

**Replies to initial written questions
raised by Finance Committee Members
in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09**

**Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health
Session No.: 16**

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FHB(FE)147	2560	CHOY So-yuk	49	Environmental Hygiene and Related Services
FHB(FE)148	2570	CHAN Wai-yip, Albert	49	Environmental Hygiene and Related Services
FHB(FE)149	2571	CHAN Wai-yip, Albert	49	Environmental Hygiene and Related Services
FHB(FE)150	2583	FANG Kang, Vincent	49	Food Safety and Public Health
FHB(FE)151	2584	FANG Kang, Vincent	49	Environmental Hygiene and Related Services
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FHB(FE)160	2613	LEE Kok-long, Joseph	49	Food Safety and Public Health
FHB(FE)161	2677	WONG Yung-kan	49	Market Management and Hawker Control
FHB(FE)162	2678	WONG Yung-kan	49	Market Management and Hawker Control
FHB(FE)163	2679	SHEK Lai-him, Abraham	49	Food Safety and Public Health
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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)001

Question Serial No.

0002

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational Expenses

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, the number of samples taken from food animals for testing of veterinary drug residues in 2007 is 58 177, representing a decrease of 17.56% over the figure of 70 573 in 2006. The estimated number for 2008 will further decrease to 58 000. Please account for such a substantial and continuous decrease.

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

The decrease in samples collected from food animals in 2007 was due to the decrease in the number of pigs, both local and imported ones, admitted into the slaughter houses. The estimated number for 2008 is largely the same as that for 2007, but rounded down to the nearest thousand. We will collect more samples for testing if the number of pig admission goes up in 2008.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)002

Question Serial No.

0003

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational expenses

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, the actual number of pest control surveys conducted in 2007 is 7 229, representing an increase of 30% over the figure of 5 578 in 2006, while the estimated number for 2008 is 529 less than that of 2007. Please advise on the reason(s) for changes in the number of surveys. What are the changes in expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

Pest control surveys are either planned in advance or conducted in response to public health needs. The estimated number of surveys for 2007 was 6 700, same as that for 2008, but more surveys were conducted in 2007 having regard to the high ovitrap indices and the need to strengthen the surveillance of various disease vectors, making the number higher than an average year.

The expenditure is estimated to increase from \$26.9 million for 2007-08 to \$32.6 million for 2008-09.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)003

Question Serial No.

0004

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational Expenses

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, the Department will introduce an amendment regulation on nutrition labelling for pre-packaged food in 2008-09. In this connection, please advise on the progress as well as the manpower and expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

The Administration plans to table the amendment regulation for negative vetting in April 2008. The resources for implementing the new legislation after the grace period will be worked out after the passage of the amendment regulation.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)004

Question Serial No.

0005

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational Expenses

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, the Department will take steps to introduce a new Food Safety Bill in 2008-09. In this connection, please advise on the progress as well as the manpower and expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

Our plan is to introduce the Food Safety Bill into the Legislative Council in the 2008-09 legislative session. The Bill will incorporate new food safety control tools and tighten up food safety controls. We have consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on the legislative proposal in December 2007. The Administration is now conducting consultation on the proposed legislative framework.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has been allocated recurrent funding of \$21 million (involving 12 posts) to enhance food safety work before enactment of the Bill. The actual resource requirements for implementing the Food Safety Bill will be worked out after the proposed regulatory measures are endorsed by LegCo.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)005

Question Serial No.

0006

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational Expenses

Programme : (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, the Department will contribute to the review of market policy and hawker licence policy. Please advise on the anticipated dates of completion of these two review exercises as well as the manpower and estimated expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

We will deploy existing resources to contribute to the reviews of market policy and hawker licence policy. No additional expenditure will be incurred. We plan to complete the reviews in around one year's time.

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

19.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)006

Question Serial No.

0007

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational Expenses

Programme : (4) Public Education and Community Involvement

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, the provision for 2008-09 is the same as the revised estimate of 2007-08. However, health promotional activities on nutrition labelling will be strengthened during the year. How will the Administration ensure that other promotional and educational activities will not be affected as the estimated financial provision remains unchanged?

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

In 2008-09, the efforts for promoting nutrition labelling will be concentrated on developing a range of educational materials and building alliance with education partners and the medical and concerned NGOs. The work does not involve a huge amount of resources and will not adversely affect other food safety promotional and educational activities.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)007

Question Serial No.

0008

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational Expenses

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, there will be a net increase of 28 posts in 2008-09. Please advise on the rank, emoluments and duties of the posts to be created.

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

The posts to be created are in the grades of Chemist, Field Assistant, Field Officer, Health Inspector, Laboratory Attendant, Pest Control Assistant, Scientific Officer (Medical) and administration support grades. The total annual salary amounts to \$16.8 million. The main duties of these posts are to perform food safety regulatory duties and provide pest control services.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)008

Question Serial No.

0009

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational Expenses

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, there will be a net decrease of 15 posts in 2008-09. Please advise on the rank, emoluments and duties of the posts to be deleted.

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

The posts to be deleted are vacant posts at the Artisan, Ganger and Workman II rank. Their main duties are to provide environmental hygiene services. Deletion of the vacant posts will not result in reduction in salary expenditure.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)009

Question Serial No.

0010

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

There will be a replacement of specialised vehicles in 2008-09 under this programme. Please give a breakdown of the vehicles to be replaced by type, model and use, the reason(s) for the replacement and the estimated amount of expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

An amount of \$92.6 million is provided for the procurement of specialised vehicles in 2008-09, the breakdown sought is provided as follows –

Replacement of existing vehicles

Type of vehicle	No. / Make	Reasons for replacement	Estimated Expenditure
Refuse Collection Vehicle (RCVs)			
4-ton	6 (Fujimighty)	} To replace retiring RCVs	\$89.6 million
6-ton	43 (Faun, Norba, Phoenix)		
11-ton	13 (Norba)		
Street-washing vehicles 6000 Litre	1 (Morita)	To replace retiring vehicle	\$1.4 million

Procurement of new vehicles

Type of vehicle	No.	Reasons for Procurement	Estimated Expenditure
Street-washing vehicles 7000 Litre	2	To meet shortfall in operational requirements	\$1.6 million

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

26.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)010

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Question Serial No.

0011

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Under this programme, the Administration will continue to study the long term goals and direction for the sustainable development of the Hong Kong fishing industry in 2008-09. Will the Administration earmark provisions for the relevant works, collaborate with local and international private organisations that are concerned about marine ecology and the sustainable development of the fishing industry, and foster the cooperation of these organisations and local fishermen's groups, with a view to promoting the development of the local fishing industry in an ecologically-friendly and sustainable direction? If yes, what are the details and expenditure incurred?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

In December 2006, we established a Committee on Sustainable Fisheries (the Committee), chaired by the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation and comprised of Members of the Legislative Council, fishermen representatives, academics and relevant subject experts, to study the long-term direction and goals for the sustainable development of Hong Kong's fishing industry. In the course of the study, the Committee will consult other advisory bodies on capture fisheries and aquaculture, and will also take into consideration views of non-governmental organizations and environmental concern groups. Apart from the work of the Committee, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department also maintains a close liaison with fishermen groups to listen to their views on sustainable development of the fishing industry. A total of \$0.14 million has been earmarked for the work of the Committee in 2008-09, including the costs in organising consultation sessions.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 25.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)011

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational
Food and Health Bureau expenses
(Food Branch)

Question Serial No.

0012

Programme: (1) Director of Bureau's Office

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Under this programme, the Administration will further create a new post outside the Political Appointment System in 2008-09. In this connection, would the Administration please provide details as to its rank, remuneration and duties?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

One Senior Personal Secretary (SPS) post will be created under Programme (1) Director of Bureau's Office in 2008-09. The SPS will provide dedicated secretarial support to the Under Secretary. The financial provision for this post is \$0.38 million per annum.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Stella HUNG

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for Food
and Health (Food)

Date _____ 14.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)012

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational
Food and Health Bureau expenses
(Food Branch)

Question Serial No.

0013

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Two new posts will be created by the Administration for strengthening support for food safety control in 2008-09 under this programme. In this connection, would the Administration please provide details as to their ranks, remunerations and duties?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

One two-year time-limited Administrative Officer (AO) post and one Personal Secretary I (PSI) post will be created under Programme (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety in 2008-09. The AO will provide support for the preparation, enactment and implementation of the new Food Safety Bill whereas the PSI will provide permanent secretarial support to the Administrative Officer Staff Grade C post approved by the LegCo Finance Committee with effect from 20 February 2008. The financial provision for the AO post and the PSI post is \$0.65 million and \$0.29 million per annum respectively.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Stella HUNG

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for Food
and Health (Food)

Date _____ 14.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)013

Question Serial No.

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational
Food and Health Bureau expenses
(Food Branch)

0014

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

A new post will be created by the Administration for providing support in the planning and development of a Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant in 2008-09 under this Programme. In this connection, would the Administration please provide details as to its rank, remuneration and duties?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

One time-limited Administrative Officer (AO) post will be created under Programme (3) Environmental Hygiene in 2008-09 for two years. The AO will provide support for planning, developing and monitoring the operation of a Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant in Hong Kong. The financial provision for the AO post is \$0.65 million per annum.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Mrs Stella HUNG

Post Title _____ Permanent Secretary for Food
and Health (Food)

Date _____ 14.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)014

Question Serial No.

0234

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What is the provision earmarked for providing technical advice on organic cultivation and intensive greenhouse production to farmers in the estimate for 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. EU Yuet-mee, Audrey

Reply:

The provision earmarked for providing technical advice on organic cultivation and intensive greenhouse production to farmers in 2008-09 is \$9.6 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 17 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)015

Question Serial No.

0235

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please inform this Committee of the expenditure involved in safeguarding animal welfare in the estimate for 2008-09.

Asked by: Hon. EU Yuet-mee, Audrey

Reply:

The estimated expenditure involved in safeguarding animal welfare is about \$2.45 million in 2008-09. This involves publicity and education for the general public on animal welfare, on such issues as responsible pet ownership and prevention of cruelty to animals, and providing a subvention to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for its work to promote animal welfare.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 17 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 016

Question Serial No.

0265

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

1. Whether the Administration has commenced the outsourcing tendering work? If so, what are the results?
2. What is the scope of the tests to be outsourced and the number of cases involved?
3. What is the average cost of sample tests outsourced? What is the estimated cost reduction compared with that before outsourcing? How will the savings on resources be used?
4. Will outsourcing be extended to other areas of tests in future? If so, please provide the timetable and areas to be further outsourced.

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

The Government Laboratory (GL) has commissioned the Efficiency Unit (EU) in 2007 to conduct a study to explore the feasibility for outsourcing part of its testing services with a view to freeing up resources for more complex analytical duties that requires higher levels of expertise. The report of the study, which was completed in February this year, recommended the Analytical and Advisory Services Division of GL to outsource one or few services which are identified as highly feasible for outsourcing as pilot at the earliest convenience. To take the recommendations of the EU report forward, the GL is now making preparation for outsourcing part of its food testing services to the private laboratories in 2008-09. Preparatory work including sounding out the outsourcing intention, liaison with the trade to keep track of the market interest and their capability, conducting technical seminars to share with the trade testing methods were being undertaken.

Based on our assessment of the current market interest and readiness, food tests relating to preservatives, heavy metals, artificial sweeteners, organochlorine pesticide residues, and veterinary drug residues can be considered for outsourcing at the initial stage. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has planned to outsource, on a pilot basis, some 3 000 samples (involving 17 000 tests) relating to preservatives and heavy metals to the private sector in 2008-09. An estimated total of around 3 000 samples (involving about 22 000 tests) may further be outsourced by GL in 2008-09.

Based on the preliminary feedback from the private laboratories and FEHD's pilot scheme, it is anticipated that the trade is able to take on the above tests at a lower cost than the Government. However, figures on the exact cost and savings achieved would only be available when more outsourcing contracts are awarded. The resources spared from the outsourced services will be re-deployed to setting up new testing services, including the development of new and advanced testing methods for new food standards, to cater for the more extensive and complicated testing demands arising from the Administration's stepped-up food control regime.

GL will conduct a review on the cost-effectiveness of its initial outsourcing programmes within 2008-09 before drawing up further measures to extend it to more types of food test.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 25.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)017

Question Serial No.

0243

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

During 2008-09, the Administration will continue to develop a Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant. In this connection, please inform this Committee of the following:

1. What is the estimated expenditure?
2. When will the tender process commence?
3. What are the respective numbers of live poultry farmers, wholesalers, retailers, transporters and workers who are expected to cease operation due to this project?
4. Is there any provision earmarked in the 2008-09 Estimates of Expenditure for setting up an assistance fund or paying compensation to surrender of licence to the above persons after the tendered construction works commences?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

The Government has identified a site in Sheung Shui for the development of the Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant (the Plant). In the past few months, we have started consultation with various stakeholders in the live poultry trade and the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene with regard to our proposal related to the development of the Plant. We are now carefully considering the views expressed by the various parties, including those on the future operation mode of the Plant, so as to formulate a model that would best suit the public interest and operation requirements of the trade. As we have yet to invite tenders for the development of the Plant, the estimated expenditure is not available.

