

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)031

(Question Serial No. 0173)

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 (Ms Irene YOUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the prevention and control of rodents, please advise this Committee of:

1. the number of rat holes filled, the number of poison treatments of rodent infestation, the number of rodent trappings, the number of dead rodents collected and the number of live rodents caught, the number of rodent infestation complaints received, the number of rodent control surveys conducted and the Rodent Infestation Rate recorded, in each of the past 3 years, with a breakdown by District Council district;
2. the manpower and total expenditure involved in pest control work, including civil service staffing and staff cost, as well as outsourced service contractors' manpower and the total value of outsourced service contracts in the past 3 years and in the coming year;
3. the effectiveness of the anti-rodent operations in designated target areas in the past 3 years; the positioning and distribution of work for the ten-week territory-wide anti-rodent campaign, the first phase of which commenced on 3 January 2022, as well as the anti-rodent operations in designated target areas; whether the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign will be regularised; if yes, the details; if no, the reasons;
4. the expenditure involved and the effectiveness of each rodent control method in each of the past 3 years; and
5. whether the Government will change the calculation method of the Rodent Infestation Rate and adjust the rodent control strategy, given that there are views that rodent infestation is serious in Hong Kong and the Rodent Infestation Rate compiled by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has failed to reflect the actual situation of rodent infestation in various districts. If yes, the details; if no, the reasons.

Asked by: Hon YANG Wing-kit (LegCo internal reference no.: 7)

Reply:

1. The number of poison treatments of rodent infestation conducted in building blocks, the number of rodent trappings used, the number of dead rodents collected, the number of live rodents caught, the number of rat holes filled, the number of rodent control surveys conducted and the number of rodent infestation complaints received as well as the Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) in the past 3 years with a breakdown by 18 districts are provided at the Annex.
2. The manpower and expenditure involved in pest control work, including rodent and mosquito prevention and control, of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department are as follows:

Year	Civil service staffing for pest control work	Total number of staff employed by pest control service contractors
2019	727	1 968
2020	740	2 178
2021	745	2 232
2022	745	2 208

Year	Overall expenditure on pest control services ^{Note 1} (\$ million)	Government staff costs for pest control work (\$ million)	Total value of pest control service contracts ^{Note 2} (\$ million)
2019-20	663	268	914
2020-21	726	273	1,161
2021-22 (Revised estimate)	731	275	1,397
2022-23 (Estimated expenditure/total contract value)	751	277	1,515

Note 1: The overall expenditure on pest control services includes government staff expenditure, the expenditure on service contracts in the year and other day-to-day operating expenses in this regard.

Note 2: The total value of service contracts refers to the amount of the whole service contract period which has been changed from 2 years to 3 years from October 2019 onwards.

3. Apart from the routine anti-rodent work, the Department conducts a territory-wide and inter-departmental anti-rodent campaign annually, with a view to stepping up rodent prevention and control in designated target areas and reminding the public of the

importance of rodent control. The first phase of the territory-wide and inter-departmental anti-rodent campaign for 2022 was launched on 3 January and the second phase will commence on 4 July. During the campaign, the Department will, in collaboration with the relevant departments, strengthen inspections and carry out anti-rodent work in target biotopes, including public markets/municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, typhoon shelters and lanes adjacent to food premises. To intensify district rodent prevention and control work, since 2017, the Department has been conducting two rounds of 8-week anti-rodent operations in designated target areas immediately after each phase of the territory-wide and inter-departmental anti-rodent campaign. The Department will, based on a host of factors such as the RIR, the number of rodent infestation complaints, district feedback, etc., designate target areas for continuous improvement of environmental hygiene, enhancement of anti-rodent efforts and enforcement actions as well as targeted rodent prevention and control work. In 2022, anti-rodent operations in designated target areas will be conducted in May and October. During the anti-rodent operations, the Department will also step up public education and publicity, and arrange health talks for building managers of private buildings, persons-in-charge of food premises, and operators of market and hawker stalls, etc. to provide them with information and technical advice on rodent prevention and control.

