

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

LC Paper No. CB(2) 758/04-05  
(These minutes have been seen by  
the Administration)

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Minutes of Meeting**  
**held on Tuesday, 11 January 2005 at 2 pm**  
**in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

**Members Present** : Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP (Chairman)  
Hon WONG Yung-kan, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Bernard CHAN, JP  
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP  
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH  
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

**Member Attending** : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP

**Public Officers Attending** : Item IV

Mr Eddy CHAN  
Deputy Secretary (Food & Environmental Hygiene)  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Miss Vivian KO  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Food & Environmental Hygiene) 1  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Mr Gregory LEUNG  
Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Mr LAI Ching-wai  
Assistant Director (Inspection and Quarantine)  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr Thomas TSANG  
Consultant Community Medicine (Communicable Disease)  
Department of Health

Item V

Mr Eddy CHAN  
Deputy Secretary (Food & Environmental Hygiene)  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Miss Vivian KO  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Food & Environmental Hygiene) 1  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Mr Gregory LEUNG  
Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Dr Thomas CHUNG  
Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control)  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr LAI Ching-wai  
Assistant Director (Inspection and Quarantine)  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Item VI

Mr Eddy CHAN  
Deputy Secretary (Food & Environmental Hygiene)  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Miss Vivian KO  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Food & Environmental Hygiene) 1  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Mr LAI Ching-wai  
Assistant Director (Inspection and Quarantine)  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Item VII

Mr Eddy CHAN  
Deputy Secretary (Food & Environmental Hygiene)  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Mr Vincent LIU  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Food & Environmental Hygiene) 2  
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Dr Y Y HO  
Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and  
Communication)  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

**Clerk in Attendance** : Mrs Constance LI  
Chief Council Secretary (2)5

**Staff in Attendance** : Miss Betty MA  
Senior Council Secretary (2)1

Ms Anna CHEUNG  
Legislative Assistant (2)5

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**I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting**  
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2) 564/04-05]

The minutes of the meeting on 14 December 2004 were confirmed.

**II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion**  
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2) 566/04-05(01) and (02)]

2. The Chairman reminded members that a special meeting would be held on 20 January 2005 at 9:35 am to receive the policy briefing from the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food.

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular meeting on 1 February 2005 at 8:30 am -

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- (a) Population-based food consumption survey 2005 ; and
- (b) Anti-mosquito campaign in 2004 and dengue vector surveillance in 2005.

**III. Information paper(s) issued since last meeting**

4. Members noted that the Administration had not provided any information paper since the last meeting.

**IV Outcome of public consultation on long-term direction to minimise the risk of human infection of avian influenza**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2) 566/04-05(03) and (04)]

5. The Chairman said that a joint submission from the Joint Committees of Poultry, Livestock and Associated Trades had been issued to members, and the following papers were tabled at the meeting –

- (a) press release issued by the Hong Kong Medical Association on 10 January 2005; and
- (b) extract of the minutes of meetings of 18 District Councils (DCs) on their views on the two proposed approaches set out in the Administration's consultation paper.

*(Post-meeting note : The papers tabled at the meeting were issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 590/04-05 on 13 January 2005.)*

6. Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Food and Environmental Hygiene) (DS(FEH)) said that the Administration's paper presented the results of the public consultation exercise on the long-term direction to minimise the risk of human infection of avian influenza. DS(FEH) informed members that at the end of the consultation period, the Administration had received over 10 000 submissions. About 7 000 submissions did not support both approaches, i.e. central or regional slaughtering. Apart from the submissions from the trade, a total of 2 522 individual submissions were received. Of the individual submissions, most of them were in support of central slaughtering. DS(FEH) further informed members that the Administration had also commissioned three opinion surveys to monitor public views on avian influenza and the Government's policy to prevent human infection of avian influenza. The results were detailed in the Administration's paper.

7. DS(FEH) stressed that the Administration had not taken a policy decision on the matter. He said that the Administration was fully aware of the divergent views

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expressed by the respondents, in particular the live poultry trade had raised strong objection to central slaughtering. While the Administration would take into account the different views received during the consultation exercise, safeguarding public health remained to be the primary objective in taking a policy decision.