As at end 2007, there were in total 50 live poultry farmers, 71 wholesalers and 471 retailers. The number of workers employed by these poultry farmers, wholesalers and retailers were about 1 900. There were also some 500 transport workers employed by the transporters. To minimise the impact of the project on the trade, we will assist the practitioners to shift to the business of "freshly slaughtered poultry" and chilled poultry. We will give consideration to ex-gratia arrangements for those who would leave the trade.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 20 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)018

Question Serial No.

0248

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In 2008-09, the Administration will continue to collaborate with the Mainland Authorities to explore the feasibility of applying information technology to enhance the traceability of food. Apart from the pilot run of a radio frequency identification (RFID) system for tracing live pigs imported into Hong Kong announced earlier, will the Administration adopt other kinds of technologies? If yes, what is the scope of application? What are the additional resources and manpower involved in the pilot run of the RFID system for live pigs? What are the estimated additional resources and manpower required in future?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

FHB and FEHD are working in collaboration with the Mainland authorities on a pilot programme to apply Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology in tracing live pigs imported from the Guangdong Province. We aim to complete the pilot programme in 2008, followed by an assessment of the effectiveness of the outcome for further improvement if necessary. The feasibility of applying RFID technology to live pigs imported from other provinces and other foods will be further explored with the Mainland authorities.

So far, FEHD has spent about \$0.2 million for purchasing equipment such as hand-held detectors and computer software, and about \$0.4 million on additional manpower for operating the equipment and testing exercises. It has also committed about \$2.4 million for further development of the pilot project in 2008-09.

In parallel, with a view to coping with our planned registration scheme for food importers and distributors for the purpose of enhancing food traceability, FEHD is examining the use of information technology in the management of the database.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Stella HUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Food
and Health (Food)

Date 14.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)019

Question Serial No.

0249

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The Administration will review the hawker licensing policy in 2008-09. Please provide relevant details including the time schedule, the substance of the review, and the manpower and expenditure involved. Will the issue of retention of the licenses for fixed cooked food stalls on roadside be included in the review?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

We are now conducting a review on existing hawker licensing policy. The licences for on-street cooked food stalls are included in the review. We will consult various stakeholders, including hawker associations, the Legislative Council and District Councils concerned in the course of the review. We plan to complete the review in around one year's time. Existing resources are deployed to work on the review and no additional expenditure will be incurred.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Stella HUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Food
and Health (Food)

Date 14.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)020

Question Serial No.

0250

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The Administration will review its liquor licensing policy in 2008-09. As the review has been launched some time ago, please give an account of the latest progress. Please provide details as to the manpower involved in the review and the amount of expenditure required, and the expected dates for the findings to be released and the recommendations to be implemented. Please also provide data on the number of applications for liquor licences in the past three years, the success rate and the time required on average in regard to these applications. Has the Administration compared the figures with those in neighbouring regions such as Singapore and Taiwan? If yes, what are the findings?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

We intend to brief the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on the preliminary findings of the review on liquor licensing policy in the second quarter of 2008. Existing resources are deployed to work on the review and no additional expenditure will be incurred.

The number of new applications for liquor licences in 2005, 2006 and 2007 were 774, 844 and 854 respectively and the success rate in 2005, 2006 and 2007 were 91%, 90% and 98% respectively. The average time needed to obtain a liquor licence was 43 days in 2007, but there is no ready information for 2005 and 2006. We have not compared these statistics with those in other neighbouring regions.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____ Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 20.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)021

Question Serial No.

0251

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the additional provision for strengthening food safety protection and preventing zoonotic diseases under this programme in 2008-09, could the Administration inform this Committee of the relevant details, including the major enhanced measures and amount of additional provisions? Could the Administration also provide the respective expenditures on food safety protection and prevention of zoonotic diseases in the past three years?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

We have earmarked \$1 million for enhancing publicity on food safety matters and \$10 million contingency funding to meet expenditure for controlling zoonotic diseases under Head 139 in 2008-09.

The Food and Health Bureau formulates policies relating to food safety protection and prevention of zoonotic diseases. The relevant measures are implemented by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and Government Laboratory. The major measures include carrying out import control of live animals and birds and surveillance on major zoonotic diseases such as avian influenza. The expenditure concerned incurred by these departments was \$301 million in 2005-06 and \$342 million in 2006-07. The revised estimate for 2007-08 was \$506 million. The expenditure on food safety protection and prevention of zoonotic diseases cannot be separately identified.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)022

Question Serial No.

0252

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to its intention to consider ways to improve the occupancy and viability of public markets in 2008-09, could the Administration inform this Committee of the relevant details, including the scope of consideration, timetable and the expenditure to be incurred?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

We are now conducting a review on the provision of public markets in Hong Kong, which covers issues such as the future provision of new markets as well as measures to deal with markets with low occupancy. We will consult the Legislative Council in the course of the review. We plan to complete the review in around one year's time. Existing resources are deployed to work on the review and no additional expenditure will be incurred.

Meanwhile, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will continue to implement measures to improve public markets, such as works projects to enhance market facilities, promotional activities, maintaining a high standard of cleanliness in markets and the enforcement of the monthly market cleansing day.

.Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Stella HUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Food
and Health (Food)

Date 14.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)023

Question Serial No.

0236

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, there will be a net increase of 28 posts in 2008-09. Please give a breakdown of the posts to be created, listing the grade and duties of the posts as well as the annual salary expenses involved. Please also state which area(s) of services will be improved following the creation of these posts.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

The information sought is provided below –

<u>Grades</u>	<u>Duties</u>	<u>Annual salary</u>
Chemist Field Assistant Field Officer Health Inspector Laboratory Attendant Scientific Officer (Medical)	To perform food safety regulatory duties.	The estimated annual salary is \$16.8 million.
Pest Control Assistant	To provide pest control services.	
Administration support staff	To provide administration support	

These posts are created for improving services in the areas of food safety and pest control.

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)024

Question Serial No.

0237

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, there will be a net decrease of 15 posts in 2008-09. Please inform this Committee of the rank, grade and duties of the posts to be deleted.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

The posts to be deleted are posts at the Artisan, Ganger and Workman II rank. Their main duties are to provide environmental hygiene services.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)025

Question Serial No.

0238

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational Expenses

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

It is estimated that the number of inspections of farms exporting food animals to Hong Kong will substantially increase from 37 in 2007 to 50 in 2008. Please advise on the reason(s) for the increase, the additional resources and manpower required as well as the types and locations of farms involved. Please give a breakdown of the number of farms (including chicken farms and pig farms) to be inspected, listing the types of farms and the average number of inspections required.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

More inspections to farms in the Mainland and other countries are planned in 2008 to enhance food safety, with a focus on control at source. The increase in manpower resources include two field officers.

The breakdown on farm inspection is tabulated as follows –

No. of visit in provinces or cities	Type of Farm			
	Poultry	Waterfowl	Pig	Cattle
Guangdong (廣東)	15	9	7	1
Shenzhen (深圳)	5		1	
Zhuhai (珠海)	2			

Jiangxi (江西)			2		
Hubei (湖北)			3		
Hunan (湖南)			2		
Argentina (阿根廷)				1	
Brazil (巴西)				2	
Total	22	9	15	4	50

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)026

Question Serial No.

0239

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

With regard to the Guandong-Hong Kong agricultural cooperation demonstration zone in Guangdong Province, will additional resources and manpower be allocated for inspection of the farms concerned to monitor their environmental hygiene and food safety standards? If yes, please provide details, including the manpower and estimated expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

To ensure food safety, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) conducts regular audit inspection to Mainland farms registered to export food to Hong Kong. Registered farms in the zone concerned will be included in our regular farm inspection programme in 2008-09.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)027

Question Serial No.

0240

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Since the introduction of the registration system for Mainland fresh water fish farms for supply to Hong Kong, how many inspection visits were made and how many fish farms were inspected in 2007-08? Please advise on the estimated number of inspection visits to be made and fish farms to be inspected for 2008-09, as well as the manpower and resources so required.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

In 2007, the Centre for Food Safety inspected a total of 24 mainland freshwater fish farms and eel farms. In 2008, we plan to visit the same number of farms. The visits will be undertaken by existing inspection teams comprising veterinary officers, field officers and research officer.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)028

Question Serial No.

0241

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

In 2008, how many Mainland processing plants that supply chilled pork to Hong Kong will be inspected and what is the estimated number of such on-site inspections? How much manpower and additional resources are required for the purpose?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

In 2007-08, officers of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) conducted four inspections to four chilled pork processing plants in the Mainland.

For 2008-09, CFS plans to conduct annual inspection to each of the four existing chilled pork processing plants.

A financial provision of \$86.1 million has been earmarked in 2008-09 for the work on import control. Separate breakdown on the resources and manpower provided specifically for inspecting processing plants of chilled pork is not readily available.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)029

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO

Question Serial No.

INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

0242

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

In view of the increasing number of farms, breeding farms and processing plants on the Mainland that export food specifically to Hong Kong, did the Administration make an estimation of the future increase in the number of such farms and plants? In this connection, did the Administration implement food control measures at sources and earmark financial provisions for the purpose? If yes, what criteria are adopted for determining the frequency and number of inspections? How much manpower and resources are involved?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

Before exporting chilled poultry and pork to Hong Kong, Mainland processing plants have to apply for registration from the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) and the Certification and Accreditation Administration (CNCA) of the People's Republic of China, and obtain endorsement from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). All animal farms for export to Hong Kong are registered by AQSIQ. We do not have information on the rate of increase in such plants and farms in future.

For control at source, staff of FEHD conduct audit inspections to the processing plants and registered farms. Inspection schedule is drawn up according to a hazard ranking system, taking into account past inspection findings, food surveillance results and export volume. The estimated expenditure for farm inspections is \$5.8 million, involving 3 veterinary officers, 8 field officers and 2 clerks. The resources and manpower deployed for inspection of processing plants cannot be separately identified.

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)030

Question Serial No.

0253

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

During 2008-09, the Department will consider further extending the scheme on contracting out market management to other districts. Please advise on the proposed time frame for extension of the scheme, the markets to be covered, the estimated savings in manpower and expenditure as well as the ways in which the resources saved will be re-deployed and put to effective use.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

- (1) In 2008-09, we will further contract out the management of 32 markets in 6 districts. For Central/Western, Wan Chai, Sham Shui Po and Yau Tsim Districts, the contracting out will commence in July 2008, whilst those for North District and Yuen Long District are scheduled for August and October 2008 respectively. After contracting out these 32 markets, there will be 57 markets in respect of which the management has been contracted out.
- (2) We expect manpower savings of around 156 staff from the above contracting out exercise. The staff concerned will be gainfully redeployed. We cannot provide an estimate on savings in expenditure, as the tender exercise has yet to complete.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

26.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)031

Question Serial No.

0254

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

In 2007, a total of 166 food business licences were suspended/cancelled. What is the respective number of food business licences suspended and cancelled?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

Among the 166 cases, 160 food business licences were suspended and six cancelled.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

19.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)032

Question Serial No.

0255

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

What is the respective number of appeal cases against the suspension of food business licences in 2006 and 2007, and how many cases were allowed? Of the appeal cases against licence suspension, what is the average duration of suspension? What is the longest and shortest duration of licence suspension in each of those two years?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

In 2006, there were nine appeal cases against food business licence suspension. The Licensing Appeals Board (LIAB) allowed the appeal in one case, shortened the suspension period in another, and upheld the suspension decision in the remaining seven cases. For these appeal cases, the average suspension period after appeal was 7.6 days. Taking the appeal outcome into account, the longest licence suspension in that year was 14 days and the shortest was five.

In 2007, there were 10 appeal cases against food business licence suspension. Nine cases were heard and one is pending hearing. Of the cases heard, LIAB shortened the suspension period in three cases, upheld the suspension decision in four and has yet to rule on the remaining two. For the seven cases already ruled by LIAB, the average suspension period after appeal was 6.7 days. Taking into account the appeal outcome as known to date, the longest licence suspension in that year was 14 days and the shortest was two.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

19.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 033

Question Serial No.

0605

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In 2007, the actual number of tests performed on food samples for regulatory compliance purposes and food complaint samples are 158 735 and 26 469 respectively, which are higher than their respective estimated figures of 130 000 and 12 000 for the year. In this connection, will the Administration adjust the relevant 2008 estimated figures upward? What is the estimated number of tests to be performed under the routine Food Surveillance Programme? Subject to the outsourcing of the tests, has the Administration increased correspondingly the estimated number of tests under the programme? If so, what are the expenditure and manpower involved?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

In view of its non-routine nature, it has always been difficult to estimate the number of food complaint samples. The estimated number of tests on food complaint samples for 2008 has already been revised upward to 20 000. The actual number of tests on food samples for regulatory compliance purposes in 2007 was higher than planned because there had been issues concerning food safety which had given rise to unscheduled request for testing services during the year. Additional food tests of such nature are difficult to predict and hence the estimated number of tests on food samples for regulatory compliance purposes for 2008 is maintained at 130 000. More importantly, it is envisaged that a much wider scope of testing services will become necessary following implementation of the new and revised legislation for the Administration's stepped-up food control regime on food safety standards, like the control of nutritional labelling as well as residues of pesticide and veterinary drugs. Thus, greater efforts by the Government Laboratory have to be focused on the development of testing methods and the associated validation work.

