

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)150

(Question Serial No. 3447)

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:

A multi-pronged approach is 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, as well as their effectiveness, in the past 3 years;
- (c) the expenditure and manpower (including in-house staff and outsourced contractor staff) involved in tackling and controlling rodent infestation in the past 3 years;
- (d) the average cost for eliminating a single rodent in the past year, and the results achieved in meeting the KPI for rodent control work.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 46)

Reply:

- (a) The number of dead rodents collected and the number of live rodents caught by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in the past 3 years, with a breakdown by location, are provided in **Annex 1**.
- (b) Since July 2022, the Department has set up a number of overnight rodent control teams in all districts across the territory, which carry out continuous and intensive rodent trapping work with the use of rodent traps in areas with more serious infestation in the small hours to enhance the effectiveness of rodent control. The number of live rodents caught by the overnight rodent control teams of the Department in the past 3 years (from 2023 to 2025) are as follows:

Year	Number of live rodents caught
2023	24 200
2024	51 100
2025	80 900

The information on the expenditure involved for overnight rodent control teams in the past 3 financial years (from 2023-24 to 2025-26) is provided in **Annex 2**.

The rodent control technologies and tools adopted by the Department, their effectiveness and the expenditure involved in the past 3 financial years (from 2023-24 to 2025-26) are provided in **Annex 3**.

- (c) The manpower and expenditure involved in pest control work, including rodent and mosquito prevention and control, of the Department in the past 3 years (from 2023 to 2025) 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	
2023	745	109	1 860 ^{Note}
2024	745	109	1 573
2025	745	109	1 166

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

Year	Overall expenditure on pest control services ^{Note} (\$ million)	Government staff costs for pest control work (\$ million)	Expenditure on pest control service contracts (\$ million)
2023-24	795	292	424
2024-25	846	307	450
2025-26 (Revised estimate)	811	301	424

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

- (d) In 2025-26, the overall revised estimated expenditure of the Department on pest control was \$811 million. The expenditure covered not only rodent prevention and control but also the prevention and control of mosquitoes and other arthropod pests with public health importance. Besides, the Department's work on rodent prevention and control is not limited to rodent disinfection. It also includes measures to prevent rodent infestation (such as rodent control surveys, filling of rodent holes, installation of rodent guards, removal of rubbish, etc.), daily inspections, law enforcement, technical support for different departments/organisations, publicity and education, as well as complaint

investigation. Therefore, it is difficult to calculate the cost of catching or collecting a rodent.

In 2025, the Department conducted strategic anti-rodent operations at a total of 93 priority rodent blackspots in all districts and eliminated around 72% of the priority rodent blackspots (67 in total), achieving the target of reducing the number of blackspots by 60% by the end of 2025.

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

Location	Year					
	2023		2024		2025	
	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)	27 428	49 922	25 683	74 337	21 743	107 638
Public market	6 951	13 275	7 372	15 267	6 181	21 378
Hawker bazaar	117	147	194	25	175	67
Total	34 496	63 344	33 249	89 629	28 099	129 083

2023-24

Team/Post	Number of teams	Number of staff	Actual 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: The Department 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 from mid-December 2023 to February 2024 to support the Year-end Clean-up Campaign.

2024-25

Team/Post	Number of teams	Number of staff	Actual expenditure (\$ million)
Overnight rodent control team	78 ^{Note 2}	234 ^{Note 2}	42
Rodent inspection officer	N.A.	19	11
Total	78 ^{Note 2}	253 ^{Note 2}	53

Note 2: The Department 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 from mid-December 2024 to February 2025 to support the Year-end Clean-up Campaign.

2025-26

Team/Post	Number of teams	Number of staff	Revised estimated expenditure (\$ million)
Overnight rodent control team	85 ^{Note 3}	255 ^{Note 3}	55
Rodent inspection officer	N.A.	16	9
Total	85 ^{Note 3}	271 ^{Note 3}	64

Note 3: The Department had progressively increased the number of overnight rodent control teams to 62 (186 staff in total) since May 2025. Besides, the number of teams was further increased to 85 (255 staff in total) for the period of December 2025 to February 2026 to support the Year-end Clean-up Campaign.

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

Rodent control technology and tool	Effectiveness	Expenditure		
		2023-24	2024-25	2025-26 (Revised estimate)
Thermal imaging camera surveillance system	The Department has fully adopted thermal imaging cameras for conducting the Rodent Activity Survey 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 \$5.77 million	About \$12.67 million	About \$5.80 million
Placing poisonous baits in a T-shaped bait box	The bait box was tested in 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 \$140,000	About \$130,000	About \$130,000
Alcohol rodent trapping device	The Department 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 \$5.78 million	About \$1.70 million	About \$640,000

The Department will continue to keep track of the new rodent control technologies and tools in the market and introduce them for use at locations with higher rodent activities when appropriate.

- End -