

**For information
on 28 January 2003**

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Anti-rodent Campaign 2003

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the Anti-rodent Campaign 2003 led by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD).

BACKGROUND

2. Rodents can transmit a number of diseases, including plague, leptospirosis, hantaviral diseases and typhus fevers. As rodents frequent filthy places like drainages and refuse heaps, they may carry various disease-causing bacteria. Inadvertent consumption of rodent-contaminated food and water may result in food poisoning or contraction of infectious diseases. The physically less active like infants, patients and the disabled are relatively prone to rodent bites. **Annex** shows the number of notified cases on rodent-borne diseases found in Hong Kong between 1997 and 2002. Sustained prevention and control efforts are necessary to contain the harm and nuisance caused by rodents.

3. FEHD is the pest control authority in Hong Kong. Apart from carrying out regular inspections and anti-rodent measures throughout the territory, FEHD has been holding anti-rodent campaigns on an annual basis. Each campaign features specific target areas where dedicated rodent control, publicity and educational efforts are made by relevant government departments. Market complexes, construction sites and food premises were the target areas for the past two years. These campaigns have proven instrumental in reducing the rodent population and enhancing public awareness of the significance of rodent prevention in the target areas.

ANTI-RODENT CAMPAIGN 2003

4. Building on its experience with previous campaigns, FEHD has recently launched the Anti-rodent Campaign 2003. Like previous campaigns, the Anti-rodent Campaign 2003 will seek to maximise its impact through concerted efforts of relevant government departments. Under the stewardship of FEHD, the Department of Health, the Housing Department (HD), the Home Affairs Department, the Marine Department, the Social Welfare Department, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Lands Department, the Highways Department, the Drainage Services Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Architectural Services Department, the Labour Department, the Environmental Protection Department and the Hospital Authority will all make dedicated efforts to monitor and eliminate rodent infestation in venues/sites under their charge. These departments will also help disseminate anti-rodent messages to the community through their networks.

5. As about 70% of complaints against rodent infestation in the past two years were related to residential buildings, housing estates and individual private residential buildings have been identified as the target areas for the 2003 Campaign. Intensive anti-rodent operations will be carried out in these areas and other district rodent blackspots. Publicity and educational programmes will be launched in parallel to promote awareness among residents and building management concerned of the importance of rodent prevention and control.

6. The 2003 Campaign will feature a promotion phase (from 2 January 2003 to 29 January 2003) and an enhancement phase (from 7 July 2003 to 2 August 2003). The promotion phase aims to (i) educate the residents and building management concerned on rodent prevention and control measures and (ii) reduce the rodent population in the territory, particularly in residential buildings and their surroundings. The enhancement phase aims to (i) further promote rodent prevention and control measures among the target groups (ii) strengthen anti-rodent work in residential areas where rodents still infest. Constant monitoring and control will be maintained between the two phases of the Campaign to achieve longer-lasting effects.

7. During the Campaign, pest control staff of FEHD will visit public places around housing estates, individual private residential buildings and

district rodent blackspots to inspect potential harbourages for rodents (e.g. planters, garbage chambers, rear lanes and storerooms) and carry out anti-rodent operations such as placing traps and poisonous bait. Residents and building management concerned will be advised to keep the living environment clean and tidy and to take appropriate measures against rodent infestation. Owners' Corporations and Mutual Aid Committees will also be advised to take early action to repair building defects so as to reduce harbourages for rodents.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

8. The Government alone cannot effectively contain rodent infestation. Co-operation and support from all sectors of the community is required. A major thrust of the Anti-rodent Campaign 2003 is to arouse community awareness of rodent problems and to mobilise community resources to control such problems. To this end, the 2003 Campaign will promote community participation by:

- distributing or posting of promotion materials of all kinds including banners, posters and leaflets through relevant government departments and public organisations;
- disseminating information on rodent prevention and elimination through press releases, Announcements of Public Interest on television and radio, and FEHD's website;
- staging thematic exhibitions in the Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre of FEHD and roving exhibitions in housing estates, town halls and civic centres in the territory;
- collaborating with HD and the Hong Kong Housing Society to educate their estate residents on rodent prevention and control through, for example, estate newsletters, inter-estate quiz competitions and year-end cleansing operations;
- enlisting the support of private pest control companies and building management to help publicize anti-rodent operations; and

- requesting District Councils to organize anti-rodent activities at the district level.

REVIEW OF CAMPAIGN

9. We will assess the effectiveness of the 2003 Campaign by conducting a questionnaire survey with Owners' Corporations, Mutual Aid Committees and building management concerned and placing rat baits in the target areas to gauge the extent of rodent infestation. The data collected from these exercises will provide useful references for mapping out future anti-rodent directions and strategies for future Campaigns.

**Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
January 2003**

**Number of notified cases on rodent-borne diseases
Found in Hong Kong during 1997-2002**

Year \ Disease	Plague	Urban typhus	Leptospirosis	Hantaviral disease
1997	0	8	0	5
1998	0	5	0	9
1999	0	12	0	8
2000	0	2	1	2
2001	0	4	1	2
2002	0	5	2	0