

**For discussion on
20 November 2002**

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**POLICY ON THE ISSUE OF FOOD FACTORY
(MEAT ROASTING) LICENCES**

PURPOSE

This paper sets out the existing policy on the issue of food factory (meat roasting) licences and the way forward.

BACKGROUND

2. The owners' corporation of a residential building in Shau Kei Wan lodged a complaint with LegCo Duty Roster Members against the environmental and hygiene problems created by a pig roasting factory. The complainant said that the operation of the factory was in breach of the building's deed of mutual covenant (DMC). Members requested the Administration to consider whether this kind of food factories should be allowed to operate in densely populated areas, having regard to the environmental and hygiene problems that may arise from their operation.

EXISTING CONTROL

3. At present, anyone who wishes to operate commercial meat roasting activities is required to obtain a food factory (meat roasting) licence from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). FEHD will screen the layout plans submitted by the applicant to ensure that the design of the premises is licensable from the hygiene perspective, i.e. the plans showing clearly that the premises have such hygiene features as sanitary fitments, ablution facilities, chimney, grease traps, scullery accommodations, etc. Thereafter, FEHD will refer the application to Fire Services Department, Buildings Department and Environmental Protection Department (EPD) for comment. In the light of the comments received, FEHD will issue a Letter of Requirements to the applicant setting out the detailed requirements on hygiene, building and fire safety and environmental protection. After the departments concerned have inspected the premises and confirmed the applicant's compliance with the requirements, a food factory (meat roasting) licence will be issued by FEHD.

4. As at 31 October 2002, there are a total of 152 licensed meat roasting factories over the territory. Of these, 99 are located in commercial/residential buildings and 53 in industrial buildings.

THE PROBLEM

5. Between January 2000 and October 2002, FEHD received 39 complaints on environmental nuisances caused by meat roasting factories, i.e. an average of 13 per year. Of the 39 complaints, 13 were related to the emission of fumes and smell. The remaining were related to improper handling of roast meat and/or the grease and dirt generated from the factory.

6. Meat roasting factories are required by licensing conditions to install water scrubbers to purify exhaust fumes before their discharge into open air. Fume emission problems caused by meat roasting factories often are due to improper maintenance of the scrubbers. The problem can be rectified by requiring the operators concerned to undertake suitable repair and maintenance. As regards improper handling of roast meat and its associated environmental hygiene nuisances, the problems are often solved after the issue of warnings by FEHD to the operators concerned. Overall, we consider that the existing enforcement mechanism could effectively contain the environmental hygiene problems arising from meat roasting factories.

PROPOSAL

7. While the environmental hygiene problems caused by meat roasting factories are not that acute, the operation of these factories in non-industrial areas may be seen by nearby residents as a source of nuisance. Therefore, for the longer term, we are of the view that such food processing businesses should not be conducted in residential buildings; nor should they be incompatible with the terms of the relevant land lease and outline zoning plans.

8. To minimize the nuisance created by meat roasting factories to their neighbourhoods, we propose that in future, food factory (meat roasting) licences should only be issued to premises in respect of which the carrying out of meat roasting is compatible with the terms of the relevant land lease and outline zoning plans. The applicants should also ensure that the proposed operations are permitted by the DMCs of the premises concerned.

9. We recognise that strict application of the requirements regarding land lease and outline zoning plans would result in non-renewal and closure of a substantial number of existing meat roasting factories. In this connection, in processing renewal of existing licences, we consider that flexibility should be

exercised with regard to the imposition of the new requirements as set out in paragraph 8 above. Concurrently, we will continue to closely monitor the operation of the existing meat roasting factories to ensure that they will not cause hygiene and environmental nuisances. For those which are continuously in breach of the licensing conditions, FEHD will take strict enforcement action, including suspension or cancellation of their licences.

WAY FORWARD

10. We propose to consult the trade on the proposal in early 2003 with a view to introducing the new measure in mid-2003.

ADVICE SOUGHT

11. Members are invited to comment on the proposals set out in paragraphs 8 to 9 above.

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