

## Chapter 1

## Introduction

Rodents pose threats to our daily life by transmitting a number of diseases such as plague, scrub typhus, urban/murine typhus, spotted fever, hantaviral disease and leptospirosis. They are also pests that can cause nuisance and physical damages to properties.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) carries out anti-rodent inspections and measures throughout the territory as one of the routine services. To enhance the anti-rodent work, interdepartmental and territory-wide anti-rodent campaigns are launched each year. However, effective rodent control cannot be sustained without the active participation of the residents concerned. Although the adaptation and reproductive abilities of rodents are very strong, it is not infeasible to establish and maintain a rodent free area. Having maintained the area rodent-free, it would not be easy for rodent to establish its foot-hold in the area and the harms as well as damages caused by the pest would be greatly reduced.

Rodent-free areas of various sizes have been established and maintained in cities including Alberta of Canada, some parts of Singapore and Budapest of Hungary. During the period from December 2005 to December 2006, FEHD had conducted a pilot study on establishing and maintaining rat-free areas. The pilot study shows that rat-free areas with rodent activities lower than 2.0% as measured by the Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR, percentage of rodent bait retrieved found to have been consumed by rodent ) can be established and maintained. At such low activities of rodent, we may consider the areas as being rodent-free. The pilot study, as well as the experience from other cities and countries, indicates active community participation is the key to the success of establishing and maintaining rat-free areas. For the benefits of the residents, we strongly advise the community to take part in establishing and maintaining an rodent-free area.



Banner for promotion of establishing rodent-free villages