8. Referring to paragraph 14 of the Administration's paper, DS(FEH) said that the Administration was actively exploring the feasibility of converting the Western Wholesale Food Market into a small to medium sized slaughterhouse on a pilot basis.

Voluntary surrender of live poultry retail licences or tenancies

9. Responding to the Chairman's enquiry about the progress of the voluntary surrender of live poultry retail licences or tenancies, DS(FEH) said that of the 814 live poultry retailers in operation, about 220 had submitted applications for surrender of licences/tenancies so far. DS(FEH) further said that as the scheme would last until July 2005, the response so far was not unsatisfactory. DS(FEH) envisaged that after the stallholders had surrendered their tenancies, the density of poultry stalls in individual markets could largely be lowered.

10. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that about 2 000 live poultry workers were currently unemployed. The implementation of either approach would seriously affect the operation of the live poultry trade and further aggravate the hardship of the poultry workers. He considered that central slaughtering would cause more serious unemployment problem than regional slaughtering.

11. Mr WONG further said that in July 2004, the Finance Committee had approved the creation of a new commitment of \$83,028,000 for providing retraining courses and one-off grants to assist affected live poultry retail workers, if their employers (i.e. live poultry retailers) had surrendered the fresh provision shop licences (with endorsement to sell live poultry) or live poultry stall tenancies in markets managed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). However, only 15 live poultry workers attended the retraining courses. Mr WONG criticised the Administration for not making efforts to assist the affected workers. Mr WONG pointed out that at the meeting on 26 October 2004, the Panel passed a motion urging the Administration to provide a paper to the Finance Committee to provide training courses and one-off grants to those unemployed live poultry workers whose employers had not surrendered their licences/tenancies, but no response had been received from the Administration so far. Mr WONG urged the Administration to provide a response to the Panel. He also asked the Administration to provide an update on the number of affected poultry workers attending retraining courses.

12. DS(FEH) said that as he had explained at the previous meeting, the purpose of the training courses and one-off grants was to assist those unemployed live poultry

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retail workers whose employers had surrendered their licences/tenancies. For those unemployed poultry workers whose employers had not surrendered their licences/tenancies, they could enrol in other ordinary retraining courses currently organised by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB). The Administration had reservations about providing special retraining courses and one-off grants for those unemployed live poultry workers whose employers had not surrendered their licences/tenancies, as this would have policy and financial implications.

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13. Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) said that the retraining courses for unemployed poultry workers whose employers had surrendered their licences/tenancies were on-going. He would provide the latest statistics on the number of courses and attendees after the meeting.

14. The Chairman said that with the reduction in the importation of live chickens, some poultry workers were currently unemployed even though their former employers had not surrendered their licences/tenancies. He considered that the Administration should address this problem.

15. DS(FEH) responded that the Administration was aware of the difficulties faced by the live poultry workers. Those unemployed poultry workers whose employers had not surrendered their licences/tenancies could enrol in the ordinary retraining courses currently organised by ERB. However, it was inappropriate to extend the arrangement for providing special retraining courses and one-off grants to this group of unemployed poultry workers as their employers had not surrendered their licences/tenancies.

16. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed strong dissatisfaction about the Administration's response. Mr WONG said that while more than \$80 million had been allocated for providing retraining courses and one-off grants to assist affected live poultry retailer workers, only 15 out of 2 000 unemployed workers had attended the retraining courses. He urged the Administration to review the eligibility criteria for the retraining courses. Mr WONG held a strong view that the Administration should provide a written response to the motion passed by the Panel.

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17. DS(FEH) undertook to provide a written response as soon as possible. DS(FEH) stressed that affected poultry workers could apply for the retraining courses, if they so wished.

*(Post-meeting note : The Administration's response has been circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 650/04-05(01) on 13 January 2005.)*

Pilot scheme for providing a slaughterhouse in Hong Kong

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18. The Chairman sought clarification on the location of the proposed slaughterhouse for chickens, as it was reported in the press that the Administration had selected the Kennedy Town Abattoir.