Subject to the outsourcing of one or few services which are identified as highly feasible for outsourcing as a pilot, the resources spared will be re-deployed to setting up new testing services, including the development of new and advanced testing methods for new food standards, to cater for the more extensive and complicated testing demands arising from the Administration's stepped-up food control regime.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)034

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Question Serial No.

0594

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In 2008-09, how much resources will the Administration deploy to make arrangements for central poultry slaughtering? What is the progress of the arrangements?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Hok-ming

Reply:

In addition to the existing resources deployed in the Food and Health Bureau, one two-year time-limited Administrative Officer post will be created in 2008-09 to provide support for planning and developing the Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant (the Plant). We have also engaged a consultant to draw up the related tender documents. The expenditure to be incurred with regard to the consultancy is around \$1.3 million.

The Government has identified a site in Sheung Shui for the development of the Plant. In the past few months, we have started consultation with various stakeholders in the live poultry trade and the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene with regard to our proposal related to the development of the Plant. We are now carefully considering the views expressed by the various parties, including those on the future operation mode of the Plant, so as to formulate a model that would best suit the public interest and operation requirements of the trade.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)035

Question Serial No.

0595

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In 2008-09, how much resources and manpower will the Administration employ to study ways to improve the occupancy position and financial viability of public markets? Will they include giving consideration to public market tenants' request for maintaining current rental level?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Hok-ming

Reply:

We are now conducting a review on the provision of public markets in Hong Kong, which covers issues such as the future provision of new markets as well as measures to deal with markets with low occupancy. We plan to complete the review in around one year's time. Existing resources are deployed to work on the review and no additional expenditure will be incurred.

Meanwhile, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will continue to implement measures to improve public markets, such as works projects to enhance market facilities, promotional activities, maintaining a high standard of cleanliness in markets and the enforcement of the monthly market cleansing day.

We understand that there are requests from public market tenants for further extension of the current rental freeze. We are considering these requests carefully.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Stella HUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Food
and Health (Food)

Date 14.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)036

Question Serial No.

0596

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What are the resources and manpower involved in the study of measures to meet the increasing demand for columbarium and crematorium facilities in the 2008-09 financial year? What are the latest developments in that respect?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Hok-ming

Reply:

Existing resources are deployed to study measures to meet the increasing demand for columbarium and crematorium facilities and no additional expenditure will be incurred.

The construction of 3 200 niches in the Kwai Chung Columbarium and another 18 500 in the Diamond Hill Columbarium by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) are due for completion in 2008 – 09, and will cost \$14.8 million and \$113.6 million respectively.

To meet the demand for crematorium services, the FEHD is planning to re-build the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Cape Collinson Crematorium to provide for eight and 10 new cremators respectively. FEHD also plans to build new columbarium facilities providing for some 30 000 niches and a Garden of Remembrance at the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery for completion by around 2012. The details and the expenditure required are being worked out.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)037

Question Serial No.

0597

Head: 139 Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Food and
Health Bureau (Food
Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Under this programme, there is a significant increase of 72.8% in the estimated expenditure for 2008-09 when compared to the revised estimate for 2007-08. What are the main reasons for the increase?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Hok-ming

Reply:

The increase in provision of \$14.2 million (72.8%) in 2008-09 is mainly for the creation of two posts (including one two-year time-limited Administrative Officer to assist in the preparation, enactment and implementation of the new Food Safety Bill and one Personal Secretary I to enhance secretarial support); enhancing publicity on food safety matters; and contingency funding to meet expenditure for controlling zoonotic diseases.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Stella HUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Food
and Health (Food)

Date 14.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)038

Question Serial No.

0598

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

How much additional resources will be spent on food safety matters, including food safety and genetically-modified food labeling system, and sampling and testing the safety of food on sale in the market? How much resources will be spent on preventing the introduction and spread of zoonotic diseases and diseases in animals and plants? What are the specific works and measures in this respect?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Hok-ming

Reply:

The Food and Health Bureau is responsible for formulating policies relating to food safety protection and the prevention of zoonotic diseases and diseases in animals and plants. Relevant measures are implemented by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Government Laboratory.

A total of \$649 million has been earmarked under these departments in 2008-09 for food safety matters and the prevention of zoonotic diseases and diseases in animals and plants. As these aspects of work are closely related, the expenditure cannot be separately identified.

Concerning food safety, the key measures include enhancing food surveillance testing and handling capacity, strengthening the food complaint handling capacity, setting up a new Food Importer and Distributor Registration System to enhance food traceability and carrying out farm inspection and sampling of feed.

Regarding the prevention of zoonotic disease, the work includes inspection of local farms and farms in exporting countries, carrying out import control of live animals and birds, combating smuggling of live animals and birds, and the surveillance on major zoonotic diseases such as avian influenza.

Apart from the funds earmarked under the departments concerned, the Food and Health Bureau has also earmarked \$1 million under Head 139 for enhancing publicity on food safety issues and \$10 million contingency funding to meet expenditure for controlling zoonotic diseases in 2008-09.

There is no legislative plan on genetically modified food and no resources have been earmarked.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)039

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Question Serial No.

0957

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question: Regarding the studies (including in-house studies or those entrusted to consultants) conducted by the Bureau for the purposes of formulating and assessing policies, please provide the relevant information in the following format:

- (1) For the projects that have reserved funds for conducting consultancy studies in 2007-08, please provide information in the following format:

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Revised Estimate (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	The follow-ups taken by the Administration on the study reports and their progress (if any)	If completed, have they been released to the public? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?

- (2) Is there any project that will reserve funds for conducting consultancy study in 2008-09? If yes, please provide the following information:

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Expenditure (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	Will the studies be released to the public if they are expected to be completed in the 2008-09 financial year? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. EU Yuet-mee, Audrey

Reply:

The information requested is provided below :

(1) Details on the consultancy studies for which funds have been reserved in 2007-08 :

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Revised Estimate (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	The follow-ups taken by the Administration on the study reports and their progress (if any)	If completed, have they been released to the public? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?
Red Hill Limited	Provision of consultancy services on the preparation of a tender document for the development of a poultry slaughtering and processing plant in Hong Kong	1,289,000	In progress	N/A	N/A

(2) Details on the consultancy study for which funds will be reserved in 2008-09 :

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Expenditure (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	Will the studies be released to the public if they are expected to be completed in the 2008-09 financial year? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____ Acting Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 040

Question Serial No.

0971

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The operations of the Government Laboratory pertaining to food analyses were re-organized from the original three functional sections into five. In this connection, what was the establishment of the original three functional sections and what is the current establishment of the five functional sections?

Asked by: Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply:

The staff establishment of the original three food safety sections which provided food testing services was 52. Of these 52 posts, 12 posts were for providing professional support and 40 posts were for providing technical and general support. Additional resources were provided to the Government Laboratory in 2007 to address the increase in workload in food testing. The current establishment of the five food safety sections after re-organisation is 84. Of these 84 posts, 23 posts are for providing professional support and 61 posts are for providing technical and general support.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 041

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Question Serial No.

0972

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The Food Safety Laboratory will be commissioned in early 2008. Please give the details of the staffing establishment and the estimates of annual expenditure.

Asked by: Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply:

The staffing establishment of the Food Safety Laboratory consists of 31 posts. Of these 31 posts, 9 posts are for providing professional support and 22 posts are for providing technical and general support. The 2008-09 estimated expenditure on the operation of the Food Safety Laboratory is \$28.6 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 25.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 042

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title): 603 Plant, vehicles
and equipment

Question Serial No.

0973

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

- a. Regarding the commitment of about \$7.82 million to acquire a set of instruments to support the enforcement of the legal requirements on nutritional labeling, is there any other existing instrument in the Laboratory that can help handle this kind of work? If yes, please give an account of the functions and the then acquisition cost of the instrument.
- b. How many types of nutrients can be analyzed by the proposed set of instruments? Please provide a list of the names of the nutrients.
- c. Can this set of instruments meet the needs if the labeling scheme is extended to cover more nutrients in the future?

Asked by: Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply:

- a. Apart from the set of instruments to be acquired, the GL will deploy its existing instrument "Inductively Coupled Plasma-Mass Spectrophotometer (ICP-MS)", which is currently used for the analysis of trace elements like heavy metals. This equipment could be used for the testing of minerals, e.g. sodium, calcium, which are regarded as nutrients. The cost of this piece of equipment at the time of acquisition is HK\$1.01 million.
- b. The nutrients that can be tested with the set of instruments to be acquired include: energy, total fat, saturated fat, monounsaturated fat, polyunsaturated fat, trans fat, protein, total carbohydrates, sugars, dietary fibre, cholesterol, and vitamins.
- c. The set of instruments to be acquired are able to test a wide range of chemical compounds and have generally covered the most common nutrients contained in food.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Dr. T L TING

Post Title _____ Government Chemist

Date _____ 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)043

Question Serial No.

0964

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

- a. According to the Department, the target of “inspecting vehicles carrying vegetables at Man Kam To Food Control Office” is deleted as it is not a good reflection of the performance measures involved in regulating vegetable import. Please explain why it cannot be used as a performance measure.

- b. Please advise on whether a new performance target will be set for the service. If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons? How can the Department assure the public that the vegetables conveyed by the vehicles are fit for consumption if a performance target is not available?

Asked by : Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply :

The import control of vegetables from the Mainland is through an administrative arrangement. Vehicles carrying vegetables into Hong Kong are not required by law to stop at Man Kam To Food Control Office (MKTFCO) of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) for inspection. The target of “inspecting vehicles carrying vegetables at Man Kam To Food Control Office (% of vehicles)” was intended to mean that for those vehicles carrying vegetables that entered MKTFCO or directed to stop at the inspection platforms of the Customs and Excise Department, all were inspected for export certification documents. This target was, however, misinterpreted as to mean that each and every vehicle carrying vegetables that came through Man Kam To Border Control Point everyday was subjected to audit inspection. We therefore do not consider it a good reflection of our performance in regulating vegetable import.

The Department will monitor vegetables imported from the Mainland, by conducting audit inspection for export certification documents and random sampling for pesticides from inbound vehicles at Man Kam To

Border Control Point. This work will be reflected by the existing indicator on “vehicles carrying vegetables inspected at Man Kam To Food Control Office in 2008”.

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)044

Question Serial No.

0965

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Regarding the inspections of farms exporting food animals to Hong Kong, please advise on:

- a. the revised estimated expenditure for 2007-08 and the estimated expenditure for 2008-09; and
- b. the general responsibilities of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

Asked by : Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply :

The information sought is provided as follows –

- a. The revised estimated expenditure for inspection of food animal farms is about \$2.9 million for 2007-08 and the estimated expenditure for undertaking the inspection in 2008-09 is \$5.2 million.
- b. The Centre for Food Safety carries out audit inspections to farms exporting live food animals to Hong Kong. The scope of inspection includes farm layout and facilities, recent reports of testing, animal health and disease management, records of veterinary drug treatment, vaccination protocols, feeding procedures, stocking conditions, movement of animals, quarantine facilities and disinfections procedures etc. Any abnormality will be referred to the relevant Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau in the Mainland for follow-up actions.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)045

Question Serial No.

0966

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Regarding the recurrent expenditure per tonne of refuse collected, the estimated expenditure for 2008 increases by \$13 over the actual expenditure for 2007. What are the reasons for the increase?

Asked by : Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply :

The increase is mainly attributed to the civil service pay adjustment in 2007, rising service contract prices and an estimated decrease in tonnage of refuse collected.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)046

Question Serial No.

0967

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

What is the total amount of refuse collected from 2006 to 2008? What is the total expenditure incurred?

Asked by : Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply :

The requested statistics is set out as follows –

	Amount of refuse collected	Expenditure
2005-06	2.0 million tonnes	\$324.0 million
2006-07	2.0 million tonnes	\$328.8 million
2007-08	1.9 million tonnes (estimate)	\$350.1 million (estimate)

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)047

Question Serial No.

0968

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

The replacement of specialised vehicles and minor plant and equipment has led to an increase of more than \$80 million in financial provision over the revised estimate for 2007-08. Please give details of the replacement exercise.

