

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)101

(Question Serial No. 0791)

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 rodent control work of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, please advise this Committee of:

1. the number of rodent blackspots in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by District Council district;
2. the number of dead rodents collected and the number of live rodents caught in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by District Council district;
3. the expenditure incurred by the Department for conducting the Rodent Activity Survey last year, the Rodent Absence Rate for each district and the estimated expenditure for conducting the survey this year;
4. the expenditure of the Department on pest control services in the past 3 years, as well as the new technologies tried out, their effectiveness and the expenditure involved;
5. the manpower and expenditure involved for overnight rodent control teams and the rodent inspection officers additionally engaged in the past 3 years, as well as the estimated manpower and expenditure for this year;
6. the number of in-house staff and the number of outsourced contractor staff engaged in pest control services in various District Environmental Hygiene Offices in the past 3 years; and
7. the specific rodent control plans of the Department for this year, their expected results and the estimated expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon LEE Tsz-king, Dominic (LegCo internal reference no.: 5)

Reply:

1. In 2023, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) conducted strategic anti-rodent operations at a total of 108 priority rodent blackspots in all districts across the territory and eliminated around 60% of the priority rodent blackspots (70 in total), achieving the indicator of reducing the number of priority rodent blackspots at least by half as set in the 2022 Policy Address. In 2024, FEHD conducted strategic anti-rodent operations at a total of 97 priority rodent blackspots in all districts across the territory and eliminated around 65% of the priority rodent blackspots (63 in total), achieving the indicator of reducing the number of priority rodent blackspots by 60% as set in the 2023

Policy Address. The number of priority rodent blackspots in 2023 and 2024, with a breakdown by District Council district, is provided in **Annex 1**.

2. The number of dead rodents collected and the number of live rodents caught by FEHD in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by District Council district, are provided in **Annex 2**.
3. From 2024 onwards, FEHD has fully adopted thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence technology for conducting the Rodent Activity Survey (RAS). FEHD has engaged outsourced contractors for installing and operating thermal imaging cameras as well as using artificial intelligence to help analyse the thermal images captured. The expenditure involved in 2024-25 was about \$12.67 million and the estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is about \$5.91 million. The Rodent Absence Rate (RAR) of each district in 2024 is provided in **Annex 3**.
4. In the past 3 financial years (2022-23 to 2024-25), the overall expenditures of FEHD on pest control services, including rodent and mosquito prevention and control, were \$786 million, \$795 million and \$871 million (revised estimate) respectively. The new rodent control technologies and tools adopted by FEHD, their effectiveness and the expenditure involved in the past 3 financial years (2022-23 to 2024-25) are provided in **Annex 4**.
5. The information on the staffing and expenditure involved for overnight rodent control teams and rodent inspection officers in the past 3 financial years (2022-23 to 2024-25) is provided in **Annex 5**. FEHD will continue to adjust the number of overnight rodent control teams according to actual needs and the availability of resources.
6. The staffing involved in pest control work, including rodent and mosquito prevention and control, in each District Environmental Hygiene Office of FEHD in the past 3 years is provided in **Annex 6**.
7. The overall estimated expenditure of FEHD on pest control for 2025-26 is \$856 million. Apart from continuing to step up the routine rodent prevention and control work, FEHD will adopt targeted rodent prevention and control strategies to enhance the effectiveness of its anti-rodent work, with a view to achieving the target of reducing the number of rodent blackspots (93) by 60% by the end of 2025. FEHD will also 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 mainly include:
 - (a) fully adopting thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence technology to monitor rodent infestation situation and formulating the 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 devices 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. In this regard, 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 to create a rodent-free environment together;
- (f) continuing to step up collaboration with other government departments in rodent prevention and control; and
- (g) 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.

Annex 1**Number of priority rodent blackspots**

District	Number of priority rodent blackspots	
	2023	2024
Central and Western	5	4
Wan Chai	7	6
Eastern	3	3
Southern	3	3
Islands	4	3
Yau Tsim Mong	10	10
Sham Shui Po	10	8
Kowloon City	10	8
Wong Tai Sin	6	6
Kwun Tong	8	7
Kwai Tsing	5	5
Tsuen Wan	8	8
Tuen Mun	4	4
Yuen Long	9	7
North	4	4
Tai Po	2	3
Sha Tin	6	5
Sai Kung	4	3
Total	108	97

**Number of dead rodents collected and number of live rodents caught
by FEHD (with a breakdown by District Council district)**