19. DS(FEH) clarified that the Administration was exploring the feasibility of converting the Western Wholesale Food Market into a slaughterhouse, as the market had previously been used as a slaughterhouse for live geese and ducks. DS(FEH) said that the Administration would consult the Panel and the Central and Western DC on the feasibility study findings.

20. Noting that the Administration would provide a small to medium sized slaughterhouse on a pilot basis, Dr KWOK Ka-ki asked whether the Administration was in favour of the regional slaughtering option. Dr KWOK also asked about the implementation timetable and the criteria for assessing the effectiveness of the pilot scheme. Dr KWOK held the view that the Administration should set out its objective clearly for the pilot study.

21. DS(FEH) said that the Administration was currently studying the technical aspects of converting the upper floor of the Western Wholesale Food Market into a slaughterhouse, and there was no concrete timetable for the pilot project yet. The Administration would take a decision as soon as possible.

22. Mr Vincent FANG said that the central slaughtering of live geese and ducks had proven to be unsuccessful. Since the public had already made clear their preference for live chickens, he could not understand why the Administration would launch a pilot study on regional slaughtering of live chickens.

23. DS(FEH) disagreed that central slaughtering of live geese and ducks was a failure. He pointed out that since the outbreak of avian influenza in 1997, as a matter of public health policy, live chickens and water fowls were segregated at all levels and central slaughtering of live geese and ducks was introduced. As he had explained at previous meetings, the resumption of importation of live geese and ducks was a commercial decision of the Mainland farms. The slaughterhouse for live geese and ducks was vacant because of changes in circumstances.

24. Mr Tommy CHEUNG criticised that while the Administration would conduct a feasibility study on the conversion of Western Wholesale Food Market into a regional slaughterhouse, SHWF had refused to meet and consult the relevant trades such as the poultry wholesalers, retailers and food business on the matter. Mr CHEUNG enquired when the feasibility study would start and why the relevant trades were not consulted.

25. DS(FEH) stressed that SHWF had met with the trades to gauge their views as and when necessary. He added that during the public consultation exercise, the trades had been consulted and they had put forward their views.

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26. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that the trade had not been requested to give views on the proposal of providing a small to medium sized slaughterhouse in Hong Kong when the Administration presented the consultation paper.

27. DS(FEH) responded that the Administration did not have a timetable for the feasibility study yet. He assured members that the Administration would revert to the Panel on the pilot project if it was considered feasible, and the relevant trades and DCs would be consulted.

28. The Chairman said that he believed the conversion of the Western Wholesale Food Market would require funding approval of the Finance Committee, and members would have further opportunities to look into the details.

Long-term policy on live poultry

29. Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed dissatisfaction that the Administration's paper failed to state clearly its policy direction and there were no concrete plans on safeguarding public health or assisting the poultry trade. Dr KWOK said that since the Administration had set out concrete options for public consultation, it should take a policy decision after completion of the consultation exercise, and any further delay would do no good to the public or the trade. Dr KWOK further said that given the recent outbreak of avian influenza in other Asian countries, an avian influenza pandemic was likely to happen any time. In case of an avian influenza outbreak in Hong Kong, the economy, tourism and food business industry would be hard hit. Dr KWOK considered that it was obvious that separating humans from live poultry could further reduce the risk of direct animal-to-human transmission. He strongly urged that the Administration should put in place immediate preventive measures and state clearly its future direction.

30. Referring to paragraph 9 of the paper, Dr KWOK also asked why the Administration had not addressed the concerns or opposition views on the two approaches (i.e. central and regional slaughtering).

31. DS(FEH) said that the Administration's paper sought to present the outcome of the public consultation exercise. DS(FEH) further said that once the Administration made a policy decision on the matter, it would provide details of its proposal together with the consideration factors and implementation details.