Asked by : Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply :

The information sought is provided as follows –

Items to be procured	Purpose	Estimated Expenditure
62 refuse collection vehicles	To replace retiring vehicles	\$89.6 million
3 street washing vehicles	To replace 1 retiring vehicle and to procure 2 additional vehicles to meet shortfall in operational requirements	\$3.0 million
1 vehicle washing machine	To replace old machine which is beyond repair	\$1.4 million
1 passenger lift control at depot	To replace existing defective lift control	\$0.5 million
3 escalators and 2 air-cooled chillers in markets	To replace old and deteriorating ones	\$5.3 million
3 hydraulic loading arms in slaughterhouse	Additions to enhance safe meat production	\$5.1 million
2 gas chromatograph mass spectrometers in food laboratory	To replace old ones which are beyond repair	\$2.6 million

Items to be procured	Purpose	Estimated Expenditure
2 passenger lifts in crematorium	To replace old and deteriorating ones	\$1.5 million
Total		\$109.0 million

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)048

Question Serial No.

0969

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 661 Minor plant, vehicles and equipment (block vote)

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

How will the Department dispose of the old specialised vehicles and minor plant and equipment after the replacement exercise?

Asked by : Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply :

After the replacement exercise, the old specialised vehicles will be disposed of by the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department by tender. All minor plant and equipment to be replaced are defective or beyond repair and will be disposed of by the contractors responsible for the replacement.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)049

Question Serial No.

0877

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Given the public's increasing demand for better food quality, has the Administration conducted any adaptive or technical studies to facilitate efficient production and improve the quality of products? If yes, what is the expenditure involved? Is the relevant financial provision in 2008-09 higher or lower in comparison with that in 2007-08? Please state the reasons.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Ting-kwong

Reply:

Regarding crops, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (the Department) conducts adaptive studies to (a) improve crop growing methods; (b) prevent diseases and pests; (c) select suitable plant varieties for local production; and (d) introduce environmentally-controlled greenhouse technology to local farmers to raise their productivity and quality of production.

Regarding fisheries, the Department conducts aquaculture studies and provides technical services relating to the development of more efficient fish culture methods and improved husbandry techniques. To provide a wider choice of fish species for culture, the Department also conducts trials of new species with good market potential such as Jade Perch and introduces the proven culture techniques to fish farmers.

In 2008-09, a provision of about \$24.9 million has been allocated to the above areas, representing an increase of about \$3.6 million as compared to 2007-08.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 17 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)050

Question Serial No.

0878

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Provision for 2008-09 is \$104.6 million (35.6%) lower than the revised estimate for 2007-08, mainly due to decrease in non-recurrent expenditure for the financial support schemes for live poultry farmers, wholesalers and related transporters and capital expenditure. Please advise whether the decrease in expenditure implies a corresponding decrease in workload and the number of staff. Why, then, does the Administration request to create 17 posts at the same time? What are the ranks, work areas and allocation arrangements in respect of these posts?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Ting-kwong

Reply:

No new posts had been created for the administration of the Voluntary Surrender Scheme for the live poultry industry, and staff had to be redeployed from other duties for the purpose. The staff involved have subsequently been redeployed to administer a similar scheme for pig farms, or returned to their original duties of enforcing livestock regulations.

The 17 posts to be created in 2008-09 are to promote and enhance Good Agriculture and Aquaculture Practices among crop and fish farms respectively. By promoting the proper use of pesticides and feeds and other good farming practices, the new staff will contribute to the effort to enhance the safety and quality of local fresh produce.

The 17 posts include 1 Agricultural Officer, 1 Field Officer I, 1 Field Officer II, 3 Field Assistant, 2 Laboratory Technician II, 1 Fisheries Officer, 2 Fisheries Supervisor I, 2 Fisheries Supervisor II, 2 Fisheries Technical Officer I and 2 Fisheries Technical Officer II.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 17 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)051

Question Serial No.

0960

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

To prevent rabies, has the Government prosecuted anyone under the Rabies Ordinance for abandonment of animals in 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08? If yes, how many prosecutions have been initiated in each year?

Asked by: Hon. HO Chun-yan, Albert

Reply:

No prosecution against the abandonment of animals has been made under the Rabies Ordinance in the past 3 years. However, we conducted 136 prosecutions against the owners of stray dogs under the Rabies Ordinance in 2007-08 and the numbers in 2005-06 and 2006-07 were 139 and 147 respectively.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **MISS CHEUNG SIU HING** _____

Post Title _____ **Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation** _____

Date _____ **25 March 2008** _____

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)052

Question Serial No.

0961

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In connection with the capture of stray animals, please provide the actual and the estimated expenditures for each year between 2006-07 and 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. HO Chun-yan, Albert

Reply:

The amounts spent on the capture and handling of stray animals were about \$32.7 million in 2006-07 and \$35.5 million in 2007-08 respectively. A provision of some \$35.5 million has been earmarked for the capture and handling of stray animals in 2008-09.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 17 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)053

Question Serial No.

0962

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What specific measures will be taken and what is the amount of estimated expenditure involved in conserving fisheries resources in Hong Kong waters in 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply:

A provision of \$15.7 million has been earmarked in 2008-09 for the management and conservation of fisheries resources. Such measures include conducting regular patrols and taking enforcement actions to combat destructive fishing practices, deployment and monitoring of artificial reefs, monitoring of local fisheries resources, implementation of relevant educational and publicity activities, and providing loans, training and technical support services to fishermen to help them switch to sustainable fisheries or related operations including fish farming and transportation. In addition, we will continue to take forward the work of the Committee on Sustainable Fisheries which is considering, amongst other things, measures for conserving local fisheries resources.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)054

Question Serial No.

1468

Head: Head 139 Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Food and
Health Bureau (Food
Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The financial provision for 2007-08 has been substantially reduced by 69.2% from the original estimate of \$63.4 million to the revised estimate of \$19.5 million. What are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The decrease in provision of \$43.9 million (69.2%) is mainly due to –

- (i) the provision for the Voluntary Surrender Scheme (the Scheme) for pig farmers (\$20 million), which has been deployed for meeting additional expenditure under the Scheme in 2007-08, being reflected under Head 22 – Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department; and
- (ii) no need to deploy contingency funding for controlling zoonotic diseases and meeting other unexpected contingencies (\$22 million).

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____
Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 25.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)055

Question Serial No.

1428

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding the introduction of legislation to strengthen control over pesticide residues in food in 2008-09, please inform this Committee of

- (a) the estimated expenditure involved; and
- (b) what the Administration will do to step up control over the genetically modified food other than the pesticide residues in food?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- (a) The Administration plans to introduce a new piece of regulation on control of pesticide residues in food in 2008-09. The legislative work is undertaken by existing staff and involves no additional expenditure.
- (b) There is no legislative plan concerning genetically modified food in 2008-09 and no resources are earmarked for the purpose.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 20 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)056

Question Serial No.

1426

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health / Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
/ Secretary for the Environment / Secretary for Development

Question:

Regarding the studies (including in-house studies or those entrusted to consultants) conducted by the Department for the purposes of formulating and assessing policies, please provide the relevant information in the following format:

- (1) For the projects that have reserved funds for conducting consultancy studies in 2007-08, please provide information in the following format:

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Revised Estimate (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	The follow-ups taken by the Administration on the study reports and their progress (if any)	If completed, have they been released to the public? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?

- (2) Is there any project that will reserve funds for conducting consultancy study in 2008-09? If yes, please provide the following information:

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Expenditure (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	Will the studies be released to the public if they are expected to be completed in the 2008-09 financial year? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. EU Yuet-mee, Audrey

Reply:

The Department did not carry out any study for policy formulation and assessment in 2007-08 and no provision has been earmarked in 2008-09 for the purpose.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 19 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)057

Question Serial No.

1427

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Regarding the studies (including in-house studies or those entrusted to consultants) conducted by the Department for the purposes of formulating and assessing policies, please provide the relevant information in the following format:

- (1) For the projects that have reserved funds for conducting consultancy studies in 2007-08, please provide information in the following format:

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Revised Estimate (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	The follow-ups taken by the Administration on the study reports and their progress (if any)	If completed, have they been released to the public? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?

- (2) Is there any project that will reserve funds for conducting consultancy study in 2008-09? If yes, please provide the following information:

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Expenditure (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	Will the studies be released to the public if they are expected to be completed in the 2008-09 financial year? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. EU Yuet-mee, Audrey

Reply :

The information sought is provided as follows –

(1) Project that has reserved funds for conducting consultancy study in 2007-08

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Revised Estimate (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	The follow-ups taken by the Administration on the study reports and their progress (if any)	If completed, have they been released to the public? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?
Pricewaterhouse Coopers	Consultancy study on private sector involvement in the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse (SSSH)	\$1.3 million	The draft report is being finalised.	We will draw reference from the study findings and recommendations in drafting the tender document for the new contract to operate and manage SSSH.	The key recommendations on enhancement of contract terms for the future operation and management of SSSH was presented to the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene of the Legislative Council on 11 March 2008.

(2) Project that has reserved funds for conducting consultancy study in 2008-09

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Expenditure (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	Will the studies be released to the public if they are expected to be completed in the 2008-09 financial year? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?
nil				

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)058

Question Serial No.

1443

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Under this programme, the estimated provision of \$809.6 million for 2008-09 represents an increase of 16.9% over the revised estimate of \$692.4 million for 2007-08. What are the reasons for the increase?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The increase in financial provision under this Programme is attributed to the following reasons –

- (a) creation of posts and increase in departmental expenses relating to enhancement of food safety regulatory functions and pest control services;
- (b) increase in capital expenditure for items such as population-based food consumption survey, integrated mass spectrometer system; and
- (c) procurement of additional equipment for operation in slaughterhouse.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)059

Question Serial No.

1444

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Apart from introducing an amendment regulation on nutrition labelling for pre-packaged food and taking steps to introduce a new Food Safety Bill, has the Department earmarked financial provision for implementing mandatory genetically modified food labelling. If yes, please provide details and advise on the manpower and expenditure involved? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

No resources are earmarked for the purpose, as there is no plan to implement a mandatory genetically modified food labelling scheme in 2008-09.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)060

Question Serial No.

1445

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

During 2008-09, the Department will take steps to introduce a new Food Safety Bill, please advise on the legislative timetable and the estimated expenditure required.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

Our plan is to introduce the Food Safety Bill into the Legislative Council in the 2008-09 legislative session. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has been allocated recurrent funding of \$21 million (involving 12 posts) to enhance food safety work before enactment of the Bill. The actual resource requirements for implementing the Food Safety Bill will be worked out after the proposed regulatory measures are endorsed by LegCo.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)061

Question Serial No.

1446

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

During 2008-09, the Department will introduce an amendment regulation on nutrition labelling for pre-packaged food, please advise on the time frame and the estimated expenditure required.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The Administration plans to table the amendment regulation for negative vetting in April 2008. The resources for implementing the new legislation after the grace period will be worked out after the passage of the amendment regulation.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)062

Question Serial No.

1467

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the Department's contribution to the review of hawker licence policy, please advise on:

- a. the detailed plan;
- b. the estimated expenditure required; and
- c. the anticipated date of completion of the review and announcement of the results.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The review will address various issues of hawker licensing, including the transfer and succession arrangements for hawker licences and the efficient use of vacant fixed hawker pitches. We will use existing resources to undertake the review. No additional expenditure will be incurred. We expect the review to be completed in about one year's time.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN/SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)063

Question Serial No.

1473

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

With regard to taking forward plans to provide more crematoria and columbaria facilities, please advise on:

- a. the details of the plans;
- b. the estimated expenditure required; and
- c. the estimated time when additional crematoria and columbaria facilities will fall short of the demand.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The information sought is provided as follows –

- (a) The Department is planning to re-build the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Cape Collinson Crematorium to provide for eight and 10 new cremators respectively. For columbarium facilities, the construction of 3 200 niches in the Kwai Chung Columbarium and another 18 500 in the Diamond Hill Columbarium are due for completion in 2008 – 09. We also plan to build new columbarium facilities providing for some 30 000 niches and a Garden of Remembrance in the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery for completion by around 2012.
- (b) For the two projects that are due for completion in 2008 – 09, the construction of 3 200 niches in the Kwai Chung Columbarium and another 18 500 in the Diamond Hill Columbarium will cost \$14.8 million and \$113.6 million respectively. The details and expenditure regarding the projects under planning are being worked out.

- (c) It is estimated that the additional crematorium facilities will fall short of the demand by around 2025 whereas the supply of new niches will likely be taken up by accumulated demand once available.

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)064

Question Serial No.

1474

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Regarding the indicator for "licensed hawkers", the numbers of "fixed pitch hawkers" and "itinerant hawkers" will be reduced from 6 636 and 600 in 2007 to 6 400 and 540 in 2008 respectively. Please advise on:

- a. the reasons for the decrease;
- b. whether a decision has been made not to issue new hawker licences.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The number of licensed fixed pitch and itinerant hawkers is estimated to decrease in 2008, having regard to the past trend of voluntary non-renewal of fixed pitch hawker licences by the licensees themselves and voluntary surrender of itinerant hawker licences.

Because of the obstruction and nuisances caused by on-street hawking activities, the Administration has not issued new hawker licences under normal circumstances since 1970 with a view to gradually reducing on-street hawking activities. We are now conducting a hawker licensing policy review which will address various issues of hawker licensing, including the issue of new hawker licences.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)065

Question Serial No.

