

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

FHB(FE)135

Question Serial No.

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

2303

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Public Education and Community Involvement

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2009-10, the Department will strengthen health promotional activities on nutrition labelling. In this connection, please advise on:

- a. the details of the activities;
- b. the estimated expenditure involved;
- c. how the Department will assess the effectiveness of the activities; and
- d. apart from nutrition labelling, how the Department will regulate genetically modified food. Has the Department earmarked financial provision for implementing mandatory genetically modified food labelling? If yes, please provide details. If not, please give the reasons.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The information sought in (a) to (c) above is provided as follows -

The Department will strengthen health promotion on nutrition labelling with an array of publicity and education activities to reach a wider audience and achieve a bigger impact. In addition to outreaching programmes targeting at schools, seminars for the general public, TV and Radio Announcements in the Public Interest, other major activities include the annual function "Food Safety Day 2009" featuring road show, game booths, exhibitions and radio broadcasting, radio/TV programmes, advertising campaign at MTR stations and bus shelters etc. A series of train-the-trainer workshops for stakeholders in the medical and education sectors will be conducted to enlist community support in promoting nutrition labelling. The activities will be evaluated using a standard structure, process and outcome framework. Surveys will be conducted to assess any change in public knowledge, attitude and practice. The promotion work is undertaken by existing staff and the expenditure cannot be separately identified.

As regards (d), as stipulated in the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Chapter 132), all food on sale must be wholesome, unadulterated and fit for human consumption. This principle also applies to genetically modified (GM) food. In response to rising consumer demand for more product information, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has issued a set of “Guidelines on Voluntary Labelling of GM Food” in July 2006. The Guidelines serve to provide references for the trade to make truthful and informative GM labels in a consumer-friendly manner.

The lack of international standard is an important reason for not introducing a local mandatory labelling scheme for GM food. No provision is hence allocated for implementing such a scheme.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ W H CHEUK

Post Title _____ Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date _____ 17.3.2009