

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)133

(Question Serial No. 3033)

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 Diane WONG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In early 2021, the Office of The Ombudsman announced the launch of a direct investigation to examine the effectiveness of rodent prevention and control by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department). The Ombudsman criticised the Department for committing "5 deadly sins", which included the ineffectiveness in rodent control, the failure of Rodent Infestation Rate surveys to reflect the actual situation, the grave problems of rodent infestation in a number of markets, the nuisances caused to the daily life of the general public and the spread of serious diseases. Please advise this Committee of:

- (1) the number of rodent infestation complaints received, the number of live rodents caught, the number of rodents poisoned, and the expenditure involved in rodent prevention and control in each of the past 3 years, with a breakdown by District Council district;
- (2) the number of fixed penalty notices issued, the number of prosecutions instituted and the penalties imposed in each of the past 3 years, with a breakdown by District Council district; and
- (3) the work to be carried out by the Department, the relevant timetable and the breakdown of the expenditure involved in 2021-22 in regard to The Ombudsman's direct investigation.

Asked by: Hon LEE Wai-king, Starry (LegCo internal reference no.: 75)

Reply:

In its press release issued on 14 January 2021, the Office of The Ombudsman pointed out that there were diverse public views on the rodent control work carried out by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and that the problems of rodent infestation in Hong Kong had received wide media coverage. Thus, it announced the launch of a direct investigation in this regard. The direct investigation is still underway.

- (1) The number of rodent infestation complaints received, the number of dead rodents collected and the number of live rodents caught by the Department in each year between 2018 and 2020, with a breakdown by District Council district, are provided at Annex I. The expenditure on rodent control services in 2018-19, 2019-20 and 2020-21 was \$198.3 million, \$217.7 million and \$242.4 million (revised estimate) respectively.
- (2) The Department mainly takes enforcement actions against offences like illegal disposal of refuse and preparation of food or washing of utensils at open space (such as rear lanes) that give rise to environmental hygiene concerns and rodent infestation. Pursuant to the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570), the Department will issue to an offender a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN), which is currently at \$1,500. Besides, the Department will also take enforcement actions against offences like preparation of food or washing of utensils at open space (such as rear lanes) under section 13 of the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X). The fines imposed upon conviction range from \$500 to \$5,000.

The number of FPNs issued by the Department against littering and the number of prosecutions taken under section 13 of Cap. 132X between 2018 and 2020, with a breakdown by District Council district, are provided at Annex II.

- (3) The direct investigation of The Ombudsman is still underway. The Department will continue to assist The Ombudsman in carrying out the investigation at the present stage, and will consider the recommendations made in the investigation report and take appropriate follow-up measures after it is released.

**Number of rodent infestation complaints received,
number of dead rodents collected and number of live rodents caught**

District	2018		
	Number of rodent infestation complaints received	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught
Central and Western	992	1 890	1 763
Eastern	884	2 398	890
Southern	171	713	439
Wan Chai	909	1 622	805
Kowloon City	1 128	2 592	1 666
Kwun Tong	487	2 434	819
Wong Tai Sin	338	1 441	413
Sham Shui Po	1 381	3 853	2 241
Yau Tsim Mong	695	2 097	1 895
Mong Kok	504	1 120	469
Yau Tsim Mong			
Sha Tin	696	858	703
Tai Po	352	771	585
North	387	1 034	464
Kwai Tsing	336	408	520
Tsuen Wan	376	823	1 631
Tuen Mun	411	503	128
Yuen Long	892	1 654	602
Sai Kung	381	480	231
Islands	343	1 183	240
Whole territory	11 663	27 874	16 504

District	2019		
	Number of rodent infestation complaints received	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught
Central and Western	1 074	2 029	1 661
Eastern	818	2 330	1 182
Southern	112	611	464
Wan Chai	988	1 533	1 213
Kowloon City	952	3 459	2 019
Kwun Tong	556	2 929	3 476
Wong Tai Sin	357	1 557	606
Sham Shui Po	1 200	3 578	3 291
Yau Tsim Mong	624	3 028	2 684
Mong Kok	537	1 144	347
Yau Tsim Mong			
Sha Tin	711	1 018	766
Tai Po	344	780	591
North	485	1 119	580
Kwai Tsing	295	395	768
Tsuen Wan	311	1 125	1 767

District	2019		
	Number of rodent infestation complaints received	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught
Tuen Mun	458	465	371
Yuen Long	776	1 554	1 490
Sai Kung	372	432	210
Islands	359	1 173	241
Whole territory	11 329	30 259	23 727

District	2020		
	Number of rodent infestation complaints received	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught
Central and Western	826	2 006	1 626
Eastern	872	2 245	1 313
Southern	172	647	492
Wan Chai	881	1 302	2 081
Kowloon City	929	2 753	2 054
Kwun Tong	517	3 848	4 357
Wong Tai Sin	245	1 305	1 507
Sham Shui Po	844	3 254	4 173
Yau Tsim Mong	525	5 059	4 238
Mong Kok	563	1 324	300
Sha Tin	506	1 118	737
Tai Po	384	771	589
North	394	1 102	580
Kwai Tsing	384	469	753
Tsuen Wan	383	1 034	1 837
Tuen Mun	380	548	321
Yuen Long	928	1 520	1 449
Sai Kung	400	521	226
Islands	198	1 162	239
Whole territory	10 331	31 988	28 872

**Number of FPNs issued against littering and number of prosecutions taken
under section 13 of the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X)**

(1) Number of FPNs issued against littering

District	2018	2019	2020
Central and Western	4 343	3 935	3 172
Eastern	2 384	2 275	2 971
Southern	877	687	508
Wan Chai	3 054	2 597	2 575
Kowloon City	1 352	1 372	1 404
Kwun Tong	1 731	2 040	2 466
Wong Tai Sin	787	894	848
Sham Shui Po	2 303	3 010	2 815
Yau Tsim Mong	5 451	4 886	4 731
Mong Kok	2 755	3 028	3 333
Sha Tin	1 477	1 485	1 566
Tai Po	953	809	1 112
North	5 704	5 015	2 514
Kwai Tsing	2 359	2 131	1 901
Tsuen Wan	1 548	1 431	1 476
Tuen Mun	1 334	1 531	1 887
Yuen Long	3 731	3 161	4 834
Sai Kung	699	692	824
Islands	518	932	800
Whole territory	43 360	41 911	41 737

**(2) Number of prosecutions taken under section 13 of the Food Business Regulation
(Cap. 132X)**

District	2018	2019	2020
Central and Western	6	5	2
Eastern	13	10	2
Southern	3	2	3
Wan Chai	0	1	1
Kowloon City	6	1	1
Kwun Tong	21	8	7
Wong Tai Sin	13	13	3
Sham Shui Po	6	10	5
Yau Tsim Mong	25	21	27
Mong Kok	3	29	5
Sha Tin	3	4	1
Tai Po	0	1	3
North	0	4	0
Kwai Tsing	4	5	1
Tsuen Wan	11	8	17
Tuen Mun	10	9	0
Yuen Long	7	9	8
Sai Kung	1	3	1
Islands	5	2	1
Whole territory	137	145	88

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