

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)079

(Question Serial No. 2321)

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 Environment and Ecology

Question:

With regard to enhancing and sustaining the effectiveness of rodent control work, please advise this Committee of:

- (1) the number of dead rodents collected, the number of live rodents caught as well as the expenditure and staffing involved in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by district;
- (2) the work carried out by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to step up pest control in 2022-23 and its effectiveness; and
- (3) the other new measures, apart from continuing with night rodent operations and trial use of new rodent control technologies and tools, to be taken to enhance and sustain the effectiveness of rodent control work in 2023-24.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, Joephy (LegCo internal reference no.: 35)

Reply:

- (1) The number of dead rodents collected and the number of live rodents caught by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by District Council district, are provided at the **Annex**.

The manpower involved in pest control work, including rodent and mosquito prevention and control, of FEHD are provided as follows:

Year	Civil service staffing for pest control work	Total number of staff employed by pest control service contractors
2020	740	2 178
2021	745	2 232
2022	745	2 199

The overall expenditure of FEHD on pest control services in the past 3 financial years (2020-21 to 2022-23) were \$726 million, \$762 million and \$796 million (revised estimate) respectively.

- (2) FEHD has stepped up rodent control work since the establishment of the current-term Government, and its efforts have borne fruits. In 2022, FEHD continued to carry out the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign and anti-rodent operations in designated target areas. 19 overnight rodent control teams were set up in July 2022. New technologies, tools and baits were put into use, including a wider application of T-shaped bait boxes. A trial scheme was launched in November 2022 to allow licensed food premises to place large-size waste containers at rear lanes for temporary storage of waste until collection by the cleaning workers they hired. The Code of Practice for Rodent Management and Checklists for Anti-rodent Work were formulated for use by relevant stakeholders. With the use of a multi-pronged approach, the total number of dead rodents collected and live rodents caught by FEHD from July to December 2022 was 42 114, around 20% more than that of January to June 2022 (35 118), and around 18% more than that in the corresponding period in 2021 (35 812). The number of live rodents caught has remarkably increased since the formation of the overnight rodent control teams. The number of live rodents caught during the second half of 2022 was 27 728, an increase of around 57% over that in the first half of the year (17 694), and around 50% more than that in the corresponding period in 2021 (18 459).

Besides, targeting rodent problems in markets and fixed-pitch hawker areas, FEHD has continued to implement deep cleaning operations in public markets and extended the intensive anti-rodent operations to all markets and fixed-pitch hawker areas. Between August and December 2022, a total of 8 026 dead rodents and live rodents were removed from public markets, around 56% more than that in the corresponding period in 2021 (5 156).

- (3) In order to effectively deal with the rodent infestation problem, a cross-sectional, inter-disciplinary and public participation approach, as well as the joint efforts of all concerned departments, are required. To further enhance the effectiveness of rodent control, the Environment and Ecology Bureau launched the Cross-sectoral Territory-wide Anti-rodent Action (the Action) on 28 December 2022 to encourage different sectors in the community (including the pest control trade, property management companies, operators of market and hawker stalls, the catering industry as well as the construction industry) and members of the public to collaborate with the Government in anti-rodent work and enhance public awareness of rodent control.

FEHD takes a proactive role in the Action. Apart from continuing to step up the routine rodent control work, FEHD also studies and tries out new rodent prevention and control strategies to enhance the effectiveness of its anti-rodent work, and keeps on providing support and advice on rodent control to the relevant departments and industries. Specifically, the rodent prevention and control measures to be adopted by FEHD in 2023-24 include:

- (a) continuing with the night rodent operations in all districts to enhance the effectiveness in capturing rodents;

