

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-FHB(FE)002**

**(Question Serial No. S013)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Ms Irene YOUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Follow-up question to Reply Serial No. FHB(FE)122:

Given that the stall operators who collected their licences in 2019 had no business at all in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, can the 7-year period of their licences be extended? As those who have yet to collect their licences can extend the time for collection of new licences so as to tide over the pandemic, why are the stall operators who have collected the licences given no assistance to extend their licence period?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wai-keung

Reply:

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department launched the scheme of Re-allocation of Fixed Hawker Pitches and Issue of New Licences in September 2019. Under the scheme, the vacated fixed hawker pitches were opened for application by persons who were interested in the hawking business. Except for applicants who are originally holders of Fixed-Pitch (Newspaper) Hawker Licence or Itinerant Hawker Licence, the licence operation validity period of applicants under other categories is 7 years. The arrangement is to promote the turnover of hawker licences, facilitate the turnover of hawker pitches and create opportunity for anyone interested in joining the trade.

According to the requirements of the scheme, eligible applicants can collect the hawker licence within 3 months from the issue of a notification letter by the Department. Some applicants were unable to complete the construction of stall within the specified time limit due to the COVID-19 epidemic which affected the fabrication of component parts of stall in early 2020. Therefore, the Department exercised its discretion to allow short-term extension of time for licence collection by these applicants. As for the licence holders who have collected the hawker licence under the scheme, more than 80% of them have completed construction of stalls and started operation amid the epidemic. Extending the operation validity period for the remaining licence holders is unfair to those who have complied with the requirements of the scheme. In fact, the Government has waived the

fees for a hawker licence in 2 consecutive years (2020-21 and 2021-22) to alleviate the impact of the epidemic on the trade.

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