4. The statistics on rodent control in the past 3 years are provided at the Annex. The Department does not keep a separate breakdown on the expenditure involved in each rodent control method.
5. The RIR serves to assess the extensiveness of the rodent infestation in outdoor public places within survey locations during the surveillance period, with a view to identifying potential rodent-infested spots within an individual survey location for specific rodent control operations. Since rodents may colonise an individual spot, the RIR does not necessarily reflect fully the rodent problem in the whole district nor assess the rodent problem in private places and the outdoor environment. Nevertheless, the RIR provides important information for identifying rodent control critical spots on which resources can be concentrated for carrying out rodent prevention and control work.

To further improve the accuracy of the RIR, the number of survey locations covered by the Rodent Infestation Survey (RIS) increased from 41 to 50 in 2020. Furthermore, the Department is working with two local universities on a study related to local rodents, with a view to obtaining further information on their food preferences and introducing baits that are more attractive to rodents and suitable for conducting rodent surveys. The Department will also actively consider extending the rodent surveillance coverage to cope with urban development.

Meanwhile, the Department has been refining various aspects of the release of the RIR and the follow-up actions in respect of the results of surveys. As regards the release of information on the RIR, the Department will continue to step up data sharing with other departments. In addition to the release of results of individual survey locations to the relevant departments by e-mail, the Department has also released detailed rodent infestation data recorded under the RIS to other departments through the Government's Geospatial Information Hub to facilitate their preparation of targeted anti-rodent operations in the venues within their purview. Since the second quarter of 2020, the

Department has released the RIR of all 50 survey locations to the public and uploaded the maps showing the areas covered by individual survey locations to enable members of the public to have a better understanding of the rodent infestation situation of particular locations and take effective rodent control measures.

To strengthen follow-up actions, the Department will conduct investigations into the rodent infestation of survey locations which record an RIR of 8% or above and enhance rodent control work at these locations. It will also convene a district anti-rodent task force meeting with relevant government departments and representatives from the organisations concerned (such as residential building managers/private organisations) and urge them to intensify rodent preventive and control measures, and to review and make suitable adjustment to their rodent control strategies, with a view to tackling rodent infestation.

Annex

District	2019							
	Number of poison treatments of rodent infestation in building blocks	Number of rodent trappings	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught	Number of rat holes filled	Number of rodent control surveys	Number of rodent infestation complaints received	Rodent Infestation Rate
Central and Western	4 594	4 912	2 029	1 661	260	23	1 074	1.6%
Eastern	21 771	2 483	2 330	1 182	217	40	818	3.2%
Southern	3 815	1 117	611	464	73	25	112	2.2%
Wan Chai	12 544	3 569	1 533	1 213	611	42	988	11.7%
Kowloon City	4 640	11 196	3 459	2 019	415	28	952	6.2%
Kwun Tong	6 302	2 927	2 929	3 476	432	42	556	9.1%
Wong Tai Sin	960	1 210	1 557	606	201	25	357	4.9%
Sham Shui Po	284	5 286	3 578	3 291	2 963	34	1 200	5.3%
Yau Tsim Mong	1 482	10 334	4 172	3 031	4 653	50	1 161	6.0% (Yau Tsim) 3.0% (Mong Kok)
Sha Tin	4 693	9 608	1 018	766	922	25	711	3.4%
Tai Po	13 500	389	780	591	754	40	344	4.5%
North	1 667	449	1 119	580	380	35	485	1.6%
Kwai Tsing	1 305	2 672	395	768	234	42	295	4.6%
Tsuen Wan	3 009	4 716	1 125	1 767	186	42	311	5.2%
Tuen Mun	4 811	2 015	465	371	46	38	458	1.7%
Yuen Long	4 685	1 767	1 554	1 490	49	42	776	4.8%
Sai Kung	7 580	1 239	432	210	183	30	372	2.3%
Islands	680	2 601	1 173	241	384	30	359	5.3%
Whole territory	98 322	68 490	30 259	23 727	12 963	633 [^]	11 329	4.2%

[^] Only surveys conducted under the Rodent Infestation Survey and the Rat-flea Survey are listed. Other rodent surveys (1 325 in number) are not included in the breakdown.