District	Year					
	2022		2023		2024	
	Dead rodents collected	Live rodents caught	Dead rodents collected	Live rodents caught	Dead rodents collected	Live rodents caught
Central and Western	1 885	1 873	1 370	2 261	1 338	4 268
Eastern	1 363	2 982	905	4 004	714	5 819
Southern	465	936	546	1 268	440	1 562
Wan Chai	1 402	2 915	1 231	4 402	1 290	6 360
Kowloon City	1 915	2 271	3 811	3 458	4 213	5 356
Kwun Tong	2 037	3 779	1 293	4 277	1 166	5 016
Wong Tai Sin	1 298	2 481	4 031	4 592	4 304	6 566
Sham Shui Po	4 132	5 842	3 926	6 133	3 818	8 530
Yau Tsim Mong	6 639	6 862	6 230	9 342	6 128	14 550
Sha Tin	1 298	1 253	917	2 598	731	4 111
Tai Po	1 692	957	2 322	1 465	2 167	2 025
North	1 041	2 281	527	2 414	380	3 209
Kwai Tsing	692	1 007	1 173	2 052	1 245	3 917
Tsuen Wan	906	2 903	557	2 491	550	3 290
Tuen Mun	1 747	2 681	2 501	4 521	2 055	4 934
Yuen Long	1 550	2 723	1 960	4 843	1 639	5 528
Sai Kung	746	794	592	1 087	532	1 571
Islands	1 002	882	604	2 136	539	3 017
Whole Territory	31 810	45 422	34 496	63 344	33 249	89 629

RAR of various districts in 2024

District (as at 2024)	First half of 2024	Second half of 2024
Central and Western	95.3%	91.6%
Eastern	96.0%	94.3%
Southern	98.7%	98.2%
Wan Chai	87.1%	91.2%
Kowloon City	93.0%	90.1%
Kwun Tong	97.1%	96.3%
Wong Tai Sin	95.2%	89.6%
Sham Shui Po	90.3%	93.0%
Yau Tsim	95.6%	94.9%
Mong Kok	94.0%	91.3%
Sha Tin	98.4%	97.6%
Tai Po	98.3%	98.0%
North	95.4%	96.5%
Kwai Tsing	94.6%	95.1%
Tsuen Wan	96.9%	93.9%
Tuen Mun	97.8%	98.0%
Yuen Long	97.9%	97.8%
Sai Kung	99.4%	98.4%
Islands	97.9%	98.0%
Overall	95.1%	94.0%

**New technologies and tools for rodent control,
their effectiveness and the expenditure involved**

Rodent control technology and tool	Effectiveness	Expenditure		
		2022-23	2023-24	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 \$3.89 million	About \$5.77 million	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 \$580,000	About \$140,000	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	About \$380,000	About \$5.78 million	About \$1.70 million

	be used in suitable places as necessary.			
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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 when appropriate.

Annex 5

2022-23

Team/Post	Number of teams	Number of staff	Actual expenditure (\$ million)
Overnight rodent control team	19	57	10
Rodent inspection officer	N.A.	11	4
Total	19	68	14

2023-24

Team/Post	Number of teams	Number of staff	Revised estimated expenditure (\$ million)
Overnight rodent control team	68 ^{Note 1}	204 ^{Note 1}	26
Rodent inspection officer	N.A.	19	9
Total	68 ^{Note 1}	223 ^{Note 1}	35

Note 1: FEHD had progressively increased the number of overnight rodent control teams to 31 (93 staff in total) since August 2023. Besides, an additional 37 teams (111 staff in total) were temporarily deployed to support the Year-end Clean-up Campaign from mid-December 2023 to February 2024.

2024-25

Team/Post	Number of teams	Number of staff	Revised estimated expenditure (\$ million)
Overnight rodent control team	78 ^{Note 2}	234 ^{Note 2}	42
Rodent inspection officer	N.A.	19	10
Total	78 ^{Note 2}	253 ^{Note 2}	52

Note 2: FEHD had progressively increased the number of overnight rodent control teams to 61 (183 staff in total) since July 2024. Besides, an additional 17 teams (51 staff in total) were temporarily deployed to support the Year-end Clean-up Campaign from mid-December 2024 to February 2025.

Annex 6

Number of in-house staff and contractor staff engaged in pest control services in District Environmental Hygiene Offices

District	In-house staff			Contractor staff		
	2022	2023	2024	2022	2023	2024
Central and Western	57	57	57	111	93	80
Eastern	41	41	41	81	90	54
Southern	67	67	67	87	81	61
Wan Chai	56	56	56	69	72	63
Kowloon City	33	33	33	87	84	65
Kwun Tong	28	28	28	105	123	84
Wong Tai Sin	27	27	27	99	108	90
Sham Shui Po	38	38	38	81	84	70
Yau Tsim Mong	57	57	57	96	123	87
Sha Tin	43	43	43	117	105	87
Tai Po	30	30	30	87	87	78
North	28	28	28	87	72	75
Kwai Tsing	36	36	36	111	81	99
Tsuen Wan	30	30	30	123	117	105
Tuen Mun	32	32	32	129	114	94
Yuen Long	38	38	38	171	156	122
Sai Kung	41	41	41	135	123	96
Islands	55	55	55	135	93	109

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