32. Mr WONG Yung-kan expressed concern that the conversion of the Western Wholesale Food Market to a slaughterhouse would mean that live geese and ducks would no longer be imported as the venue had been used for slaughtering of live geese and ducks. Mr WONG said that while the live poultry trade agreed that safeguarding



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public health was important, he had doubts that central slaughtering could totally eliminate the risk of outbreaks of avian influenza. Mr WONG said that while central slaughtering of poultry was practised in the Netherlands, Japan and Korea, there were still avian influenza cases in these countries. Moreover, there was evidence that wild birds could also carry the H5N1 virus. He considered that the Administration should not only impose stringent control over the live poultry trade with the hope of achieving zero infection. He said that the poultry trade would be willing to cooperate to further control the risk of infection so that the trade could survive.

33. DS(FEH) said that the Government had the responsibility to safeguard public health by minimizing the risk of infectious disease outbreaks. He also clarified that central or regional slaughtering could not eradicate the risk of avian influenza outbreaks. The purpose of seeking to implement central or regional slaughtering was to present a practical and effective method of segregating humans from live poultry. DS(FEH) added that the Government was striving to aim at achieving zero human infection of avian influenza, and it would be prudent for a responsible Government to set a higher standard in respect of public health. As regards the avian influenza cases in countries which practised central slaughtering, DS(FEH) pointed out that there was no human infection case in those countries, and the case in the Netherlands involved a veterinarian who had close contact with live poultry.

34. On the importation of live ducks and geese, DS(FEH) said that the Administration had not prohibited the importation of live geese and ducks. The inspection and quarantine requirements for imported live geese and ducks remained essentially the same as those that were in place before the regional outbreaks of avian influenza which occurred in January 2004. He further said that the export of live geese and ducks from the Mainland farms to Hong Kong was subject to the approval of the Mainland authorities. However, it should be noted that the World Health Organization had affirmed that there was a higher risk of live ducks and geese carrying the avian influenza virus.

35. Mr Vincent FANG shared Dr KWOK Ka-ki's view that the Administration should state clearly its long-term policy on prevention of avian influenza. Mr FANG said that if the Administration was to take forward the policy of segregating humans from live poultry by means of central or regional slaughtering, it should let the poultry trade know the overall policy and plan. It would then be up to the operators to decide whether it would continue with their operation. In the absence of a clear direction, the live poultry trade had no idea of the prospect of their business, and this was unfair to the trade.

36. Mr Vincent FANG further said that slaughtered live chickens could be kept fresh for a period of three to four hours only. If the consumers could not buy "freshly slaughtered" chickens at the markets, they would buy chilled chickens instead as they were cheaper. Mr FANG considered that both central and regional slaughtering of

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live chickens were not viable. Mr FANG asked about the operational arrangements if regional slaughtering was to be adopted, for example, whether the freshly slaughtered chickens could be distributed to the retailers for sale within three hours so as to ensure the quality.

37. DS(FEH) said that as a number of factors would affect the quality of freshly slaughtered chickens, he could not provide a definite answer to Mr FANG's question. DS(FEH) explained that the initial thinking on "freshly slaughtered chickens" option was that the slaughtering process would be conducted in a few regional slaughtering hubs. In the hubs, there would be retail outlets separated from the poultry storage and culling areas. Consumers would have a choice of purchasing either chilled chickens or freshly slaughtered chickens. The dressed poultry would not undergo a chilling process, and would be allowed to be sold as freshly slaughtered chickens.

38. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that the Administration was "killing" the live poultry trade by reducing daily imports of live poultry. Referring to the views of some DCs such as Eastern DC, Mr CHEUNG said that most DCs did not support the proposals of central or regional slaughtering of chickens. He commented that the Administration had been selective in presenting the views obtained in the public consultation exercise.

39. Miss CHAN Yuen-han urged the Administration to fully consult the relevant trades and consider the adverse impact on those trades before taking a decision on the matter.

Views obtained during the consultation exercise and opinion surveys

40. Mr WONG Yung-kan said that the Administration broadly categorized the submissions received during the consultation period into three categories, viz. individual submissions, standardized forms/questionnaires submitted by political parties, trade and related bodies as well as signatures. Mr WONG said that many of the submissions came from individual customers patronizing the markets but they were classified as views from members of the trade in the Administration's paper.

