

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)055

(Question Serial No. 3094)

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 (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Regarding the anti-rodent work, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. Although the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has emphasised that various measures have been adopted to strengthen rodent control work, rodent infestation remains serious in many areas across the territory, in particular Cheung Hong Estate in Tsing Yi. Would the Department please provide details of the new measures under use and on trial? Which of them is the most effective for rodent control? How effective are the other new methods or technologies adopted for rodent control?
2. What are the cost differences between the new methods or technologies adopted by the Department and the conventional rodent control methods previously used?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Han-pan (LegCo internal reference no.: 39)

Reply:

- 1.&2. In 2024-25, apart from continuing to step up the routine rodent prevention and control work, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (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 adopted by FEHD in 2024-25 mainly include:
 - (a) fully adopting thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence technology to monitor rodent infestation situation and formulating the Rodent Absence Rate (RAR), so as to plan rodent prevention and control work and deploy more effective anti-rodent actions in blackspots. Compared with the conventional census baiting method, the new method has greater sensitivity and precision, a more comprehensive coverage and a lower risk of interference by environmental factors;
 - (b) carrying out routine rodent control work at public places and markets in all districts and conducting overnight rodent operations at rodent blackspots, so as to enhance the effectiveness in capturing rodents;

- (c) 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 device and glue traps in more public markets and refuse collection points;
- (d) extending the current arrangement of allowing food premises to place large-size waste containers in suitable rear lanes and urging such premises to strengthen rodent control, so as to improve the environmental hygiene and tackle the rodent problem in rear lanes;
- (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. FEHD launched the Anti-rodent Charter for residential premises on 31 December 2024 to raise awareness on maintaining environmental hygiene and cultivate good habits among residents; and
- (f) continuing to carry out public education and publicity activities to remind the public to eliminate the 3 survival conditions of rodents, namely food, harbourage and passages (i.e. to eliminate the food sources of rodents and block their potential nesting places and passages as soon as possible), and to take heed of the importance of rodent prevention and control.

Among these measures, FEHD considers the RAR a useful indicator that enables FEHD to effectively deploy resources and implement targeted rodent prevention and control measures according to the results of the Rodent Activity Survey (RAS). In fact, for the first half of 2024, a total of 90 locations have an RAR below 80%, indicating that rodent activities were higher. Nearly 90% (78) of these locations saw improvement for the second half of the year, with 42 of them achieving an RAR of over 90%. This reflects the fruitful results of the targeted measures adopted according to the analysis of the RAR. In future, FEHD will continue to refine its rodent prevention and control measures according to the analysis results of the RAR.

Moreover, apart from collaborating with various government departments to conduct 2 rounds of territory-wide and inter-departmental anti-rodent campaign each year, FEHD maintains close liaison with different departments and provides them with technical support to facilitate their adoption of effective rodent prevention and control measures in areas under their management. In particular, FEHD has set up the Working Group on Rodent Prevention and Control in Public Rental Housing Estates with the Housing Department (HD) to implement and strengthen rodent control work in public rental housing estates. Where necessary, FEHD will conduct joint site inspections with HD and take anti-rodent actions inside and outside the housing estates concurrently so as to enhance the effectiveness of rodent control.

In 2024-25, the new rodent control technologies and tools adopted by FEHD, their effectiveness and the expenditure involved are as follows:

Rodent control technology and tool	Effectiveness	Expenditure in 2024-25
Thermal imaging camera surveillance system	FEHD conducted trials on thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence analytical function in 2020 and found it effective in facilitating objective assessment of rodent infestation situation. FEHD has fully adopted thermal imaging cameras for conducting the RAS as a replacement for the Rodent Infestation Survey from 2024 onwards to enhance rodent surveillance in districts and deploy more effective anti-rodent actions at locations where the rodent problem is more serious.	About \$12.67 million
Placing poisonous baits in a T-shaped bait box	The bait box was tested between October and November 2020. Test results showed that the T-shaped bait box was more effective than ordinary rectangular bait boxes in attracting rodents to enter and consume the baits. The equipment has been widely employed.	About \$130,000
Alcohol rodent trapping device	FEHD has conducted trials progressively on alcohol rodent trapping devices in public markets and refuse collection points since October 2022. The results are positive. The equipment will be used in suitable places as necessary.	About \$1.70 million

FEHD will continue to keep track of the rodent control technologies and tools in the market and introduce them for use at locations with higher rodent activities when appropriate. As the above technologies and tools are different from the conventional methods in terms of functions and applications, it is difficult to make a direct comparison of their effectiveness and costs. FEHD will, having regard to the actual circumstances and conditions, adopt suitable technologies and tools for the rodent control work.