

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 1313)**

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:

Under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2024-25, it is stated that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will continue to review and update local food safety standards, guidelines and regulatory arrangements. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (a) How many food samples were taken by the Department for testing of veterinary drug residues and additives and how many cases of non-compliance were found in each of the past 5 years? What follow-up actions were taken by the Department?
- (b) Will new measures be introduced to step up food surveillance in 2024-25? If yes, what are the details and estimated expenditure? If no, what is/are the reason(s)?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wai-keung (LegCo internal reference no.: 18)

Reply:

- (a) The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department implements the Food Surveillance Programme to take food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels under a risk-based principle for microbiological, chemical and radiological testing on an ongoing basis. In the past 5 years (i.e. 2019 to 2023), CFS tested more than 59 000 food samples for veterinary drug residues and food additives. The test results of all samples, except for 200, were satisfactory. The overall satisfaction rate was 99.7%. The relevant information is tabulated as follows:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>Total</b>
Number of food samples tested for veterinary drug residues and food additives	11 644	11 444	12 141	11 532	12 272	59 033
Number of food samples detected with veterinary drug residues and food additives exceeding the relevant limits	41	22	46	48	43	200

CFS has taken appropriate follow-up actions on these cases, including tracing the sources, informing the relevant authorities of the places of origin, instructing vendors to stop selling the food, recalling and disposing of the implicated food, and making public announcements.

- (b) In 2024-25, CFS will enhance its surveillance of online food sales by increasing the number of online food samples to be taken for testing to over 8 800. In response to Japan's nuclear-contaminated water discharge plan, CFS has stepped up the radiation testing on imported Japanese food. CFS took more than 42 000 samples of imported Japanese food for radiation testing in 2023. Based on projections from the testing approach and data of 2023, it is estimated that about 80 000 samples of imported Japanese food will be collected for radiation testing in 2024-25, but the actual figures will depend on the imported consignments, their quantity and the testing strategy.

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