germany, Vietnam, Spain, Canada and Italy.
- (iii) The number of fresh provision shops eligible for selling chilled and frozen pork in the past 3 years is as follows:

| Year (As at 31 December) | Number |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| 2018 | 790 |
| 2019 | 848 |
| 2020 | 957 |

- (iv) The FEHD conducts regular inspections on fresh provision shops and market meat stalls and will follow up on reports of selling of chilled or frozen pork disguised as fresh pork. During investigation, if there is sufficient evidence indicating the sale of chilled or frozen pork as fresh pork, the licences of the fresh provision shops breaching the relevant licence conditions may be cancelled.

According to records, the FEHD conducted 36 blitz operations against 78 fresh provision shops in the past 3 years (2018, 2019 and 2020). There were 35 prosecutions instituted under the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) against 34 fresh provision shops for selling fresh pork and un-prepackaged chilled pork in the same premises or selling of restricted food without permission. Of these cases, 27 have been convicted and fined, and the remaining 8 are pending a trial by the court. For the fresh provision shops convicted for related offences by the court, the FEHD will consider cancelling their licences under the demerit point system.

- End -