1717

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What plans does the Government have to develop local fish fry hatching in 2008-09? What is the amount of expenditure involved? What are the details?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

In 2008-09, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department plans to set up an experimental fish hatchery. Through demonstrations and technical training workshops, the department will help interested fish farmers to acquire the necessary techniques and experience to develop their own hatchery. A provision of \$2.7 million has been earmarked for this task.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ MISS CHEUNG SIU HING _____

Post Title _____ Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation _____

Date _____ 20 March 2008 _____

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)066

Question Serial No.

1718

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What is the amount of provision earmarked for promoting sustainable development of the fisheries industry and conserving fisheries resources in Hong Kong waters?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department promotes sustainable development of the fisheries industry through the provision of infrastructural support, technical assistance and advice, credit facilities and vocational training to local fish farmers and fishermen. Low interest loans under the Fisheries Development Loan Fund (with an approved commitment of \$290 million) administered by the Department are made available to local fishermen and fish farmers. Moreover, fishermen may apply to the Marine Fish Scholarship Fund for sponsorships to attend relevant training courses. We also assist fish farmers to raise the quality and competitiveness of their products through implementing the Accredited Fish Farm Scheme and introducing new fish species such as Jade Perch for culture.

With regard to the conservation of fisheries resources, the Department conducts regular patrols and takes enforcement actions against destructive fishing practices, deploys and monitors artificial reefs, monitors local fisheries resources, and carries out educational and publicity activities. The Department also chairs the Committee on Sustainable Fisheries to study the overall direction and long term goals for our fisheries industry as well as viable strategies and options for the sustainable development of the industry.

A provision of \$20.6 million has been earmarked in 2008-09 for the promotion of sustainable development of the fisheries industry and for the conservation of fisheries resources.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ MISS CHEUNG SIU HING _____

Post Title _____ Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation _____

Date _____ 20 March 2008 _____

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)067

Question Serial No.

1719

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What plans does the Government have to promote organic farming and intensive greenhouse production?
What is the amount of expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department organizes training seminars, workshops and on-farm demonstrations of technical skills to help farmers acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in organic farming and greenhouse production. The Department also conducts adaptive studies to improve growing methods; prevent diseases and pests; and to select suitable plant varieties to raise farmers' productivity and quality of production. In 2008-09, the amount of provision earmarked for promoting organic farming and intensive greenhouse production to farmers is \$9.6 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)068

Question Serial No.

1720

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What plans does the Government have for the promotion of local agricultural and fisheries products? What is the amount of expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

In 2008-09, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department will promote local agricultural produce by emphasizing quality and food safety, the key characteristics of produce from accredited farms, organic farms and intensive greenhouse production. New or improved vegetable species and varieties will also be introduced to stimulate market demand. In addition, the Department will organize promotional activities and exhibitions to promote local produce to consumers.

As regards fisheries, we will continue helping fish farmers to improve production and quality control standards as well as the competitiveness of their products through organizing training workshops, implementing the Accredited Fish Farm Scheme and introducing new fish species such as Jade Perch for culture. We will also help fishermen and fish farmers to promote their products through the development of local brand names and marketing networks as well as organizing promotional activities for local fisheries products.

A total of \$23.4 million has been earmarked for these tasks in 2008-09.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 18 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)069

Question Serial No.

1721

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

For the 17 posts to be created under this programme in 2008-09, what are the ranks and work arrangement involved?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

Rank of Post	No. of Post	Main Duties
I. Agriculture		
Agricultural Officer	1	◆ To promote Good Agricultural Practice to meet community demands and expectation for safe and quality local fresh produce.
Field Officer I	1	
Field Officer II	1	
Field Assistant	3	
Laboratory Technician II	2	
II. Fisheries		
Fisheries Officer	1	◆ To promote Good Aquaculture Practice to meet community demands and expectation for safe and quality local fresh produce.
Fisheries Supervisor I	2	
Fisheries Supervisor II	2	
Fisheries Technical Officer I	2	
Fisheries Technical Officer II	2	
Total	17 posts	

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 18 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)070

Question Serial No.

1722

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead: 000 Operational expenses

Programme:

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The amount of subvention to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Hong Kong) under this subhead is to be increased by \$300,000 in the estimate for 2008-09. What are the reasons for the increase? Are there any specified uses? What are the criteria for only increasing such an amount? Why no other animal welfare organisations are given any subvention?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has been collaborating with the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to promote animal welfare for some time. The amount of subvention provided by the AFCD depends on the requirement of the animal welfare activities to be organized in the year in question. In 2008-09, the increased subvention to SPCA will be deployed on neutering service of animals (\$172,000), investigation of animal cruelty cases (\$28,000), rescue of animals (\$50,000) and public education (\$50,000).

AFCD will consider applications for subvention from other animal welfare organizations on a case-by-case basis.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 18 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)071

Question Serial No.

1723

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Is there any provision earmarked for relaunching the Voluntary Surrender Scheme after the centralized poultry slaughtering plant was planned? If yes, please provide the details and time table. If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

The Government has started consultation with various stakeholders in the live poultry trade and the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene in the past few months with regard to the proposal related to the development of the Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant. It is now carefully studying the views expressed by the various parties and considering how best to provide for the poultry slaughtering processing plant, including the possible arrangements for the live poultry trade.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)072

Question Serial No.

1724

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What are the amounts of resources earmarked for the inspection of animals and plants imported into the territory, the inspection of local farms and fish farms, the monitoring of chemical residues in food animals and the regulation of feeding food animals with chemicals?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

For 2008-09, a provision of \$23.9 million has been earmarked for the inspection of animals and plants imported into the territory, \$2.1 million for the inspection of local livestock farms and the regulation of feeding food animals with chemicals; \$4.9 million for the inspection of fish farms and \$10.1 million for the monitoring of drug residues in food animals.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title _____

Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date _____

20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)073

Question Serial No.

1725

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What are the plans for promoting animal welfare in 2008-09? What are the amounts of expenditure and manpower involved?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

A provision of \$2.45 million has been reserved for the promotion of animal welfare in 2008-09. This involves publicity and education for the general public on animal welfare on such issues as responsible pet ownership and prevention of cruelty to animals, and providing a subvention to the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for its work to promote animal welfare. 1 Senior Veterinary Officer, 4 Veterinary Officers, 4 Field Officers I and 8 Field Officers II are involved among their other duties.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 18 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)074

Question Serial No.

1726

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

As the number of local livestock farms is decreasing, has the Administration reduced its manpower? If yes, please provide the details. If no, please state the reasons.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

The existing resources have been deployed to strengthen the control of the livestock industry through stepped up inspections to live pig and poultry farms to promote good husbandry and environmental hygiene practices and to enforce licence conditions and codes of practice. More work has also been done on fish disease investigation, avian influenza surveillance and enforcement control of backyard poultry.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)075

Question Serial No.

1690

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding the review of the hawker licensing policy during 2008-09, would the Administration inform this Committee of the following:

- (a) the details of the review;
- (b) the estimated expenditure involved; and
- (c) the expected completion date of the review and the expected time of releasing the results?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The review will address various issues of hawker licensing, including the transfer and succession arrangements for hawker licences and the efficient use of vacant fixed hawker pitches. We will use existing resources to undertake the review. No additional expenditure will be incurred. We expect the review to be completed in about one year's time.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____
Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 20.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)076

Question Serial No.

1691

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau (Food
Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

During 2008-09, measures will be implemented to meet the increasing demand for columbarium and crematorium facilities. Please advise this Committee of:

- a. the details of the measures;
- b. the estimated expenditure required; and
- c. the estimated capacities of the facilities concerned.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The construction of 3 200 niches in the Kwai Chung Columbarium and another 18 500 in the Diamond Hill Columbarium by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) are due for completion in 2008 – 09, and will cost \$14.8 million and \$113.6 million respectively.

To meet the demand for crematorium services, the FEHD is planning to re-build the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Cape Collinson Crematorium to provide for eight and 10 new cremators respectively. Besides, FEHD plans to build new columbarium facilities providing for some 30 000 niches and a Garden of Remembrance at the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery for completion by around 2012. The details and expenditure required are being worked out.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 25.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)077

Question Serial No.

1728

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The Administration has started to collaborate with the Mainland Authorities to explore the feasibility of applying information technology to enhance the traceability of food since 2007-08. Please advise on the following:

- (a) As there are various types of food, has the Administration considered the priority areas of study, such as dry goods, wet goods or live poultry? What are the criteria for determining the priority?
- (b) What studies had been conducted in 2007-08 and how much provision was involved?
- (c) What studies will be conducted in 2008-09 and what is the expected expenditure?
- (d) Has the Administration considered the application of the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology and the areas of application? What arrangement will be made for the relevant local industries, including food suppliers, to know and apply such technology?

Asked by: Hon. SIN Chung-kai

Reply:

- (a) to (c) FHB and FEHD are working in collaboration with the Mainland authorities on a pilot programme to apply Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology in tracing live pigs imported from Guangdong Province. We aim to complete the pilot programme in 2008, to be followed by an assessment of the effectiveness of the outcome for further improvement if necessary. So far, FEHD has spent about \$0.2 million for purchasing equipment such as hand-held detectors and computer software, and about \$0.4 million on additional manpower for operating the equipment and testing exercises.

We aim to complete the pilot programme and assessment in 2008-09 and to explore the feasibility of applying such information technology (IT) to live pigs imported from other provinces and other foods. FEHD has committed about \$2.4 million for further development of the pilot project in 2008-09. Besides, with a view to coping with our planned mandatory registration scheme for food importers and distributors for the purpose of enhancing food traceability, FEHD is examining the use of IT in the management of the database.

- (d) We shall share the knowledge with the relevant local industries upon completion of the pilot programme to apply RFID technology in tracing live pigs imported from Guangdong Province.

Signature _____
Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP
Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)
Date 25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 079

Question Serial No.

1655

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In 2008-09, the Administration will explore the feasibility to outsource some of the tests to the commercial sector. Please advise on the latest progress of the study and when the study will be completed. Will the related organizations be consulted and how much savings are expected to be achieved ?

Asked by: Hon. LI Kwok-ying

Reply:

The Government Laboratory (GL) has commissioned the Efficiency Unit (EU) in 2007 to conduct a study to explore the feasibility for outsourcing part of its testing services with a view to freeing up resources for more complex analytical duties that requires higher levels of expertise. The report of the study, which was completed in February this year, recommended the Analytical and Advisory Services Division of GL to outsource one or few services which are identified as highly feasible for outsourcing as pilot at the earliest convenience. To take the recommendations of the EU report forward, GL is now making preparation for outsourcing part of its food testing services to the private laboratories in 2008-09. Preparatory work including sounding out the outsourcing intention, liaison with the trade to keep track of the market interest and their capability, conducting technical seminars to share with the trade testing methods were being undertaken.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has planned to outsource, on a pilot basis, some 3 000 samples (involving 17 000 tests) relating to preservatives and heavy metals to the private sector in 2008-09. An estimated total of around 3 000 samples (involving about 22 000 tests) may further be outsourced by GL in 2008-09. The exact cost and savings to be achieved would only be available when the outsourcing contracts are awarded.

The resources spared from the outsourced services will be re-deployed to setting up new testing services, including the development of new and advanced testing methods for new food standards, to cater for the more extensive and complicated testing demands arising from the Administration's stepped-up food control regime.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 26.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)080

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Question Serial No.

0582

Head : 33 Civil Engineering and Development Department

Subhead

(No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Port and Marine Facilities

Controlling Officer : Director of Civil Engineering and Development

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Has the Government earmarked any provision for the clearance of seabed sediments in the 26 fish culture zones in Hong Kong? If yes, please provide the relevant details and the timetable for the commencement of works. If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply :

A priority list for removing sediments at the 26 fish culture zones (FCZs) in Hong Kong has been drawn up by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). AFCD and Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) consulted mariculturists' representatives on this list in May 2007. The representatives supported the Government to carry out dredging works for the five top priority FCZs at Sha Tau Kok, Yim Tin Tsai (East), Yim Tin Tsai, Yung Shue Au and Po Toi O subject to the findings of an environmental impact assessment (EIA) study.

\$1.4 million has been earmarked in 2008-09 for conducting the above EIA study, which is planned to commence in 2008-09 for completion in one and a half year. Dredging works to clear seabed sediments at the respective FCZs will be carried out in phases after the completion of EIA study.

Signature

Name in block letters

JOHN S V CHAI

Post Title

Director of Civil Engineering and Development

Date

26.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 081

Question Serial No.

2377

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Additional resources were allocated to the Laboratory in 2007 to address the increasing workload in food testing, including those related to food complaint cases. To bring about better utilization of the new resources, the operations pertaining to food analyses were re-organised from the original 3 functional sections into 5. After the re-organisation, did the Laboratory review its effectiveness in 2007-08? If so, what was the situation?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

Upon allocation of additional resources in 2007, the testing services on food by the Government Laboratory had been strengthened in general. It is reflected through the number of food test performed, the turnaround time for tests on food complaint cases, and the capability of the Government Laboratory in setting up new testing services.

