

**For information
on 9 January 2004**

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Anti-rodent Campaign 2004

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the Anti-rodent Campaign 2004 led by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD).

BACKGROUND

2. Rodents are harmful pests that can transmit a number of diseases, such as plague, leptospirosis, hantaviral diseases, scrub typhus and urban typhus. They may also cause physical damage to properties and contaminate foodstuff. The table at **Annex** shows the number of reported cases on rodent-borne diseases found in Hong Kong between 2000 and 2003. Sustained and concerted efforts from all sectors of the community are necessary to contain the harm and nuisance that rodents can bring about.

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, food premises and residential buildings were the target areas for the past three 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. This is evidenced by the decreasing trend of rodent infestation rates¹ in the territory in the past few

¹ FEHD conducts rodent infestation survey by placing bait in different locations to monitor the situation of rodent infestation in the territory. The percentage of bait consumed by rodent gives the rodent infestation rate (i.e. number of bait consumed by rodent/total number of bait set X 100%), which

years-

<u>2000</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2002</u>	<u>2003(Jan-Nov)</u>
16.0%	8.8%	9.1%	5.9%

ANTI-RODENT CAMPAIGN 2004

4. To sustain governmental and community efforts on the prevention and control of rodent problems, FEHD has launched a new round of anti-rodent campaign in 2004. Like previous campaigns, the Anti-rodent Campaign 2004 seeks to maximise its impact through concerted efforts of relevant government departments. Under the stewardship of FEHD, members of the Inter-departmental Working Group on Pest Prevention and Control in particular the Marine Department, Lands Department, Labour Department, Government Logistics Department, Home Affairs Department, Correctional Services Department and Housing Department all make dedicated efforts to monitor and eliminate rodent infestation in venues/sites under their charge. These departments also help disseminate anti-rodent messages to the community through their networks.

5. Plague was a very serious rodent-related infectious disease with a high mortality rate. Although no plague cases have been recorded locally since 1929, Hong Kong still faces a risk of plague because the disease occurs from time to time in neighbouring regions. We are constantly exposed to the risk of importing plague-infected rodents and fleas from ships and cargoes transporting from other places. The rat-flea survey conducted by FEHD last year revealed that the average rat-flea indices² at public cargo handling areas in Cha Kwo Ling and Western District were higher than one, suggesting that risk of plague transmission in cargo handling areas was high if the disease had been introduced to these places. The Anti-rodent Campaign 2004 therefore aims to reduce the risk by targeting our rodent prevention and control work at cargo handling areas, as well as factories and warehouses.

indicates the seriousness of rodent problem in an area. Seriousness of rodent problem increases with the rate of rodent infestation.

6. The 2004 Campaign, under the slogan of “Prevent Disease, Eliminate Rodent Nuisance”, features a promotion phase (from 15 December 2003 to 10 January 2004) and an enhancement phase in July 2004. The promotion phase aims to (i) arouse the awareness of the management of cargo working areas and warehouses on the importance of rodent prevention and control measures and (ii) reduce the rodent population in the territory, particularly in cargo handling areas and their surroundings. The enhancement phase aims to (i) further promote rodent prevention and control measures among the target groups and (ii) strengthen anti-rodent work in cargo working areas and warehouses where rodents still infest. Constant monitoring and control will be maintained in between the two phases of the Campaign.

7. During the Campaign, pest control staff of FEHD, together with relevant staff of other departments, give advice to the management of cargo working areas, warehouses and factory buildings to maintain a high standard of environmental hygiene, to follow proper storage practices and to correct structural defects to discourage rodent infestation. Our pest control staff also carry out rodent surveys and disinfestations in public places near cargo handling areas and known blackspots. We will closely inspect structures highly susceptible to rodent infestation, such as container offices, refuse chambers, etc, and step up enforcement action against problematic cargo handling sites during the Campaign.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

8. We need the partnership and support of every sector of the community to achieve the full benefits of the governmental actions on rodent prevention and control work. It is essential for us to arouse community awareness of rodent problems and to mobilise community resources to control such problems. To this end, the 2004 Campaign promotes community participation by organizing a series of publicity and educational activities including exhibition at FEHD’s Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre, theme talks for management of cargo handling areas, warehouses and factory buildings, etc. Through Announcement of Public Interests (API) on radio and television, posters,

² Rat-flea index = number of rat flea(s) collected from the rat examined / total number of rats examined

pamphlets, banners, FEHD's homepage, the public and the target groups are reminded of the importance of rodent prevention and control measures. District Councils also render support to the Campaign by organizing anti-rodent activities at the district level.

EVALUATION

9. We will assess the effectiveness of the 2004 Campaign by placing rat baits in the target areas to gauge the extent of rodent infestation before and after each phase of the Campaign. The data collected will provide useful reference for mapping out anti-rodent directions and strategies for future Campaigns.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
January 2004

Annex

**Number of reported cases on rodent-borne diseases
found in Hong Kong during 2000-2003(Jan-Nov)**

Year \ Disease	Plague	Urban typhus	Scrub Typhus	Leptospirosis	Hantaviral disease
2000	0	2	2	1	2
2001	0	4	3	1	2
2002	0	5	8	2	0
2003 (Jan-Nov)	0	0	12	0*	1

* 1 imported probable case of Leptospirosis pending confirmation