

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)158**

**(Question Serial No. 0692)**

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:

Under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2021-22, it is mentioned that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will overhaul and develop new information technology systems for more effective management of data in food import and food safety incidents. Please provide specific details, including the staff establishment and expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon QUAT Elizabeth (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)

Reply:

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department set up a dedicated team at the end of 2017 to fully review its operational workflow, revamp its information technology (IT) systems for higher efficiency, and enhance its mode of operation through IT to support the work of its frontline staff and reinforce its capability in food import control, surveillance, incident management and traceability. Launched by the CFS in phases beginning at the end of 2019, the Food Trader Portal (FTP) provides a platform for electronic communication with the trade. Through the FTP, food traders can complete registration as importers or distributors by electronic means. Starting from 2020, food traders can apply online for import licences and import permission in respect of meat, poultry, game, milk and frozen confections. It is expected that by June 2021, the online application service will be extended to the import of eggs and the report of food consignment arrivals to the CFS. Meanwhile, the CFS is developing the Food Import and Export Control System with a view of replacing the existing Food Import Control System to support various aspects of the workflow of import control and the issue of supporting documents for import and export of food. In addition, the CFS is constructing a new Food Incident Management System to strengthen the management of food safety incidents. The existing Food Surveillance System is also being revamped. These two systems are expected to be completed at the end of 2021 and 2022 respectively. The above systems, upon completion, will interface with each other to provide a well-connected network of information in support of risk profiling and risk-based inspection to step up food safety control. The interface of the systems is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2024. The CFS will continue to enhance its IT systems in the order of priorities.

The dedicated team in charge of the above work will have 87 staff at an estimated staffing expenditure of about \$71 million in 2021-22.

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