

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**EEB(F)132****(Question Serial No. 1443)**Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not specifiedProgramme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related ServicesControlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Ms Irene YOUNG)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and EcologyQuestion:

Among the indicators, the number of prosecutions against unlicensed food premises has decreased significantly. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- a) the relevant statistics kept by the Department in the past 5 years in tabular form;
- b) the reason(s) for the decrease in the number of prosecutions against unlicensed food premises; and
- c) whether the Department has measure(s) in place to increase its capability for prosecution against unlicensed food premises.

Asked by: Hon LUK Hon-man, Benson (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)Reply:

- a) In the past 5 years, the numbers of prosecutions instituted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department for operation of an unlicensed food premises are tabulated as follows:

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Number of prosecutions	3 169	4 031	3 052	4 598	3 775

- b)&c) The Department is concerned about the carrying on of a food business without a licence. Apart from conducting routine inspections, blitz operations are carried out based on the intelligence collected. If a person is found carrying on a food business without a licence, carrying on a food business upon the expiry of a provisional licence while a full licence is pending, or carrying on a food business in an area other than the approved area prescribed by the licence, the Department will take enforcement actions in the light of the actual situation, including instituting prosecutions against

the person concerned for carrying on a food business without a licence. The number of prosecutions instituted for operation of an unlicensed food premises is contingent upon a number of factors, including the actual operation of the trade. According to the Department's observation, in the past 3 years when the epidemic situation of COVID-19 was more severe, some food business premises suspended their business or adjusted their business hours, the problem of carrying on of a food business without a licence and the number of prosecutions instituted also changed accordingly. The Department will continue to closely monitor the operation of food business and combat the problem of carrying on a food business without a licence.

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