

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)125

(Question Serial No. 2641)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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

Programme: (4) Public Education and Community Involvement

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Community engagement is one of the ways to promote public health. By engaging in various public health activities, such as health seminars, vaccination and health checks, community members can acquire the relevant knowledge, be more aware of health, and learn about healthcare practices and disease prevention. In addition, government departments and health authorities can organise various charitable events to encourage participation from community members and take the opportunity to promote public health knowledge among them, so as to enhance their health awareness and health literacy. Regarding the promotion of food safety and hygiene, please advise this Committee of:

1. the effectiveness of the food safety education and publicity work and the expenditure involved in the past 2 years;
2. the details of the food safety education and publicity programmes organised in the past 2 years; and
3. whether publicity and education work on food safety in school was carried out for students, schools, parents and suppliers in the past 2 years, and the expenditure and details of the relevant activities.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Man-kwong (LegCo internal reference no.: 31)

Reply:

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has been promoting food safety among the public and the trade through organising various activities (including outreach programmes, workshops and the Trade Consultation Forums), publishing electronic publications on food safety (e.g. the monthly "Food Safety Focus") and producing different training and educational materials, etc.

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, CFS has stepped up its utilisation of video conferencing and online devices to facilitate risk communication. It has also made use of its website and various social media platforms (e.g. dedicated pages on Facebook and Instagram) to

disseminate important food safety information in a faster and more direct manner. In 2022, CFS collaborated with the District Health Centres (DHCs) across the territory to enhance public awareness of food safety through health talks and educational video broadcasts at DHCs.

In 2021 and 2022, more than 108 400 participants took part in 298 public education/exchange events organised by CFS in physical or virtual mode. As at the end of 2022, there were around 23 900 followers and 32 500 subscribers on social media platforms, representing an increase of about 36% over 2 years. Moreover, CFS conducts “Knowledge, Attitude and Practice (KAP)” questionnaire surveys for food handlers who have attended its food safety talks. The survey results show that on average, 90% of the participants had a clear understanding of the relevant messages on food safety after attending the talks. CFS will continue to review the effectiveness of the publicity programmes.

The publicity and education work on food safety in schools is as follows:

- (i) CFS has compiled the “Guidelines on How to Ensure School Lunches Ordered Are Safe” for reference by schools when selecting lunch box caterers. It has also compiled a booklet on “Developing a School Food Safety Plan Based on the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) System (for School Lunch Box Caterers)” for reference by lunch box caterers, so as to enhance the safety of lunch box production.
- (ii) CFS organises webinars for the trade to remind lunch box caterers to follow good hygiene practices during food preparation and develop a food safety plan based on the principles of the HACCP system. It also conducts webinars to remind schools of the points to note when selecting lunch box caterers and the importance of observing good personal, food and environmental hygiene.
- (iii) Prior to the resumption of face-to-face classes in 2023, CFS took the initiative to send letters to school management and lunch box caterers, urging them to pay attention to the food safety of lunch boxes supplied to students. It also organised additional food safety talks to brush up stakeholders’ knowledge of food safety in schools.

The expenditure on the aforementioned food safety education and publicity work was about \$6.6 million in 2021-22 and about \$5.8 million in 2022-23.

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