District	2020							
	Number of poison treatments of rodent infestation in building blocks	Number of rodent trappings	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught	Number of rat holes filled	Number of rodent control surveys	Number of rodent infestation complaints received	Rodent Infestation Rate
Central and Western	4 752	5 058	2 006	1 626	193	25	826	2.2%
Eastern	19 813	2 895	2 245	1 313	171	40	872	7.4%
Southern	3 641	1 118	647	492	65	28	172	3.0%
Wan Chai	13 184	4 085	1 302	2 081	816	38	881	1.8%
Kowloon City	4 608	13 393	2 753	2 054	343	35	929	4.4%
Kwun Tong	6 016	4 107	3 848	4 357	325	45	517	4.5%
Wong Tai Sin	832	2 234	1 305	1 507	134	30	245	1.2%
Sham Shui Po	270	4 850	3 254	4 173	2 654	40	844	2.4%
Yau Tsim Mong	2 685	11 586	6 383	4 538	4 729	50	1 088	7.4% (Yau Tsim) 3.0% (Mong Kok)
Sha Tin	5 060	9 679	1 118	737	956	32	506	6.0%
Tai Po	13 260	419	771	589	503	40	384	6.4%
North	1 701	470	1 102	580	100	35	394	2.5%
Kwai Tsing	1 296	3 086	469	753	295	47	384	3.2%
Tsuen Wan	2 981	5 212	1 034	1 837	324	42	383	5.6%
Tuen Mun	5 274	2 023	548	321	85	43	380	2.0%
Yuen Long	5 314	7 263	1 520	1 449	18	45	928	3.0%
Sai Kung	8 672	1 737	521	226	254	35	400	1.5%
Islands	742	2 615	1 162	239	382	28	198	1.4%
Whole territory	100 101	81 830	31 988	28 872	12 347	678*	10 331	3.6%

* Only surveys conducted under the Rodent Infestation Survey and the Rat-flea Survey are listed. Other rodent surveys (1 292 in number) are not included in the breakdown.

District	2021							
	Number of poison treatments of rodent infestation in building blocks	Number of rodent trappings	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught	Number of rat holes filled	Number of rodent control surveys	Number of rodent infestation complaints received	Rodent Infestation Rate
Central and Western	4 800	5 115	2 040	1 679	110	27	822	2.2%
Eastern	17 921	7 229	2 053	2 259	116	48	810	4.2%
Southern	3 343	1 206	706	537	243	50	206	2.1%
Wan Chai	13 056	4 045	1 532	2 920	642	15	986	5.5%
Kowloon City	5 469	9 540	2 474	2 102	90	33	1 064	3.8%
Kwun Tong	6 264	4 490	2 740	3 528	116	47	349	0.0%
Wong Tai Sin	1 964	3 435	1 424	2 137	173	33	365	4.9%
Sham Shui Po	414	6 449	3 763	6 198	5 943	33	846	5.2%
Yau Tsim Mong	4 080	12 571	6 732	4 690	7 553	45	1 215	8.7% (Yau Tsim) 3.4% (Mong Kok)
Sha Tin	5 291	8 786	1 237	799	1 036	47	473	1.5%
Tai Po	14 794	771	1 126	713	126	41	409	3.6%
North	1 705	864	1 307	760	5	47	356	2.2%
Kwai Tsing	1 692	3 048	466	747	374	47	520	2.5%
Tsuen Wan	3 014	5 112	958	1 864	449	41	403	4.6%
Tuen Mun	6 011	2 146	881	755	96	47	508	2.2%
Yuen Long	6 679	6 900	1 634	1 377	328	47	860	2.3%
Sai Kung	12 402	1 868	874	539	54	47	688	3.7%
Islands	786	2 589	1 389	242	386	47	222	0.5%
Whole territory	109 685	86 164	33 336	33 846	17 840	742#	11 102	3.1%

Only surveys conducted under the Rodent Infestation Survey and the Rat-flea Survey are listed. Other rodent surveys (1 344 in number) are not included in the breakdown.

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