

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

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Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

In 2009-10, the number of blood samples to be taken from poultry will decrease substantially by 40%. In this connection, by how much will the financial provision be reduced? What are the specific plans for prevention of avian influenza in 2009-10?

Asked by : Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply :

The estimated number of blood samples for 2009 is contingent on the estimated number of live poultry to be supplied from the Mainland. The usual daily import limit on live chickens came down from 20 000 in January 2008 to the current 7 000 chickens. This in turn reduces the number of blood samples that needs to be taken. Notwithstanding such reduction, the provision for the overall prevention of avian influenza in 2009-10 remains the same given the persistent threat of avian influenza and the need for the Administration to remain vigilant against the risks posed by the virus.

Regarding the control of imported live poultry, the measures taken by the Department to prevent the outbreak of avian influenza in Hong Kong include: poultry farm inspections and liaison with the Mainland authorities to ensure that requirements on animal health, quarantine and farm conditions are complied with; inspection of every consignment of imported poultry, including verification of Animal Health Certificates; collecting blood samples and cloacal swabs for laboratory testing of avian influenza H5. Besides, the Department has also implemented various measures at the retail outlets. These include enforcing no overnight stocking of live poultry at retail outlets; maintaining comprehensive surveillance by engaging a local university to take environmental swabs for

analysis and conducting regular checks on retail outlets to ensure compliance with the relevant licensing conditions or tenancy requirements.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ W H CHEUK

Post Title _____ Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date _____ 17.3.2009