

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**EEB(F)095****(Question Serial No. 0839)**Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not specifiedProgramme: (1) Food Safety and Public HealthControlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Ms Irene YOUNG)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and EcologyQuestion:

The Japanese Government intends to discharge nuclear wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear power station into the sea between spring and summer this year. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- (1) the number and percentage of test conducted on imported Japanese food products, as well as the manpower and expenditure involved in the past 3 years; and
- (2) whether the Government will increase the number and percentage of test to be conducted on imported Japanese food products in the coming year; and if yes, the details, including the estimated number and percentage of tests to be conducted, the manpower to be involved and the expenditure to be incurred in increasing the required facilities.

Asked by: Hon CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)Reply:

Since 2021, radiation testing on imported Japanese food products has been subsumed under the routine annual Food Surveillance Programme of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. The numbers and percentages of imported Japanese food products sampled for radiation testing in the past 3 years are as follows:

Year		2020	2021	2022
Number of samples tested	5 affected prefectures*	24 337	5 933	6 482
	Prefectures other than the 5 affected ones	77 720	3 519	4 418
	Total	102 057	9 452	10 900
Percentage of samples taken from the 5 prefectures out of the total number of samples taken from all prefectures		23.85	62.77	59.47

* The 5 affected prefectures are Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma.

In response to the wastewater discharge plan of Japan, CFS has planned to increase the tests on imported Japanese food products, particularly those on aquatic products and targeted testing of specific radioactive substances. At present, a task force set up by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is conducting a review to see if Japan's discharge plan can meet the safety standard of the IAEA, and whether it will have a negative impact on human health and the ecosystem. The Environment and Ecology Bureau has set up an interdepartmental task force with CFS and the relevant government departments including the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Hong Kong Observatory, the Department of Health and the Government Laboratory to evaluate the impact of the discharge plan on food safety and draw up response measures. The details of the specific measures will be determined, having regard to all pertinent factors, including IAEA's final report and conclusion, as well as other relevant information and assessment results.

The majority of staff responsible for radiation monitoring of imported Japanese food products are also tasked with the work on the import control of other food imports. CFS does not have a breakdown of the manpower deployed for radiation monitoring of imported Japanese food products. The staff establishment for the aforementioned work and the overall expenditure in the past 3 years and in 2023-24 are set out below:

Year	Staff establishment (number of staff)	Overall expenditure (\$ million)
2020-21	100	53.95
2021-22	94	49.86
2022-23 (Revised estimate)	102	56.24
2023-24 (Estimate)	110	69.81

The overall expenditure in 2023-24 has covered the costs of the manpower and testing equipment required for stepping up the radiation testing of imported Japanese food products.

- End -