The actual number of tests performed on food samples for regulatory compliance purposes and food complaints has increased from 112 421 and 14 604 in 2006 to 158 735 and 26 469 respectively in 2007. The percentage of food complaint samples completed within target time was also within the pledged target of 80%. In addition, the Government Laboratory is planning to set up new testing services, including the development of new and advanced testing methods for new food standards, to cater for the more extensive and complicated testing demands arising from the Administration's stepped-up food control regime.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 26.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 082

Question Serial No.

2379

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the number of samples for testing, there is a decrease, instead of an increase, in the estimated numbers of "food samples for regulatory compliance purposes", "food complaint samples" and "pharmaceuticals (registration)" in 2008. What are the reasons for that? Does it have anything to do with the contracting-out of services?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The estimated number of tests on food complaint samples has increased from 12 000 in 2007 to 20 000 in 2008. In view of its non-routine nature, it has always been difficult to estimate the number of food complaint samples and the estimate in 2008 provides a realistic estimate on the number of samples having regard to the situation in 2007. The actual number of tests on food samples for regulatory compliance purposes in 2007 was higher than planned because there had been issues concerning food safety which had given rise to unscheduled request for testing services during the year. Additional food tests of such nature are difficult to predict and hence the estimated number of tests on food samples for regulatory compliance purposes for 2008 is maintained at 130 000.

It is envisaged that a much wider scope of testing services will become necessary following implementation of the new and revised legislation for the Administration's stepped-up food control regime on food safety standards, like the control of nutritional labelling as well as residues of pesticide and veterinary drugs. Thus, greater efforts by the Government Laboratory have to be focused on the development of testing methods and associated validation work.

Subject to the outsourcing of one or few routine food testing services which are identified as highly feasible for outsourcing as pilot, the resources spared will be re-deployed to setting up new testing services, including the development of new and advanced testing methods for new food standards, to cater for the more extensive and complicated testing demands arising from the Administration's stepped-up food control regime.

Regarding the actual tests performed under pharmaceuticals (registration), the slight increase to 20 139 in 2007 is due to the increased demand arising from a number of ad-hoc investigatory cases. The estimated workload of 19 000 tests in 2008 is based on the trend of workload in the past few years and has no relationship with the outsourcing initiative.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 26.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 083

Question Serial No.

2380

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The Government Laboratory will continue to provide analytical support to other government departments. In this connection, does the Laboratory have any new plan for further enhancement of food safety efforts in Hong Kong? If yes, please inform this Committee of the details of work and the estimated expenditure.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

To further strengthen the testing services on food to cope with the Administration's stepped-up food control regime, the Government has set up the Food Safety Laboratory (FSL) to provide for the additional accommodation required by the expanded food testing services. The FSL has commenced operation since February 2008 with an estimated expenditure of \$28.6 million in 2008-09.

In addition, funds of \$31.0 million will be allocated to Government Laboratory (GL) to acquire advanced equipment to set up new testing services for the more extensive and complicated testing needs of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) in the coming years.

Furthermore, the GL is now making preparation for outsourcing part of its food testing services to the private laboratories in 2008-09. Preparatory work was being undertaken, including sounding out the outsourcing intention, liaison with the trade to keep track of the market interest and their capability, conducting technical seminars to share with the trade on testing methods. The resources spared from the outsourced services will be re-deployed to setting up new testing services, including the development of new and advanced testing methods for new food standards to cater for the more extensive and complicated testing demands arising from the Administration's stepped-up food control regime.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 26.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 084

Question Serial No.

2381

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the issue of exploring the feasibility of outsourcing some of the testing services to the commercial sector, what kinds of testing services are going to be outsourced to the commercial sector? How does the Government Laboratory ensure the quality of the outsourced services? What will be the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

Based on our assessment of the current market interest and readiness, food tests relating to preservatives, heavy metals, artificial sweeteners, organochlorine pesticide residues, and veterinary drug residues can be considered for outsourcing at the initial stage. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has planned to outsource, on a pilot basis, some 3 000 samples (involving 17 000 tests) relating to preservatives and heavy metals to the private sector in 2008-09. An estimated total of around 3 000 samples (involving about 22 000 tests) may further be outsourced by the Government Laboratory in 2008-09.

Based on the preliminary feedback from the private laboratories and FEHD's pilot scheme, it is anticipated that the trade is able to take on the above tests at a lower cost than the Government. However, figures on the exact cost and savings achieved would only be available when more outsourcing contracts are awarded.

Appropriate quality assurance and control measures will be implemented for the outsourced work to ensure the quality of the test results produced by the contracted laboratories. Such measures include encouraging the contracted laboratories to obtain accreditation for the setup and testing methodology, regular testing of blind samples and on-site inspection by the Government officers concerned as necessary.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 26.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)085

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational
Food and Health Bureau expenses
(Food Branch)

Question Serial No.

2178

Programme: (1) Director of Bureau's Office

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What is the estimated salary expenditure arising from the creation of one position of Under Secretary in 2008-09?

What is the estimated salary expenditure arising from the creation of one position of Political Assistant in 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. YEUNG Sum

Reply:

The estimated salary expenditure arising from the creation of one position of Under Secretary and one position of Political Assistant in 2008-09 is \$2.68 million and \$1.97 million respectively.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Stella HUNG

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Food
and Health (Food)

Date 14.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)086

Question Serial No.

2181

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Has the Administration earmarked any funds in 2008-09 for the legislative work in preparation for the Labelling Scheme on Nutrition Information? What are the estimated manpower and expenditure involved in the relevant work?

Asked by: Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply:

The Administration plans to table the Amendment Regulation on nutrition labelling for prepackaged food at the Legislative Council for negative vetting in April 2008. The preparatory work for the legislation has been absorbed through the existing resources of the Food and Health Bureau. The publicity in 2008-09 relating to the nutrition labelling requirements will also be absorbed through the existing resources of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____
Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 25.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)087

Question Serial No.

2182

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In considering ways to improve the occupancy and viability of public markets in 2008-09, will the Administration commission a consultancy study in this regard? If yes, what is the estimated expenditure for the study? What is the expected completion date?

Asked by: Hon. LI Wah-ming, Fred

Reply:

We are now conducting a review on the provision of public markets in Hong Kong, which covers issues such as the future provision of new markets as well as measures to deal with markets with low occupancy. We expect to complete the review in around one year's time. Existing resources are deployed on the review and no additional expenditure will be incurred.

Meanwhile, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will continue to implement measures to improve public markets, such as market improvement works, promotional activities, maintaining a high standard of cleanliness in markets and the enforcement of the monthly market cleansing day.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)088

Question Serial No.

2368

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Has the Administration earmarked funds for 2008-09 for a review on genetically modified (GM) food, including reviewing the current Guidelines on Voluntary Labelling of GM Food and studying a mandatory GM food labeling system? If so, please give an account of the relevant arrangements and estimated expenditure. If not, why?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

An evaluation on the effectiveness of the Guidelines on Voluntary Labelling of Genetically Modified Food is being conducted. The work does not involve additional expenditure. There is no legislative plan concerning genetically modified food in 2008-09 and no resources are earmarked for the purpose.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____ Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 20 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)089

Question Serial No.

2370

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

As regards collaborating with the Mainland Authorities to explore the feasibility of applying information technology to enhance the traceability of food, please advise on the latest results of the efforts. If a new information technology system is to be introduced, what are the estimated manpower and resources required?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

FHB and FEHD are working in collaboration with the Mainland authorities on a pilot programme to apply Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology in tracing live pigs imported from Guangdong Province. We aim to complete the pilot programme in 2008, to be followed by an assessment of the effectiveness of the outcome for further improvement if necessary. The feasibility of applying RFID technology to live pigs imported from other provinces and other foods will be explored in collaboration with the Mainland authorities.

So far, FEHD has spent about \$0.2 million for purchasing equipment such as hand-held detectors and computer software, and about \$0.4 million on additional manpower for operating the equipment and testing exercises. It has also committed about \$2.4 million for further development of the pilot project in 2008-09.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 20 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)090

Question Serial No.

2371

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

On continuing to develop proposals to prevent avian influenza outbreak, what are the Administration's specific work plans and timetable for 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

Whilst the Food and Health Bureau formulates policies relating to the prevention of avian influenza outbreak, the relevant measures are implemented by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). The measures to be implemented by these two departments in 2008-09 include –

- (a) monitoring and surveillance of local poultry farms;
- (b) inspection of poultry farms in the Mainland and liaison with the Mainland authorities to ensure that requirements on animal health, quarantine and farm conditions are complied with;
- (c) inspection of every consignment of imported poultry, including verifying Animal Health Certificates and collecting blood samples and cloacal swabs for laboratory testing of avian influenza H5;
- (d) enforcement of the ban on keeping of backyard poultry;
- (e) enforcement of the two rest days every month at retail markets to reduce virus load;
- (f) inspection of poultry retail outlets and pet bird shops;
- (g) collection of dead wild birds for avian influenza testing;
- (h) maintaining comprehensive surveillance by engaging a local university to take environmental swabs for analysis; and
- (i) carrying out public education and publicity programme on avian influenza preventive measures.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 20 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)091

Question Serial No.

2372

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding "continuing to promote the sustainable development of local agriculture and fisheries industry", please provide the following information and elaborate:

- (a) a comparison of the financial provisions, plans and staff establishment for promoting organic farming for 2007-08 and 2008-09;
- (b) the achievements of the plans in 2007-08 and the targets set for 2008-09;
- (c) the amount of farmland now engaged in organic farming and the increase in such farmland or farms projected for 2008-09;
- (d) projected increase in market share of organic farm products in 2008-09; and
- (e) whether additional resources will be made available to increase technical support to the sector and if yes, please state the details and the expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The Food and Health Bureau is responsible for formulating policies and overseeing the continual promotion of the sustainable development of local agriculture and fisheries industry. Relevant measures are implemented by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). The information requested is provided below:

- (a) The AFCD has allocated about 16 staff and \$5.7 million to promote organic farming in 2007-08. The same resource is earmarked for 2008-09.
- (b) Largely through AFCD's effort in promoting and developing organic farming, the number of organic farms has increased from 80 in 2007 to 106 at present. The estimated value of organic production has also risen from \$30 million in 2007 to \$40 million in 2008. In 2008-09, AFCD will continue to conduct adaptive studies to improve growing methods, formulate appropriate disease and pest prevention programmes, and select suitable crop varieties to help farmers improve their productivity and produce quality.
- (c) There are at present 106 organic farms with a total area of about 42 hectares. The development of local organic farming is market driven. AFCD provides technical support to facilitate farmers who adopt organic farming but it does not set a target on the number of organic farms.

- (d) Presently local organic farms produce some 4-5 tonnes of organic vegetables per day. As the development of organic farming is market driven, we do not make any projection on the market share of local organic farm products.
- (e) Please see answer (a) above.

Signature _____
Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP
Acting Permanent Secretary for
Post Title Food and Health (Food)
Date 25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)092

Question Serial No.

2373

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

As regards continuing to develop a Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant, when does the Administration expect to proceed with a tender exercise? What is the manpower involved in this plan?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The Government has identified a site in Sheung Shui for the development of the Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant (the Plant) and engaged a consultant to draw up tender documentation. In the past few months, we have started consultation with various stakeholders in the live poultry trade and the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene with regard to our proposal on the development of the Plant. We are now carefully considering the views expressed by the various parties, including those on the future operation mode of the Plant, so as to formulate a model that would best suit the public interest and operation requirements of the trade. We would thereafter proceed with the various preparatory work, including the tender.

In addition to the existing manpower in the Food and Health Bureau, one two-year time-limited Administrative Officer post will be created in 2008-09 to provide support for planning and developing the Plant.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)093

Question Serial No.

2374

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding implementing measures to meet the increasing demand for columbarium and crematorium facilities, please provide the following information and elaborate:

- (a) the specific plan and staff establishment for 2008-09;
- (b) a comparison of the total provisions under this item for 2007-08 and 2008-09; and
- (c) the direction of the long-term plan and the resources required.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

- (a) and (b) The construction of 3 200 niches in the Kwai Chung Columbarium and another 18 500 in the Diamond Hill Columbarium by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) are due for completion in 2008 – 09, and will cost \$14.8 million and \$113.6 million respectively.

To meet the demand for crematorium services, the FEHD is planning to re-build the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Cape Collinson Crematorium to provide for eight and 10 new cremators respectively. FEHD also plans to build new columbarium facilities providing for some 30 000 niches and a Garden of Remembrance at the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery for completion by around 2012. The details and the expenditure required are being worked out.

The work at the bureau level will be absorbed through existing resources.

- (c) To meet the demand for columbarium and crematorium facilities, we will continue to upgrade public cremators by phases to increase their handling capacity and identify possible sites for columbarium facilities. The support of the Legislative Council, local residents and relevant district councils is essential to the Government in the provision of columbarium and crematorium facilities. We will also continue to encourage the public to consider more actively to adopt options for ash disposal other than traditional ones, including scattering the ashes at sea or in Gardens of Remembrance.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)094

Question Serial No.