41. DS(FEH) said that the categorization of results of the consultation exercise was to facilitate members' consideration of the views received. The Administration would take into account all the views received during the consultation exercise.

42. Mr TAM Yiu-chung noted from paragraph 5 of the paper that while medical professional bodies supported the central or regional slaughtering approaches, three submissions from veterinary professional bodies raised objection to either approach. Mr TAM asked whether the Administration had studied the reasons behind the objection.

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43. Referring to the results of the opinion surveys, Mr TAM also sought clarification on the questions put to the respondents on whether they supported the policy of “separating humans from live poultry” during the telephone interview. He wondered whether the respondents were provided with the approaches for the segregation policy, i.e. central or regional slaughtering. Mr TAM said that improvement works to the markets could also achieve the purpose of segregating humans from live poultry. Mr TAM expressed doubts whether responses obtained in the opinion surveys could accurately reflect the views of the respondents. He added that those submissions expressed support for the policy of segregating humans from live poultry did not necessarily mean that they supported central slaughtering. The Administration should give due care in considering the views collected.

44. DS(FEH) explained that segregating humans from live poultry was the policy objective, and central or regional slaughtering was the long-term measure to achieve such a policy. The present arrangement to reduce the contact between live poultry and customers at the retail markets and fresh provision shops was an interim measure to implement the segregation policy. The Administration had also introduced the voluntary surrender of poultry licences/tenancies to reduce the density of poultry stalls at markets. However, these interim measures were not adequate to achieve the objective of the segregation policy, and the long-term measures of central or regional slaughtering had been proposed.

45. Regarding the three submissions from veterinary professional bodies, Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Environmental Hygiene 1 said that their major concern was the possible cross contamination in the process of handling slaughtered meat in the slaughterhouse, and they considered that the current improvement measures in the markets could have minimised the risk of avian influenza outbreaks. One of these submissions had stated that it would not object to regional slaughtering under certain conditions.

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46. At the request of Mr WONG Yung-kan, the Administration agreed to provide the three submissions from veterinary professional bodies to the Panel.

47. Dr Joseph LEE said that he was not comfortable with the methodology of the opinion surveys and the presentation of the summary of results. Dr LEE said that the questionnaire of the opinion survey was rather confusing and therefore it failed to collate useful data for the consideration of the options proposed by the Administration. Judging from the results of the opinion survey, he could not see how the Administration could arrive at the decision to commission a feasibility study on providing a small to medium sized slaughterhouse in Hong Kong. He also expressed disappointment that the Administration’s paper did not explain how regional slaughtering could achieve the policy objective of zero infection.

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48. Mr Tommy CHEUNG suggested that a special meeting should be held to discuss the findings of the opinion surveys and the agency conducted the survey should be invited to attend the meeting to explain the methodology adopted.

49. DS(FEH) said that the opinion surveys had already been completed and the Administration would be happy to provide the full report to Members.

Admin 50. The Chairman suggested that the Administration should first provide the full set of the questionnaires and the results of the three opinion surveys for members' consideration. Members would then decide whether a special meeting should be held after studying the information. Members agreed.

Admin 51. The Chairman said that the Administration should revert to the Panel on the details on the pilot scheme to convert the Western Wholesale Food Market to a small to medium sized slaughterhouse.

**V Importation of chilled pork from the Mainland**

[LC Paper No. CB(2) 566/04-05(05)]

52. The Chairman said that a submission from “港九新界鮮肉商、運輸、屠宰、銷售從業員人員聯席會議” provided by Mr WONG Yung-kan was tabled at the meeting.

*(Post-meeting note : The paper tabled at the meeting was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 590/04-05 on 13 January 2005.)*

Importation of chilled pork

53. Referring to paragraph 3 of the Administration's paper, the Chairman asked about the reasons for the decrease in the amount of chilled pork imported from Thailand in 2003.

54. Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control)/FEHD (AD/FEHD) responded that chilled pork represented only 3% to 4% of the total consumption of pork in Hong Kong. Therefore, fluctuation in the import volume of chilled pork was insignificant to the total consumption of pork.

55. Dr Joseph LEE asked about the need for importing chilled pork from the Mainland given that the consumption of chilled pork represented only a small fraction of the total consumption, and that inspection of chilled meat posed more difficulties than that of fresh meat. He wondered whether the new import arrangement aimed to combat meat smuggling activities. In this connection, he asked for the statistics on the seized smuggled chilled pork.

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56. Mr WONG Yung-kan referred to paragraph 10 of the submission from the trade tabled at the meeting. He asked whether the Administration would agree not to import chilled meat from the Mainland before obtaining the support from the trade and the Legislative Council.

57. Mr Vincent FANG also asked about the underlying reasons for importing chilled pork from the Mainland and the Administration's long-term plan for the importation of chilled pork.

58. DFEH responded that as Hong Kong practised free trade, there was no prohibition on import of chilled pork into Hong Kong, subject to the import requirements being met. He said that import licences had to be obtained from FEHD, and each batch of imported chilled pork must be accompanied by a health certificate issued by the authorities in the place of origin certifying that the meat was hygienic and fit for human consumption. As no chilled pork had been imported from the Mainland before, the Administration had to discuss with the Mainland authorities the setting up of a mechanism for the importation of chilled pork from the Mainland. DFEH further said that importation of chilled pork from the Mainland was a commercial decision of some local importers. AD/FEHD added that importation of meat was subject to the established inspection and quarantine procedures. He explained that FEHD would inspect and test the first six batches of imported chilled pork, and subsequent imports would be subject to monitoring under the regular food surveillance system and random testing at the import, wholesale and retail levels.

59. Regarding the amount of smuggled meat seized, DFEH said that FEHD and Customs and Excise Department had conducted joint operations, and 90 tonnes and 57 tonnes smuggled meat (including fresh/chilled/frozen meat) were seized in 2003 and 2004 respectively.

60. The Chairman asked whether other countries imported chilled meat from the Mainland. He said that the Administration could make reference to the import arrangements adopted in other countries. DFEH said that the Administration would provide the information after the meeting.

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Surveillance and control measures on imported chilled pork

61. Mr Tommy CHEUNG expressed support for the importation of chilled pork from the Mainland, as chilled pork was being imported from other countries such as Thailand. Nevertheless, Mr CHEUNG expressed concern whether consumers would be able to know that the pork they bought was fresh or chilled pork, as some traders might pose chilled pork as fresh pork for sale. Mr CHEUNG asked about the monitoring of the sale of chilled pork from the Mainland, and whether the Administration had discussed with the trade such arrangements since importation of chilled pork from the Mainland was to begin in the first quarter of 2005.

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62. DFEH said that FEHD was now finalising the discussion with the Mainland authorities on the inspection and quarantine procedures for chilled pork destined for Hong Kong. The Mainland authorities would provide a list of processing plants that would be allowed to supply chilled pork to Hong Kong, to enable FEHD to conduct inspection on those premises. Upon receipt of the list, FEHD would conduct visits to the plants to obtain more information about the facilities, operation, production process and the hygiene monitoring system of these plants and their associated farms. DFEH further said that FEHD would then discuss with the trade the necessary logistics arrangement, such as the points of entry into Hong Kong.

63. Mr Tommy CHEUNG asked whether FEHD staff were allowed to conduct random inspections to the processing plants and pig farms in the Mainland, after the importation arrangements had been put in place. DFEH said that the Mainland authorities welcomed inspections by FEHD, but there were manpower implication for FEHD to conduct regular inspections to these plants.

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64. The Chairman said that the Panel should observe the unloading and inspection/quarantine procedures for the first batch of chilled pork imported from the Mainland.

