

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

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(Question Serial No. 0298)

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:

To tackle the serious rodent problem in Hong Kong, the Government has set the target of reducing the number of priority rodent blackspots by 50% in 2023-24 and drawn up a series of pest control measures. Please advise this Committee of the following:

- (a) What is the estimated number of priority rodent blackspots in the territory? Is there any increase or decrease as compared with the past 3 years? What are the specific figures?
- (b) What are the estimated expenditure and manpower required for the handling and control of rodent infestation for 2023-24? Will outsourced service contractors be engaged and what is the estimated expenditure?
- (c) Did the night rodent operations incur additional manpower and expenditure, including the engagement of outsourced service contractors (if any), in 2022-23? What are the details?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony (LegCo internal reference no.: 27)

Reply:

- (a) The Chief Executive has set in the 2022 Policy Address a work indicator to reduce the number of priority rodent blackspots at least by half by end-2023. There are 108 priority rodent blackspots over the territory, including rodent blackspots released by the District Matters Co-ordination Task Force and those identified by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department based on the number of complaints received, views from the local community and observation of staff during routine inspections, etc. Currently, routine and strategic anti-rodent operations targeting such blackspots are carried out by the Department. More resources are deployed to improve the rodent infestation situations in these areas in a comprehensive and sustainable manner. The Department has all along been conducting anti-rodent operations in areas with more serious rodent infestation, but in the past it has not kept any breakdown of rodent blackspots or use them to set any work indicator.

- (b) 745 in-house staff and 2 175 staff engaged by the contractors provide pest control services, including rodent and mosquito control services. In 2023-24, the total estimated expenditure on pest control is \$797 million, including the estimated expenditure of \$449 million for outsourced pest control service contracts.
- (c) Since July 2022, the Department has set up 19 overnight rodent control teams in all districts under outsourced service contracts. In addition, 11 rodent inspection officers have been engaged to arrange and supervise the work of the teams. The information on the manpower and expenditure involved in 2022-23 is provided as follows:

Team/Post	Number of teams	Number of staff	Expenditure (revised estimate) (\$ million)
Overnight rodent control team	19	57	10
Rodent inspection officer	N.A.	11	4
Total	19	68	14

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