2149

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The total financial provision will decrease by 35.6% to \$189.5 million in 2008-09 from \$294.1 million in 2007-08. Please provide the reasons for the decrease.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

The reduction is mainly due to the significant drop of the estimated expenditure for ex-gratia payment under the voluntary surrender scheme for the live poultry industry following the closure of the scheme in August 2006. All relevant payments have been made by 2007-08.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **MISS CHEUNG SIU HING** _____

Post Title _____ **Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation** _____

Date _____ **25 March 2008** _____

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)095

Question Serial No.

2296

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In 2007, livestock production decreased significantly as many farms ceased production under the voluntary surrender schemes for pig and poultry farms. Has the Administration formulated any measures to safeguard a stable food supply? If yes, what are the manpower and amount of expenditure involved? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

Hong Kong relies heavily on imported food. In 2007, local production of live pigs and poultry accounted for less than 10% of the total consumption of all pork and poultry meat. The Administration has taken positive steps with the relevant Mainland authorities on the stable supply of live pigs and frozen/chilled pork. In July 2007, the Ministry of Commerce started to introduce more import agents for live pigs to promote competition and stabilize supply. The supply of poultry and poultry products has all along been stable. The Administration maintains a close liaison with the relevant Mainland authorities on food supply issues.

For local pig farmers planning to restart their business in the Mainland, the Food and Health Bureau and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department liaised with the relevant Mainland authorities last year. Requirements on food safety, biosecurity and environmental protection measures necessary for setting up pig farms in the Mainland for export to Hong Kong have been provided to interested pig farmers for reference. In September 2007, the relevant Mainland authority also arranged a briefing for pig farmers.

All these activities are carried out by existing staff as part of their routine duties. No specific manpower or expenditure is earmarked for these activities.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)096

Question Serial No.

2305

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

On the introduction of new code of practice as part of the licensing conditions for pig farming, will any measures be taken to assist the existing pig farms to comply with the new code? As some of the former farmers are planning to restart their pig farming business in the Mainland and supply fresh pork to Hong Kong, will the Administration provide assistance to those farmers in terms of technical support, financial incentives, etc. If yes, what are the details and the expenditure involved; if no, why not?

Asked by: Hon. SHEK Lai-him, Abraham

Reply:

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (the Department) will continue to liaise closely with pig farmers and listen to their views on the proposed Code of Practice (the Code). It will give sufficient advance notice before the implementation of the Code when it is finalized, and allow another 12 months on implementation for farmers to adapt to the new requirements. During the period, AFCD staff will visit each individual farm to provide guidance on compliance with the Code.

For farmers planning to restart their business in the Mainland, the Food and Health Bureau and the Department liaised with the relevant Mainland authorities last year. Requirements on food safety, biosecurity and environmental protection measures necessary for setting up pig farms in the Mainland for export to Hong Kong have been provided to interested pig farmers for reference. In September 2007, the relevant Mainland authority also arranged a briefing for pig farmers. A contact point within the Department has also been established to assist pig farmers. All these activities are carried out by existing staff as part of their routine duties. No specific manpower or expenditure is earmarked for these activities.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)097

Question Serial No.

2311

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The provision for 2008-09 is 64.6% lower than the revised estimate for 2007-08, which is mainly due to decrease in non-recurrent expenditure for the financial support schemes for live pig farmers and related transporters. Please give reasons for the decrease.

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

Expenditure for the Voluntary Surrender Scheme for pig farmers and related transporters is expected to decrease significantly in 2008-09 because most eligible pig farmers have already received their ex-gratia payment within 2007-08.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)098

Question Serial No.

2382

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In connection with the programme aimed at facilitating agricultural and fisheries production and improving productivity, the financial provision for 2008-09 is substantially lower than the original estimate for 2007-08 by 47.1%. Please state the reasons.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The reduction is mainly due to the significant drop of the estimated expenditure for ex-gratia payment under the voluntary surrender scheme for the live poultry industry following the closure of the scheme in August 2006. All relevant payments have been made by 2007-08.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title _____

Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date _____

25 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)099

Question Serial No.

2383

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In connection with the number of new loans under agriculture, the estimate for 2008 is less than those of 2006 and 2007. What are the reasons? What measures will be taken by the Department to encourage farmers to apply for loans for agricultural production?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The number of new loans under agriculture is expected to decrease in 2008 as the number of farms has decreased due to the implementation of Voluntary Surrender Schemes for livestock farmers. The Department will continue to promote the various loan funds among farmers during farm visits and meetings with farmers' co-operatives.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title _____

Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date _____

20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)100

Question Serial No.

2384

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

How will the Department provide technical advice on organic cultivation and intensive greenhouse production to farmers? What are the techniques, manpower arrangements and expenditure involved in such measures? What is the estimated number of farmers to be assisted? How will the Department motivate them to capture high-value-market niches?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (the Department) organizes training seminars, workshops and on-farm demonstrations of technical skills to help farmers acquire the necessary knowledge and skills in organic farming and greenhouse production. The Department also conducts adaptive studies to improve growing methods; prevent diseases and pests; and to select suitable plant varieties to raise farmers' productivity and quality of production. We will extend all these services to some 1 900 farms registered with us. In 2008-09, about 16 staff and \$5.7 million are allocated to promote organic farming, and another 10 staff and \$3.9 million are allocated to promote intensive greenhouse production.

To help farmers capture the high-value-market niches, the Department organizes promotional trade activities and exhibitions to promote local produce. It also works closely with the Vegetable Marketing Organization and uses its sale networks to market local produce to high-end markets for local farmers. Moreover, it organizes technical seminars and workshops on marketing strategies and planning for farmers, and assists them to explore direct sale channels such as Pick Your Own or Weekend Farmers Market.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)101

Question Serial No.

2385

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

How will the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department strengthen the facilities and ability to provide diagnostic tests for animal diseases including avian influenza? What are the techniques, staffing arrangements and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

To enhance the animal disease testing capacity of the veterinary laboratory, a new annexe building of about 450 square metres is under construction and is expected to be completed in the last quarter of 2008. A range of laboratory tests are used for animal disease testing including bacteria and virus isolation, serological and molecular techniques. A provision of \$22.5 million has been earmarked in 2008-09 for this activity with the involvement of a total of 51 staff.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)102

Question Serial No.

2386

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The revised estimate for 2007-08 is 17.9% lower than the original estimate for 2007-08. Please state the reasons for the substantial decrease.

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

The decrease is mainly due to the reduction in the estimated requirement for ex-gratia payment under the Voluntary Surrender Scheme for live poultry farmers, wholesalers and related transporters. Apart from a less than originally expected cash flow requirement for eligible cases, there were also 16 withdrawn applications by chicken farmers.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)103

Question Serial No.

2387

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

A great amount of fish cultured by fish farmers died during the continuous cold spell in February 2008. Has the Administration earmarked any funds to assist such fish farmers? If yes, what is the estimated expenditure? How many fish farmers will get the assistance?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

To provide urgent assistance to the fish farmers affected by the long cold spell in February 2008, we have made prompt arrangement for disbursement of primary producer grants under the Emergency Relief Fund (ERF). In view of the severity of the event, a special grant under the ERF has also been approved to provide further relief to the affected fish farmers. Some 900 fish farmers have applied for the ERF and the total expenditure is estimated to be \$9.0 million. Moreover, fish farmers in need may apply for loans under the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Loan Fund to re-establish their business.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)104

Question Serial No.

2295

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding assisting farmers to capture high-value-market niches by providing technical advice on organic cultivation and intensive greenhouse production, please provide information on the following:

- a. Apart from providing technical support on cultivation, will the Administration assist farmers in other areas, such as giving them help on expanding their sales network, marketing or wholesaling? If yes, please give the details. What are the manpower and expenditure involved? If not, please state the reasons.
- b. Will the Administration provide financial assistance or loans to farmers for development in this area? If yes, what is the estimated expenditure involved? Please provide the details. If not, please state the reasons.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

- a. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department organizes promotional trade activities and exhibitions to promote local produce. It also works closely with the Vegetable Marketing Organization and uses its sale networks to market local produce to high-end markets for local farmers. Moreover, it organizes technical seminars and workshops on marketing strategies and planning for farmers, and assists them to explore direct sale channels such as Pick Your Own or Weekend Farmers Market. Two staff and about \$0.5 million are earmarked for such activities in 2008-09.
- b. Low interest loans under the Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Loan Fund, the J.E. Joseph Trust Fund and the Vegetable Marketing Organization Loan Fund administered by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department are made available to local farmers for developing organic cultivation and greenhouse production. A total sum of \$34.2 million is available at present.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ MISS CHEUNG SIU HING _____

Post Title _____ Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation _____

Date _____ 20 March 2008 _____

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)105

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

1008

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What is the current expenditure on subsidising the management of cremation facilities?
How much in percentage terms does it account for the total management expenses?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

In 2007-08, the estimated total expenditure in providing crematorium and columbarium services was \$121 million, and the estimated revenue collected was \$47 million. The deficit of \$74 million was 61% of the total expenditure.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ **W H CHEUK**

Post Title _____ Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date _____ 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)106

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

1009

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please advise on the specific plans for reprovisioning and construction of cremation facilities, and the respective amount of expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

The Department is planning to re-build the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Cape Collinson Crematorium to provide for eight and 10 new cremators respectively. The details and expenditure are being worked out.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)107

Question Serial No.

1010

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please advise on the number of unallocated niches under the management of the Department and their respective locations. What is the estimated time when these niches will fall short of demand? Is there any concrete plan for the expansion or construction of columbaria facilities, and what is the amount of expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

As at 29.2.2008, a total of 1 658 niches in FEHD-managed columbaria remain unallocated. Their distribution by location is as follows –

Columbarium	No. of Unallocated Niches
Cape Collinson	30
Diamond Hill	11
Fu Shan	3
Kwai Chung	5
Wo Hop Shek	26
Cheung Chau	836
Lamma	445
Peng Chau	302

The niches in Cheung Chau, Lamma and Peng Chau Columbaria are restricted for use by indigenous villagers and genuine residents. We expect that they can cater for local demand in the near future. In other columbaria, the supply for niches would be outstripped by demand in the current year.

The construction of 3 200 niches in the Kwai Chung Columbarium and another 18 500 in the Diamond Hill Columbarium at a cost of \$14.8 million and \$113.6 million respectively is due for completion in 2008 – 09. We plan to build new columbarium facilities providing for some 30 000 niches and a Garden of Remembrance at the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery for completion by around 2012. The details and expenditure are being worked out.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)108

Question Serial No.

1011

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

What is the current establishment of the Centre for Food Safety? How many posts still remain unfilled?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply :

As at 1.3.2008, there were 526 posts in the Centre for Food Safety, with 44 of them unfilled. Most of the duties concerned are either outsourced, or carried out by existing or non-civil service contract staff.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)109

Question Serial No.

1012

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What are the operational expenses of the Centre for Food Safety in 2008-09? Please give a breakdown of the expenses.

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

A financial provision of \$320.4 million has been included in the 2008-09 Estimate for the Centre for Food Safety, comprising personal emoluments of \$207.2 million, departmental expenses of \$97.8 million and capital & non-recurrent expenditure of \$15.4 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)110

Question Serial No.

1013

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

What is the expenditure and manpower involved for conducting regular food safety surveillance in 2008-09?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply :

The estimated direct expenditure for food surveillance in 2008-09 is \$45.4 million. The manpower involved for the service is 96 staff, including health inspectors, administration and supporting staff.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)111

Question Serial No.

1014

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Does the Department have any plan to change the focus of the monitoring work under the existing routine Food Surveillance Programme? If yes, please advise on whether additional expenditure will be required.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply :

A proactive three-tier approach involving routine, targetted and seasonal food surveillance has been adopted since 2007. In planning the food surveillance programme, various factors including the risk of food items, consumption level, past surveillance data, and previous local/overseas food incidents are taken into consideration. In 2008, while maintaining the same approach, more samples will be taken among popular food items to support a thematic analysis. No additional resources are required for this adjustment.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)112

Question Serial No.

1015

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

During 2008-09, how much manpower will be allocated to administer the voluntary notification scheme for food importers and distributors? What is the number of food importers and distributors who have joined the existing notification scheme, and how much in percentage terms does it account for the total number of food importers and distributors?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply :

Two Executive Officers will be added to enhance the existing staff in implementing a Pre-Statutory Voluntary Registration Scheme from October 2008 onwards.

As at 10 March 2008, some 970 importers and 560 distributors of the food trade have registered with the Department. The Department does not have reliable figures of the total number of food importers and distributors in Hong Kong.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)113

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

1133

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In 2008-09, the Department will introduce an amendment regulation on nutrition labelling for pre-packaged food. What is the expenditure involved, e.g. how much the government will spend on promoting the regulation to the industry and consumers, and organizing workshops/training for the industry etc?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Bernard

Reply:

In 2008-09, the efforts for promoting nutrition labelling will be concentrated on developing educational materials and building alliance with education partners, with train-the-trainer workshops organized for the education partners. We will prepare guidelines on nutrition labelling for the trade and organize workshops to help them comply with the guidelines. The promotional work is undertaken by existing staff and the expenditure cannot be separately identified.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 25.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)114

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2183

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding the introduction of an amendment regulation on nutrition labelling for pre-packaged food in 2008-09, please advise on the following:

- a) the progress, the estimated date of submission to the Legislative Council, the list of nutrients to be covered in the amendment regulation, the exemption arrangement and the manpower involved;
- b) the measures to be taken to prevent food suppliers from using the cost of implementing nutrition labelling as an excuse for increasing the price.