65. Mr Vincent FANG asked about the monitoring of pig farms as the unhygienic conditions of some of these farms posed serious public health risks. Assistant Director (Inspection and Quarantine) of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AD/AFCD) said that AFCD would conduct periodic inspections to ensure the hygiene standards of pig farms. The Environmental Protection Department would take enforcement actions if the waste generated from the farms exceeded the prescribed standards and caused environmental pollution. Repeated non-compliance with the licensing requirements could lead to cancellation of the licence.

66. Mr WONG Yung-kan said that as a result of urbanisation, pig farms previously located in remote rural areas were now surrounded by residential developments. He considered that the solution to animal waste from pig farms was to formulate a long-term policy on animal waste treatment.

Licensing requirements for selling chilled pork

67. Responding to Mr Tommy CHEUNG's enquiry about the licensing requirements for selling chilled pork, DFEH said that under the existing licensing framework, chilled meat and fresh meat could be put on sale at the same shop e.g. supermarkets, subject to their compliance with the relevant licensing requirements. For example, operators were not allowed to display chilled meat for sale as fresh meat, and they were required to display a legible notice at a conspicuous location and on refrigerators that imported chilled meat was available for sale at their premises. DFEH further said that to enhance deterrence against malpractices, FEHD had introduced an additional licensing/tenancy condition since June 2003 that operators

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selling chilled meat as fresh meat would have their licences cancelled or market tenancy agreements terminated immediately.

68. Mr WONG Yung-kan said that the trade did not object to the importation of chilled pork from the Mainland, but they were of strong view that chilled pork and fresh pork should not be allowed to be put on sale at the same premises so as to better safeguard consumers' interests. Mr WONG was concerned that if fresh meat and chilled meat were sold at the same shop, it would be difficult to detect whether the operator had displayed defrosted meat for sale as fresh meat. Mr WONG said that the trade had requested separate licences be issued for the sale of chilled meat and fresh meat, but the Administration did not address this in its paper for the Panel.

69. DS(FEH) and DFEH said that the Administration did not rule out the suggestion of "one licence for one shop", if there was a strong call for the change from Members and the trade. However, the proposal might cause some inconvenience to consumers. DFEH further said that FEHD was actually studying the streamlining of licensing requirements for selling a variety of goods at the same premises.

70. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that the problem of some retailers selling chilled meat as fresh meat had been raised for some time. He considered that the proposal of "one-shop one-licence" could better safeguard consumers' interest having regard to the marked difference in the price of fresh and chilled meat. It would be for individual consumers to decide whether to buy fresh or chilled pork if they were to be sold at different shops. Mr TAM further said that to safeguard public health, the Administration should impose stringent inspection standards on imported chilled meat.

71. Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that while Members belonging to the Liberal Party did not accept the multi-licence requirements for selling a variety of goods at a shop, they did not fully support the proposal of "one licence for one shop". He believed the crux of the problem was to ensure that consumers would know whether they were buying fresh pork or chilled pork. Mr CHEUNG considered that the Administration could consider designating certain retail outlets for selling chilled meat and tightening the control of imported chilled meat at source.

72. The Chairman said that some fresh meat retailers would store the unsold fresh pork at the end of the day in the refrigerators for sale on the following day. He asked whether pork placed in refrigerator would be classified as chilled pork.

73. DFEH said that according to the trade, unsold fresh meat would normally be sold to restaurants or siu mei shops at the end of the day. DFEH stressed that the Administration was open-minded on the proposal of "one licence for one shop", and was seeking the advice from the Department of Justice as to whether and how the relevant legislation should be amended to give effect to the proposal. DFEH added that while some operators sold either chilled meat or fresh meat, there were presently

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over 200 supermarkets, 24 market stalls and 119 fresh provision shops which had obtained the licences for selling both fresh and chilled meat.

74. Mr WONG Kwok-hing reiterated his concern that if fresh meat and chilled meat were allowed to be sold at the same shop, some operators could cheat their consumers by selling defrosted chilled pork at the price of fresh pork.

75. DFEH agreed that there were enforcement difficulties in instituting actions against such malpractices. Nevertheless, FEHD would conduct random inspections at the retail level.