- (b) continuing to use new technologies, tools and baits, including wider application of T-shaped bait boxes at suitable locations, piloting the use of alcohol rodent trapping device in more public markets and refuse collection points and introducing glue traps to some public markets and indoor facilities with more serious rodent infestation, as additional rodent control methods;
- (c) engaging 3 contractors to carry out a three-month project to assess the rodent infestation, draw up anti-rodent strategies and carry out anti-rodent work in Shek Tong Tsui Market in Central and Western District, Shui Wo Street Market in Kwun Tong and Heung Che Street Market in Tsuen Wan respectively, with a goal to bring in the latest and most effective anti-rodent strategies and methods;
- (d) extending the current trial scheme in phases after review to allow more food premises to place large-size waste containers in rear lanes and requiring such premises to strengthen rodent control, so as to improve the environmental hygiene and tackle the rodent problem in rear lanes;
- (e) stepping up public education and publicity and reminding the public of the importance of rodent control, including organising the School Cleaning Video Production Competition in collaboration with the Education Bureau to further enhance students' awareness of environmental cleanliness and strengthen their understanding of rodent control;
- (f) continuing to arrange health talks for building managers of private buildings, persons-in-charge of food premises, operators of market and hawker stalls, etc. to provide them with information and technical advice on rodent prevention and control; and
- (g) exploring ways to improve the existing methodology of rodent surveillance and conducting trials on the use of thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence function for detecting rodent activities at individual survey locations. The aim is to assess the feasibility of formulating a more representative new Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) to progressively replace the existing RIR, so as to better reflect the rodent infestation situation of the survey locations and facilitate the planning of anti-rodent operations at blackspots.

In addition, strategic anti-rodent operations are being conducted against over 100 priority rodent blackspots. More resources are devoted to improving the rodent situations in these areas in a comprehensive and sustainable manner, striving to achieve the indicator set in the 2022 Policy Address, that is, to reduce the number of priority rodent blackspots at least by half by end-2023.

**Numbers of dead rodents collected and live rodents caught
by FEHD in the past 3 years**

District	2020	
	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught
Central and Western	2 006	1 626
Eastern	2 245	1 313
Southern	647	492
Wan Chai	1 302	2 081
Kowloon City	2 753	2 054
Kwun Tong	3 848	4 357
Wong Tai Sin	1 305	1 507
Sham Shui Po	3 254	4 173
Yau Tsim Mong	6 383	4 538
Sha Tin	1 118	737
Tai Po	771	589
North	1 102	580
Kwai Tsing	469	753
Tsuen Wan	1 034	1 837
Tuen Mun	548	321
Yuen Long	1 520	1 449
Sai Kung	521	226
Islands	1 162	239
Whole territory	31 988	28 872

District	2021	
	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught
Central and Western	2 040	1 679
Eastern	2 053	2 259
Southern	706	537
Wan Chai	1 532	2 920
Kowloon City	2 474	2 102
Kwun Tong	2 740	3 528
Wong Tai Sin	1 424	2 137
Sham Shui Po	3 763	6 198
Yau Tsim Mong	6 732	4 690
Sha Tin	1 237	799
Tai Po	1 126	713
North	1 307	760
Kwai Tsing	466	747
Tsuen Wan	958	1 864
Tuen Mun	881	755
Yuen Long	1 634	1 377
Sai Kung	874	539
Islands	1 389	242
Whole territory	33 336	33 846

District	2022	
	Number of dead rodents collected	Number of live rodents caught
Central and Western	1 885	1 873
Eastern	1 363	2 982
Southern	465	936
Wan Chai	1 402	2 915
Kowloon City	1 915	2 271
Kwun Tong	2 037	3 779
Wong Tai Sin	1 298	2 481
Sham Shui Po	4 132	5 842
Yau Tsim Mong	6 639	6 862
Sha Tin	1 298	1 253
Tai Po	1 692	957
North	1 041	2 281
Kwai Tsing	692	1 007
Tsuen Wan	906	2 903
Tuen Mun	1 747	2 681
Yuen Long	1 550	2 723
Sai Kung	746	794
Islands	1 002	882
Whole territory	31 810	45 422

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