

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)159**

**(Question Serial No. 3789)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

A multi-pronged approach has been adopted in rodent control, including strengthening overnight operation, applying new technologies and tools, and formulating a new rodent infestation index. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- (a) the number of dead rodents collected and live rodents caught in the past 3 years (with a breakdown by location of capture, e.g. markets, streets, etc.);
- (b) the expenditure involved in overnight rodent control and the adoption of new technologies and tools in the past 3 years as well as their effectiveness;
- (c) the progress of the formulation of the “Composite Rodent Infestation Rate”;
- (d) the expenditure and manpower (including in-house staff and outsourced contractor staff) involved in tackling and controlling rodent infestation in the past 3 years;
- (e) the average cost for eliminating a single rodent in the past year; and
- (f) the results achieved in meeting the KPI for rodent control work.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 79)

Reply:

- (a) The number of dead rodents collected and the number of live rodents caught by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by location, are provided in **Annex 1**.
- (b) Since July 2022, FEHD has set up overnight rodent control teams under the District Environmental Hygiene Offices over the territory to enhance the effectiveness in capturing rodents. The information on the expenditure for overnight rodent control teams in the past 3 years is provided in **Annex 2**.

In 2022, 2023 and 2024, the overnight rodent control teams caught about 9 500, 24 200 and 51 000 live rodents respectively, accounting for about 20%, 40% and 60% of the total number of live rodents caught in the corresponding years.

The new rodent control technologies and tools used by FEHD in the past 3 years, their effectiveness and the expenditure involved are provided in **Annex 3**.

- (c) From 2024 onwards, thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence technology were fully adopted for conducting the Rodent Activity Survey (RAS) as a replacement for the Rodent Infestation Survey (RIS). The RAS is conducted in all districts across the territory once every 6 months. The Rodent Absence Rates enumerated based on the survey results for all districts for the first half and the second half of 2024 have been uploaded to the website of FEHD. 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.
- (d) The manpower and expenditure involved in pest control work, including rodent and mosquito prevention and control, of FEHD are as follows:

Year	Civil service staffing		Total number of staff employed by pest control service contractors
	Planning and implementation of pest control work in districts	Vector surveillance, technical support and advisory work	
2022	745	109	1 977 <sup>Note</sup>
2023	745	109	1 860 <sup>Note</sup>
2024	745	109	1 573

Note: Excluding positions created under the Anti-epidemic Fund.

Year	Overall expenditure on pest control services <sup>Note</sup> (\$ million)	Government staff costs for pest control work (\$ million)	Expenditure on pest control service contracts (\$ million)
2022-23	786	286	457
2023-24	795	292	424
2024-25 (Revised estimate)	871	310	471

Note: The overall expenditure on pest control services includes the expenditure on government staff, service contracts and other day-to-day operating expenses.

- (e) In 2024-25, the overall revised estimated expenditure of FEHD on pest control in public places and facilities under its purview was \$871 million. The expenditure covered not only rodent prevention and control but also the prevention and control work of mosquitoes and other arthropod pests with public health importance. Besides, FEHD's work on rodent prevention and control is not limited to "rodent disinfection". Such work also includes measures to prevent rodent breeding (such as filling of rodent holes, installation of rodent guards, removal of rubbish and junk, etc.), daily inspections, law enforcement, technical support for different departments/organisations, publicity and education, as well as follow-ups to complaints. Therefore, it is difficult to calculate the average cost of catching or collecting a rodent.

- (f) In 2024, FEHD conducted strategic anti-rodent operations at a total of 97 priority rodent blackspots in all districts 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.

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

Location	Year					
	2022		2023		2024	
	Dead rodents collected	Live rodents caught	Dead rodents collected	Live rodents caught	Dead rodents collected	Live rodents caught
Public place (including street and rear lane)	N.A <sup>Note</sup>		27 428	49 922	25 683	74 337
Public market	N.A <sup>Note</sup>		6 951	13 275	7 372	15 267
Hawker bazaar	N.A <sup>Note</sup>		117	147	194	25
Total	31 810	45 422	34 496	63 344	33 249	89 629

Note: FEHD does not keep the relevant information.

**2022-23**

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

**2023-24**

<b>Team/Post</b>	<b>Number of teams</b>	<b>Number of staff</b>	<b>Expenditure (\$ million)</b>
Overnight rodent control team	68 <sup>Note 1</sup>	204 <sup>Note 1</sup>	26
Rodent inspection officer	N.A.	19	9
<b>Total</b>	68 <sup>Note 1</sup>	223 <sup>Note 1</sup>	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**

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

**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
<b>Thermal imaging camera surveillance system</b>	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 \$3.89 million	About \$5.77 million	About \$12.67 million
<b>Placing poisonous baits in a T-shaped bait box</b>	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
<b>Alcohol rodent trapping device</b>	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 \$380,000	About \$5.78 million	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.

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