76. Mr WONG Yung-kan proposed that a motion be moved at the meeting to urge the Administration to amend the legislation to implement the “one licence for one shop” proposal. The wording of Mr WONG’s proposed motion was –

“本委員會促請特區政府在輸入首批內地冰鮮豬肉前，完成一牌一店的法例修訂，並同時盡早對現有出售泰國冰鮮豬肉店舖實施一牌一店的修訂，以保障消費者的健康和權益。”

[English translation

“This Panel urges the HKSAR Government to complete the legislative amendment to require “one licence for one shop” before the first batch of chilled pork is imported from the Mainland, and at the same time, implement as soon as possible the amendment of “one licence for one shop” on shops currently selling chilled pork from Thailand, so as to safeguard consumers’ health and their interests.”]

The motion was seconded by Mr WONG Kwok-hing.

77. The Chairman put Mr WONG Yung-kan’s motion to vote. Two members voted for the motion and one member voted against the motion. Two members abstained from voting. The Chairman declared that the motion was passed.

**VI Establishment of chicken hatcheries in Hong Kong**

[LC Paper No. CB(2) 566/04-05(06)]

78. Mr WONG Yung-kan asked whether the Administration would continue to promote the development of chicken hatcheries in Hong Kong, now that importation of live chickens and day-old chicks from the Mainland had resumed.

79. DS(FEH) said that the development of local chicken hatcheries would ensure that there would be continuous supply of day-old chicks to local chicken farmers, in



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the event that importation of live chicken had to be suspended because of an avian influenza outbreak.

80. Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed support for setting up a trust fund and providing financial assistance to farmers for establishing local hatcheries. As regards the approval-in-principle for seven local hatcheries to import hatchery workers, Dr KWOK asked whether retraining would be provided to local workers so that they could take up such jobs.

81. DS(FEH) responded that there was a lack of skilled workers to provide the necessary technical support for the operation of chicken hatcheries (e.g. sexing of chicks), as local farms had all along been relying on the importation of day-old chicks from the Mainland.

82. AD/AFCD said that the Administration did not consider it necessary to provide retraining courses to local workers as only seven out of 18 farmers had applied for the importation of skilled hatchery workers. Moreover, the local hatcheries were not in full operation, because it was cheaper to import day-old chicks from the Mainland.

## **VII Anti-rodent campaign in 2005**

[LC Paper No. CB(2) 566/04-05(07)]

83. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that despite a decreasing trend of rodent infestation rates from 2000 to 2004, the number of reported cases on rodent-borne diseases found in Hong Kong had increased during the same period. Dr KWOK asked about the effectiveness of rodent infestation rates in preventing spread of rodent-borne diseases.

84. Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication) of FEHD (Consultant/FEHD) explained that for most rodent-borne diseases, the numbers of cases were more or less the same as previous years and remained small. However, the numbers of spotted cases and leptospirosis had increased. The increase in leptospirosis was due to a small local outbreak. For other rodent-borne diseases, many cases occurred in rural areas and therefore their risks were not reflected by the rodent infestation rates, which were conducted mainly in urban areas. Other animals including stray dogs, wild rodents such as voles also played significant roles in spreading these diseases in rural areas. People could get infected when engaging in outdoor activities in rural areas. The Administration would step up publicity to educate the public to take preventive measures when engaging in outdoor activities, e.g. wearing long sleeves sweaters and long trousers. Consultant/FEHD added that the rodent infestation survey was conducted in selected densely populated locations. It would not be easy to measure the rodent problem in rural areas.

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85. Mr WONG Yung-kan asked whether the Administration would make reference to the Area Ovitrap Indices and make public the situation of rodent problems in different areas.

86. Consultant/FEHD said that the proliferation of rodents was related to the environmental hygiene conditions, and rodent problems were confined to areas providing food and favourable harbourage. Shopping centres were one of those areas which should be given high priority in rodent control and prevention. The anti-rodent efforts therefore aimed to reduce the risk by targeting the rodent prevention and control work at shopping centres and their peripheries. Surveillance figures on rodent problems would be made available to the public.

**VIII Any other business**

87. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:30 pm.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
7 February 2005