

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)098

(Question Serial No. 2556)

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:

Rodent infestation is serious at markets in Sha Tin and Tai Po Districts, and the problem has existed for a long time without improvement. With regard to the initiatives to improve the current situation, please advise this Committee of:

- (1) the statistics on rodent control work and the Rodent Infestation Rates of Sha Tin and Tai Po Districts in the past 3 years;
- (2) the specific rodent control plans for Sha Tin and Tai Po Districts in 2024-25, the preparation and the expected effectiveness;
- (3) the numbers of in-house staff and outsourced contractor staff engaged in the provision of pest control services under the Sha Tin and Tai Po District Environmental Hygiene Offices and the expenditure involved in the past 3 years; and
- (4) the number of alcohol rodent trapping devices installed and the number of rodents caught each month since the introduction of the device to Sha Tin and Tai Po Districts.

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 24)

Reply:

- (1) The statistics of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on rodent control work and the Rodent Infestation Rates of Sha Tin and Tai Po Districts in the past 3 years are provided at **Annex**.
- (2) In 2024-25, apart from continuing to step up the routine rodent prevention and control work, FEHD will also adopt targeted rodent prevention and control strategies to enhance the effectiveness of its anti-rodent work, and keep 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 all districts across the territory, including Sha Tin and Tai Po Districts, in 2024-25 include:
 - (a) continuing with the overnight 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 and pilot use of alcohol rodent trapping devices and glue traps in more public markets and refuse collection points;
- (c) extending the current arrangement of allowing food premises to place large-size waste containers in suitable 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;
- (d) fully adopting thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence technology for monitoring rodent infestation and formulating the “Rodent Absence Rate” to replace the original Rodent Infestation Rate, so as to plan rodent prevention and control work and deploy more effective anti-rodent actions in blackspots;
- (e) continuing to assist the Environment and Ecology Bureau to implement the Cross-sectoral Territory-wide Anti-rodent Action to encourage different sectors in the community, including property management companies, operators of market and hawker stalls, the catering industry, the construction industry and the pest control trade to strengthen anti-rodent work within their respective sectors, and arranging health talks to provide them with information on rodent prevention and control; and
- (f) continuing to carry out public education and publicity activities to remind the public of the importance of rodent control.

In addition, FEHD will continue to conduct strategic anti-rodent operations against 97 priority rodent blackspots in 2024, including a total of 8 priority rodent blackspots in Sha Tin and Tai Po Districts, in order to achieve the indicator set in the 2023 Policy Address, that is, to reduce the number of priority rodent blackspots by 60% by end-2024.

- (3) The numbers of in-house staff and contractor staff engaged in the provision of pest control services under the Sha Tin and Tai Po District Environmental Hygiene Offices in the past 3 years are tabulated as follows:

District	Staff	2021	2022	2023
Sha Tin District	In-house staff	43	43	43
	Contractor staff	126	135	141
Tai Po District	In-house staff	30	30	30
	Contractor staff	120	105	111

The overall expenditure of FEHD on pest control services in the past 3 years is tabulated as follows:

Year	Overall expenditure on pest control services ^{Note} (\$ million)
2021-22	762
2022-23	786
2023-24 (Revised estimate)	808

Note: The overall expenditure on pest control services includes the expenditure on government staff, service contracts and other day-to-day operating expenses in this regard.

FEHD does not keep a separate breakdown of the expenditures of individual District Environmental Hygiene Offices on rodent control services.

- (4) Since April 2023, FEHD has placed 18 alcohol rodent trapping devices in the facilities under the purview of Sha Tin and Tai Po Districts. The number of rodents caught each month is as follows:

District	Number of rodents caught with alcohol rodent trapping devices 2023								
	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Sha Tin District	2	16	1	15	7	13	5	1	1
Tai Po District	27	43	19	19	23	15	10	30	15

**Statistics on pest control work and Rodent Infestation Rate
of Sha Tin District from 2021 to 2023**

Item	2021	2022	2023
Number of poison treatments of rodent infestation in building blocks and other public places	5 291	5 294	4 622
Number of rodent trappings	8 786	2 325	3 562
Number of dead rodents collected	1 237	1 298	917
Number of live rodents caught	799	1 253	2 598
Number of rat holes filled	1 036	1 108	741
Number of rodent control surveys	47	36	54
Rodent Infestation Rate	1.5%	2.9%	4.7%

**Statistics on pest control work and Rodent Infestation Rate
of Tai Po District from 2021 to 2023**

Item	2021	2022	2023
Number of poison treatments of rodent infestation in building blocks and other public places	14 794	14 452	14 103
Number of rodent trappings	771	1 272	1 307
Number of dead rodents collected	1 126	1 692	2 322
Number of live rodents caught	713	957	1 465
Number of rat holes filled	126	448	765
Number of rodent control surveys	41	18	12
Rodent Infestation Rate	3.6%	0.9%	0.4%

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