

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)134

(Question Serial No. 0770)

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:

Regarding rodent control work, please advise this Committee of the following:

- a. Please set out the expenditure, staffing and specific work involved in the provision of rodent control services by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in the past 3 years.
- b. Please provide the figures with regard to rodent disinfestation, such as the number of dead rodents collected, the number of live rodents caught, the number of rodent infestation complaints received and the number of operations conducted, in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by 18 districts.
- c. It is noted that the Government launched a pilot scheme earlier on to deploy wireless motion sensors, rodent traps, bait boxes, etc., through the application of Internet of Things solutions, with a view to stepping up the monitoring of rodent prevention and control work in markets. How effective was the pilot scheme?
- d. The Government launched the Cross-sectoral Territory-wide Anti-rodent Action in December 2022. Please provide the details of the work involved. Has the Government assessed its effectiveness?

Asked by: Hon NGAN Man-yu (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

- a. The manpower involved in the pest control work, including rodent and mosquito prevention and control, of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) in the past 3 years is 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

In the past 3 financial years (2020-21 to 2022-2023), the overall expenditure of FEHD on pest control were \$726 million, \$762 million and \$796 million (revised estimate) respectively. The expenditure covered not only rodent prevention and control but also the prevention and control work of mosquitoes and other arthropod pests with public health importance. Besides, FEHD's work on rodent prevention and control is not limited to "rodent disinfection" only. Such work also includes measures to prevent rodent breeding (such as filling of rodent holes, installation of rodent guards, removal of rubbish and junk, etc.), daily inspections, law enforcement, technical support for different departments/organisations, publicity and education, as well as follow-ups to complaints.

- b. The number of dead rodents collected, the number of live rodents caught and the number of rodent infestation complaints received in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by District Council district, are provided at the **Annex**. FEHD conducts anti-rodent operations of different scales and types in response to actual situations. Nevertheless, no breakdown of the relevant figures is maintained.
- c. FEHD is committed to enhancing the effectiveness of rodent prevention and control work in public markets through the application of innovative technologies. In late June 2022, FEHD launched the Rodent Control Pilot Project jointly with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) at Yeung Uk Road Market in Tsuen Wan, using the Internet-of-Thing (IoT) technology to improve rodent control management in the market. The use of IoT technology allows FEHD's large scale deployment of rodent traps and T-shaped bait boxes with sensors to difficult-to-reach locations where rodents frequently access. Through a web-based management platform, information such as the frequency and areas of rodent activities are collected for systematic analysis, which facilitates the formulation of rodent prevention and control strategies. FEHD and EMSD will review the effectiveness of the project in due course, and carefully study its feasibility and future application direction.
- d. In order to effectively deal with the rodent infestation problem, a cross-sectional, interdisciplinary 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 for 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 3-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 deployed to improve 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.

District	2020		
	Dead rodents collected	Live rodents caught	Rodent infestation complaints received
Central and Western	2 006	1 626	826
Eastern	2 245	1 313	872
Southern	647	492	172
Wan Chai	1 302	2 081	881
Kowloon City	2 753	2 054	929
Kwun Tong	3 848	4 357	517
Wong Tai Sin	1 305	1 507	245
Sham Shui Po	3 254	4 173	844
Yau Tsim Mong	6 383	4 538	1 088
Sha Tin	1 118	737	506
Tai Po	771	589	384
North	1 102	580	394
Kwai Tsing	469	753	384
Tsuen Wan	1 034	1 837	383
Tuen Mun	548	321	380
Yuen Long	1 520	1 449	928
Sai Kung	521	226	400
Islands	1 162	239	198
Whole Territory	31 988	28 872	10 331

District	2021		
	Dead rodents collected	Live rodents caught	Rodent infestation complaints received
Central and Western	2 040	1 679	822
Eastern	2 053	2 259	810
Southern	706	537	206
Wan Chai	1 532	2 920	986
Kowloon City	2 474	2 102	1 064
Kwun Tong	2 740	3 528	349
Wong Tai Sin	1 424	2 137	365
Sham Shui Po	3 763	6 198	846
Yau Tsim Mong	6 732	4 690	1 215
Sha Tin	1 237	799	473
Tai Po	1 126	713	409
North	1 307	760	356
Kwai Tsing	466	747	520
Tsuen Wan	958	1 864	403
Tuen Mun	881	755	508
Yuen Long	1 634	1 377	860
Sai Kung	874	539	688
Islands	1 389	242	222
Whole Territory	33 336	33 846	11 102

District	2022		
	Dead rodents collected	Live rodents caught	Rodent infestation complaints received
Central and Western	1 885	1 873	655
Eastern	1 363	2 982	682
Southern	465	936	134
Wan Chai	1 402	2 915	829
Kowloon City	1 915	2 271	823
Kwun Tong	2 037	3 779	346
Wong Tai Sin	1 298	2 481	243
Sham Shui Po	4 132	5 842	1 014
Yau Tsim Mong	6 639	6 862	1 741
Sha Tin	1 298	1 253	499
Tai Po	1 692	957	384
North	1 041	2 281	310
Kwai Tsing	692	1 007	632
Tsuen Wan	906	2 903	423
Tuen Mun	1 747	2 681	496
Yuen Long	1 550	2 723	887
Sai Kung	746	794	474
Islands	1 002	882	191
Whole Territory	31 810	45 422	10 763

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