

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)060

(Question Serial No. 0209)

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:

In Programme (1), it is mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will continue to review and update local food safety standards, guidelines and regulatory arrangements such as those for metallic contaminants and additives in food. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. The international standards or scientific studies to which references will be made when updating the standards for metallic contaminants and additives in food? How to ensure that the new standards can safeguard public health effectively? What is the estimated manpower to be involved in the above work?
2. How to evaluate the effectiveness of existing food safety standards and regulatory arrangements? Is there any plan to introduce new testing methods or monitoring measures and what is the expenditure involved?
3. How does the Department strengthen the monitoring of food production and sales chains to ensure that food safety standards are enforced?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hok-fung (LegCo internal reference no.: 11)

Reply:

1. The Policy Measures of the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address and the Supplement to the Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address proposed to review and update the food safety legislation relating to additives in food and food adulteration (metallic contamination), with a view to further enhancing food safety.

When reviewing and updating the relevant food safety legislation, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will make reference to the food safety standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and major importing places (such as the Mainland), take into account local situation (including dietary practices, food characteristics and reality check results) and stakeholder's views. CFS will update local food safety standards in a timely manner to safeguard food safety. As CFS officers responsible for updating food

safety standards are also tasked with other duties, we do not have a separate breakdown of the manpower involved in this area of work.

2. & 3. CFS implements the Food Surveillance Programme to take food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing under a risk-based principle on an ongoing basis. It will step up the testing of food samples in response to the implementation of the amendment regulations to monitor the enforcement of food safety standards, and will continue to conduct technical meetings with the trade and other stakeholders and prepare guidelines on the updated food safety legislation to facilitate the trade's understanding of the amended legislation and compliance with the relevant requirements. In addition, CFS has been working closely with testing institutions to keep abreast of new testing methods and regulatory measures at the international level for safeguarding food safety.

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