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Your ref. : CB1/DC/TW/06

22 December 2006

Secretary General
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Att'n : Ms Guy Yip)

Dear Ms Yip,

Nuisance caused by the Tsuen Wan Slaughterhouse

Thank you for your letter of 22 November 2006. Our response to areas within our jurisdiction are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Noise and Odour Nuisance

To address the complaints of nuisance caused by the Tsuen Wan Slaughterhouse (TWSH), the slaughterhouse management has effected a series of improvement measures over the past years. Concerned government departments continue to monitor closely the performance of the slaughterhouse operation, in particular, staff of the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) carry out surprise inspections from time to time to assess the odour and noise level arising from the slaughterhouse operation. According to findings of the EPD, the odour and noise arising from the operation of the TWSH is well maintained within statutory limits.

Control and prevention of Japanese Encephalitis (JE)

Culex mosquitoes are the principal vector of JE virus. These mosquitoes breed in waterlogged fields, water pools, streams with

marginal vegetation and irrigation ditches, etc. Since 2004, the Government has been implementing comprehensive JE vector prevention and control work by adopting a multi-pronged approach covering the following areas -

- (a) JE vector surveillance and information dissemination;
- (b) mosquito control measure to reduce the breeding of vector mosquito by environmental management and source reduction;
- (c) publicity and public education;
- (d) community participation such as recruitment of volunteers to assist in eliminating mosquito breeding grounds; and
- (e) law enforcement.

In addition to the above, the Department is also holding annual anti-mosquito campaign and large-scale thematic operations. Preventive control and publicity have been stepped up during the campaign period. This is supplemented by regular inspection and enforcement work carried out by district pest control staff. As a standing preventive measure against possible spread of JE in the community, district staff have been conducting anti-JE vector work at areas within 100-m radius of pig farms and slaughterhouses once per week. In addition, staff working in slaughterhouses are closely monitoring the situation to ensure the slaughterhouse management has taken positive steps to eliminate potential breeding places. So far, the aforesaid measures are effective.

Design of Slaughterhouses

The lairages in both the TWSH and Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse (SSSH) are of 'open' type design for better natural ventilation of the live food animals. The slaughterhall and meat despatch bank in the SSSH is of a 'closed' type design. There is however no statutory requirement for lairages and slaughterhall to be of 'closed' type design. This notwithstanding, the management of both slaughterhouses are fully aware of the need for mosquito prevention and thus have set down mosquito prevention programmes to achieve the purpose.

Relocation of the TWSH

The study report on the feasibility of centralizing slaughtering operation of live food animals at the SSSH has yet to be finalized by the Architectural Services Department (Arch SD). Upon receipt of the

report, we will consider the findings and other related factors. We will then make recommendations to the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on the way forward.

Proposed Measures to Improve Conditions in TWSH

We note the concern of the LegCo Members to bring about further improvements to the TWSH. In this regard, we have conducted a comprehensive review of the situation and would require the slaughterhouse management to upgrade the present facility and provision through the imposition of additional licensing conditions. These include the installation of mosquito traps in the indoor and outdoor environment within the precinct of the slaughterhouse; appointment of a pest control contractor for regular pest control actions; and installation of bumper guards in meat despatch area. Subject to the satisfactory outcome of a feasibility study, the slaughterhouse management would also be required to install automatic odour neutralizing dispensing equipment at the extraction fan area of the lairage; suitable automatic / semi-automatic carcass splitting equipment, etc.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 2867 5288.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Rhonda LO)
for Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

c.c.

Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

(Att'n : Miss Winnie LAU Fax : 2845 3489)

Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

(Att'n : Mr Johnson TANG Fax : 2136 3281)

Director of Architectural Services

(Att'n : Mr Y S Lee Fax: 2523 9622)

} With incoming correspondence