

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)061

(Question Serial No. 0210)

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:

It is stated under Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2025-26 in Programme (1) that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will continue to conduct Rodent Activity Survey and extend its coverage. The Department will also continue to implement and trial new measures to enhance and sustain the effectiveness of its rodent control work, including continuing with the overnight rodent control operations and trial use of new rodent control technologies and tools, etc. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

1. What new areas will the Rodent Activity Survey be extended to in 2025-26? What are the specific scope and method of the Rodent Activity Survey? How does the Department ensure that the survey findings accurately reflect the situation of rodent infestation?
2. What new rodent control technologies and tools will the Department trial? Will these technologies and tools be first trialled in tourist districts, such as Central and Western District, Yau Tsim Mong and Causeway Bay, etc., so as to enhance the environmental hygiene of these areas? What are the estimated expenditure involved and the expected results?
3. Has the Department consider strengthening co-operation with other departments and professional sectors to enhance the overall effectiveness of rodent control work? If yes, what are the details of the co-operation mechanism and resource allocation?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Hok-fung (LegCo internal reference no.: 12)

Reply:

1. From 2024 onwards, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has fully adopted thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence technology for conducting the Rodent Activity Survey (RAS) as a replacement for the Rodent Infestation Survey (RIS). The RAS will be conducted in all districts across the territory once every 6 months. Since January 2025, FEHD has extended the RAS to cover public rental housing estates managed by the Housing Department as well as parks and recreational facilities managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, making the survey more representative.

Compared with the conventional census baiting method, the new method is more effective in reflecting the distribution and severity of rodent infestation in a district, for it has greater sensitivity and precision, a more comprehensive coverage and a lower risk of interference by environmental factors. When conducting the RAS, FEHD will take into account a basket of factors, such as rodent-related complaint figures which have been confirmed upon investigation, the number of live and dead rodents caught, inspection results, the views from local communities, etc., to identify locations with potential rodent problems in each district to form a sampling frame. During each survey, based on factors such as geographical distribution and complaint figures, approximately 120 locations (including approximately 20 locations at venues managed by the Housing Department and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department) will be selected from the sampling frame through stratified sampling for installation of thermal imaging cameras, so as to effectively deploy resources and ensure the representativeness of the sampled locations. Artificial intelligence will be used to help analyse the thermal images and identify the presence of rodents. Based on the analysis results, FEHD will enumerate a Rodent Absence Rate for the district.

2. 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 RIS 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

Rodent control technology and tool	Effectiveness	Expenditure in 2024-25
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 more active rodent activities, including suitable tourist areas, when appropriate.

3. 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, which includes:
 - (a) conducting exchanges and communicating with the relevant government departments (including the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Drainage Services Department, the Education Bureau, the Government Logistics Department, the Home Affairs Department, the Housing Department, the Lands Department and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department) through the Inter-departmental Working Group on Pest Prevention and Control to step up collaboration and enhance the overall level of rodent control work of government departments. In case there is rodent infestation in venues under the management of other departments, FEHD will conduct joint site inspections with the departments concerned and take anti-rodent actions inside and outside the venues concurrently so as to enhance the effectiveness of rodent control;
 - (b) providing contract templates on pest control to the contract management units of the relevant departments;
 - (c) arranging workshops and talks regarding pest control for the relevant departments, assisting them to adopt effective rodent prevention and control measures in the venues under their management as well as to strengthen their monitoring of the performance and effectiveness of their outsourced contractors;
 - (d) formulating the Code of Practice for Rodent Management and making a series of videos on rodent control for reference by the pest control staff of the relevant departments; and
 - (e) setting up the Working Group on Rodent Prevention and Control in Public Rental Housing Estates with the Housing Department to implement and strengthen rodent control work in public rental housing estates.

Moreover, FEHD launched the Anti-rodent Charter (the Charter) for residential premises on 31 December 2024 to raise awareness on maintaining environmental hygiene and cultivate good habits among residents to create a rodent-free environment together. All property management companies/owners' corporations/residents' organisations of private residential premises, the Hong Kong Housing Society, transitional housing, subsidised sales flats and Tenants Purchase Scheme estates may sign up to the Charter. The participants should commit to assigning staff to coordinate anti-rodent efforts in their residential estates or buildings, conveying anti-rodent messages to residents, etc., and they will be provided with free technical support on rodent control from FEHD. FEHD will leverage the Charter to enhance the effectiveness of rodent control in private buildings.

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