

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)113

(Question Serial No. 0109)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

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

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

According to the targets for performance measures, the occupancy rate of public market stalls remained at 82% for 2024 and 2025. While the target was lowered from 90% to 85% for 2025, the figure still fell short of it. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- (1) the latest number of vacant market and cooked food stalls, with a breakdown by the duration for which they have remained vacant (less than 3 months, 4 to less than 6 months, more than half a year but less than a year, and over a year);
- (2) the follow-up measures taken or planned to be taken by the Government to increase the occupancy rate of market and cooked food stalls; and
- (3) the manpower resources and expenditure involved in managing market and cooked food stalls.

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Chun, Jonathan (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)

Reply:

- (1) The information sought is provided as follows:

| Vacancy period (as at 31 December 2025) | Number of vacant stalls ^a | Number of frozen stalls ^b |
|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Less than 3 months | 85 | 38 |
| 4 to 6 months | 134 | 45 |
| 7 to 12 months | 201 | 94 |
| Over a year | 700 | 1 052 |
| Total | 1 120 | 1 229 |

Notes:

^a Excluding frozen stalls.

^b Including stalls frozen for various reasons, such as improvement works being carried out in the market where the stall is located, or the stall may be used for accommodating tenants affected by projects in other public markets.

- (2) Apart from putting up vacant stalls for open auction on a regular basis, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has a number of measures to increase the

occupancy rate of public markets and put long-standing vacant market stalls to better use:

- (i) Since May 2024, FEHD has restored the previous arrangement of putting up long-standing vacant stalls that could not be let out in public markets for open auction at reduced upset prices. The upset prices for the stalls in an open auction will be initially set at 80% of the open market rent if the stalls have been vacant for over 6 months, and at 60% if the vacant period is over 8 months.
- (ii) Following the pilot scheme in the fourth quarter of 2024, FEHD implemented, in April 2025, the arrangement where stalls which have not been let out in open auctions are made available for renting by members of the public at their upset prices on a first-come, first-served basis.
- (iii) Making reference to the experience of Yue Man Hawker Bazaar in Kwun Tong, FEHD is considering launching a scheme in Aberdeen Market which allows young people to operate the stalls. FEHD is identifying suitable partners for the scheme. It will take into account the implementation of the scheme in Aberdeen Market and further explore ways to make better use of vacant stalls.

In addition, FEHD maintains active communication with various stakeholders (including tenants, local community, hawker associations and logistics service providers) to increase the occupancy rate. Measures include adjusting the trade mix in the markets to better meet the needs of stall operators and the public. Tenants may also submit applications or suggestions for changing the types of commodities sold. FEHD will, in consultation with the Market Management Consultative Committees, determine whether to adjust the distribution of the types of commodities sold based on factors such as vacancy period of the stalls, compatibility of the proposed commodities with those sold by nearby stalls, public interest, and proper market management. In Aberdeen Market, for example, FEHD has introduced various trades and types of commodities into existing vacant stalls, such as ready-to-eat food, mobile phones/electronic parts, pet supplies/food, hardware, as well as services like haircut, manicure, beauty treatment and Chinese medicine practitioners. To diversify market services, FEHD also collaborates with the Environmental Protection Department to set up GREEN@COMMUNITY recycling stores in some vacant stalls. Moreover, considering that some stall operators have expressed their wish for relaxing restrictions on stall size and height, FEHD will consolidate and merge some of the vacant stalls to form larger ones with a view to providing stall operators with more options.

- (3) As at 31 December 2025, the staff establishment for market management under the Environmental Hygiene Branch of FEHD includes 197 civil servants and 104 non-civil service/post-retirement service contract staff. The overall expenditure (revised estimate) of FEHD on the management of public markets in 2025-26 was \$1.138 billion.

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