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The Amendment Regulation on Nutrition Labelling Scheme for prepackaged food is planned to be tabled in the Legislative Council in April 2008. Under the proposed Scheme, nutrition labels should include information on energy, carbohydrate, protein, fat, saturated fat, sodium, sugars and trans fat. In addition, nutrition claims are regulated and the amount of any claimed nutrients should also be provided. We propose to exempt certain types of prepackaged food, including food products having practical difficulties in providing the required information, raw food, food with insignificant values of energy and core nutrients and food sold in small volume. We have also allowed flexibilities in the labelling format so as to reduce the need for re-labelling of food. These measures are aimed at minimizing the impact of the Scheme on the trade. There is, however, no plan to introduce direct measures to control price changes as a result of the Scheme. The resources for implementing the new legislation after the grace period will be worked out after the passage of the amendment regulation.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)115

Question Serial No.

2184

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the review of hawker licence policy, please advise on:

- a) the details (including the progress, timeframe and anticipated completion date), expenditure and manpower involved; and
- b) whether consideration will be given to adjust the positioning of hawker policy so as to affirm that permitting hawking is a solution to help the grass roots achieve self-reliance and alleviate poverty. If yes, what are the details? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

The review will address various issues of hawker licensing, including the transfer and succession arrangements of hawker licences and the efficient use of vacant fixed hawker pitches. The review is undertaken by existing resources and no additional expenditure will be incurred. We expect to complete the review in about one year's time.

Signature _____

Name in block letters **W H CHEUK** _____

Post Title **Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene** _____

Date **25.3.2008** _____

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)116

Question Serial No.

2287

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) : 000 Operational expenses

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

As poison treatment and trapping of rodents in building blocks and elimination of mosquito breeding places are provided by contractors in some districts, please list the districts where contractors will be engaged for provision of these services in 2008, highlighting the respective District Environmental Hygiene Offices concerned. Please also advise on the estimated total expenditure involved in outsourcing these services, as well as the manpower and estimated expenditure required if these services are to be provided by staff of the Department.

Asked by : Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply :

To enhance pest and rodent control, the Department has since July 2003 engaged contractors in all 19 districts to supplement services provided by in-house staff. The estimated expenditure on the engagement of contractors for this purpose will be some \$190 million in the 2008-09 financial year. The contractors will deploy about 1 460 staff to provide the required services. If such services are provided by the Department with in-house staff, the estimated direct expenditure and manpower will be about \$235 million and 1 460 staff respectively.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)117

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2288

Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational Expenses

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In 2008-09, the Department will continue to convert designated aqua privies into flushing toilets by phases. Please advise on the estimated expenditure so involved and the estimated percentage of aqua privies converted into flushing toilets by the end of 2008-09.

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

The estimated expenditure for the conversion in 2008 – 09 is \$108 million. By the end of 2008-09, about 30% of all aqua privies will be converted into flushing toilets.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)118

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2289

Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operating Expenses

Programme: (4) Public Education and Community Involvement

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In 2008-09, health promotional activities on nutrition labelling will be strengthened. Please advise on the planned promotion projects, manpower and estimated expenditure involved. Will the promotion projects include enhancing public understanding of various formats of nutrition labels and assisting consumers in calculating the nutrition content of food products based on the labels where necessary? If yes, what is the manpower and estimated expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

In 2008-09, the efforts for promoting nutrition labelling will be concentrated on developing educational materials and building alliance with education partners, with train-the-trainer workshops organized for the education partners. The educational materials and activities aim to facilitate consumers in better understanding the information on nutrition labels, including the conversion of nutrients expressed in different units. We will prepare guidelines on nutrition labelling for the trade and organize workshops to help them comply with the guidelines. The promotional work is undertaken by existing staff and the expenditure cannot be separately identified.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)119

Question Serial No.

2292

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The estimated let-out rate of stalls in public markets is 76% in 2008. What is the rental loss incurred by stalls being left vacant? After 30 June 2008, will there be an extension for rental freeze or even a rental reduction for public market stalls, particularly those in markets with low patronage and viability problem?

Asked by: Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply:

Excluding stalls that are not for leasing due to re-development, impending renovation works and resiting commitment etc, the vacant stalls could bring maximum rental earnings of about \$ 6.3 million per month if they are leased out at the current open market rental.

We have received several requests from public market tenants for further extension of the current rental freeze which will expire on 30 June 2008. We are considering these requests carefully.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)120

Question Serial No.

2302

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

In 2008-09, there will be a net increase of 28 posts, resulting in an expenditure rise of \$117.2 million. Please provide the job description, salaries and ranks of the additional posts, and the reasons for such increase.

Asked by : Hon. SHEK Lai-him, Abraham

Reply :

The posts to be created are in the grades of Chemist, Field Assistant, Field Officer, Health Inspector, Laboratory Attendant, Pest Control Assistant, Scientific Officer (Medical) and administration support grades. Their main duties are to perform food safety regulatory duties and provide pest control services. The total annual salary amounts to \$16.8 million.

The increase in expenditure is attributed to the following reasons –

- (a) creation of posts and increase in departmental expenses relating to enhancement of food safety regulatory functions and pest control services (\$97.7 million);
- (b) increase in capital expenditure for items such as population-based food consumption survey, integrated mass spectrometer system (\$15.3 million); and
- (c) procurement of additional equipment for operation in slaughterhouse (\$4.2 million).

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)121

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2369

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

How does the Department promote the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) approach to the trade and the adoption of the HACCP-based food safety plan? What is the financial provision earmarked for implementing this initiative in 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

In 2008, the Department will organize 33 seminars to promote Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) and the HACCP-based Food Safety Plan, and distribute practice guidelines, bulletins and leaflets to the food trade and the general public. Promotion of HACCP is part and parcel of the overall education and promotion programmes on food safety. There is no separate breakdown on its expenditure.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

W H CHEUK

Post Title _____

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date _____

20.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)122

Question Serial No.

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

2375

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In what ways will the Administration strengthen its management of cremation and burial facilities so as to cope with the increasing demand for mortuaries and columbaria? Will additional resources (viz. manpower and facilities) be provided? If yes, please give details of the plan concerned and the amount of expenditure involved. If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

To cope with the increased demand for cremation during peak seasons, we will schedule the maintenance programme to avoid maintenance works during those periods so that cremators are put in full operation and if necessary, additional cremation sessions will be arranged.

The Department is planning to re-build the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Cape Collinson Crematorium to provide for eight and 10 new cremators respectively. The details including expenditure and manpower are being worked out.

The construction of 3 200 niches in the Kwai Chung Columbarium and another 18 500 in the Diamond Hill Columbarium at a cost of \$14.8 million and \$113.6 million respectively are due for completion in 2008 – 09. The management of these new facilities will be absorbed by existing resources. We plan to build new columbarium facilities providing for some 30 000 niches and a Garden of Remembrance at the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery for completion by around 2012.

Signature _____

Name in block letters **W H CHEUK** _____

Post Title **Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene** _____

Date **20.3.2008** _____

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)123

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2376

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (4) Public Education and Community Involvement

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

How will the Department strengthen health promotional activities on nutritional labelling?
Please advise on the plan, manpower arrangement and expenditure involved.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

In 2008-09, the efforts for promoting nutrition labelling will be concentrated on developing educational materials and building alliance with education partners, with train-the-trainer workshops organized for the education partners. We will prepare guidelines on nutrition labelling for the trade and organize workshops to help them comply with the guidelines. The promotional work is undertaken by existing staff and the expenditure cannot be separately identified.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)124

Question Serial No.

2388

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

The actual number of mosquito breeding places eliminated by the Department in 2007 is 68 605. Among these cases, how many of them were handled by contractors engaged by the Department?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Hok-ming

Reply :

Of the 68 605 mosquito breeding places eliminated in 2007, 54 875 (or 80%) were handled by contractors engaged by the Department.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)125

Question Serial No.

1195

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The revised financial provision under the programme of Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services for 2007-08 was \$766.9 million, which was 15.8% more than that of the original estimate, while the estimated expenditure for 2008-09 under the same programme is substantially reduced by 64.6%. In fact, animal and plant disease control is paramount to safeguarding public health. Please explain why there is such a substantial reduction in the estimated expenditure under this programme. What are the reasons? Which areas of service are affected by the expenditure reduction?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply:

The reduction is mainly due to a significant drop in the estimated expenditure for the Voluntary Surrender Scheme for pig farmers and related transporters in 2008-09 because most eligible pig farmers have already received their ex-gratia payment within 2007-08.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 17 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)126

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau (Food
Branch)

Question Serial No.

2581

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

During 2008-09, the Administration will implement measures to meet the increasing demand for columbarium and crematorium facilities. Please advise this Committee of:

- (a) the details of the measures and the expenditure involved; and
- (b) whether increasing the number of public mortuaries is one of the measures. If so, what are the details and the expenditure involved? If not, what are the reasons for that?

Asked by: Hon. LAU Wai-hing, Emily

Reply:

- (a) The construction of 3 200 niches in the Kwai Chung Columbarium and another 18 500 in the Diamond Hill Columbarium by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) are due for completion in 2008 – 09, and will cost \$14.8 million and \$113.6 million respectively.

To meet the demand for crematorium services, the FEHD is planning to re-build the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Cape Collinson Crematorium to provide for eight and 10 new cremators respectively. FEHD also plans to build new columbarium facilities providing for some 30 000 niches and a Garden of Remembrance at the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery for completion by around 2012. The details and the expenditure required are being worked out.

- (b) To meet the rising demand for body storage in public mortuaries, the Department of Health will work on enhancing the capacity through expansion and reprovisioning of existing facilities. Such projects are being planned and the details and expenditures are not yet available.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____ Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 25.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)127

Question Serial No.

2585

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In respect of the development of a Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant, apart from the additional provision of \$0.9 million for the creation of new posts in 2008-09, will it be necessary to earmark or inject any more funds in that year? In respect of the site of the Poultry Slaughtering and Processing Plant, is the Government required to inject funds for the development of any complementary facilities? If so, what will be the estimated amount of funds and will such amount be earmarked for 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply:

The Government has identified a site in Sheung Shui for the development of the Poultry Slaughtering and Processing (the Plant). We have consulted various stakeholders of trade and the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene in the past few months with regard to our proposal on the development of the Plant. We are now carefully considering the views expressed by the various parties, including those on the future operation mode and funding arrangements of the Plant, so as to formulate a model that would best suit the public interest and operation requirements of the trade. As we have yet to invite tenders for the development of the Plant, the estimated expenditure is not available.

There is no additional provision this year for the development of the plant besides the \$0.7 million earmarked for the creation of a time-limited post to provide the necessary support.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____ Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)128

Question Serial No.

2586

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

When is the review of the hawker licensing policy expected to be completed and when will the findings be announced? As the numbers of itinerant hawkers and fixed pitch hawkers are decreasing due to old age of some of the hawkers, some of the markets for fixed pitch hawkers and open-air bazaars for itinerant hawkers have become vacant. Having conducted the review, will the Bureau come up with a solution to the market vacancy problem, thereby revitalizing the markets and bazaars?

Asked by: Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply:

The review will address various issues of hawker licensing, including the transfer and succession arrangements for hawker licences and the efficient use of vacant fixed hawker pitches. We will consult various stakeholders, including hawker associations, the Legislative Council and District Councils concerned in due course. The review is expected to be completed in around one year's time.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary
for Food and Health (Food)

Date 20.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)129

Question Serial No.

2587

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The 2008-09 provision for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety programme is 72.8% (or \$14.2 m) higher than the revised estimate for 2007-08. This is attributable to the creation of two new posts. What are their major responsibilities for better safeguarding of food safety?

Asked by: Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply:

The increase in provision of \$14.2 million (72.8%) in 2008-09 under Programme (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety is not only attributable to the creation of two new posts, but also for enhancing publicity on food safety matters and contingency funding to meet expenditure for controlling zoonotic diseases.

The two posts to be created in 2008-09 include one two-year time-limited Administrative Officer to assist in the preparation, enactment and implementation of the new Food Safety Bill and one Personal Secretary I to provide permanent secretarial support to the Administrative Officer Staff Grade C post approved by the LegCo Finance Committee with effect from 20 February 2008.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____ Acting Permanent Secretary
for Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)130

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Question Serial No.

2588

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What will be the amount of resources provided to promote the sustainable development of local agriculture and fisheries industry in 2008-09 and how will the resources be allocated?

Asked by: Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply:

The Government seeks to promote the sustainable development of agriculture and fisheries industry through the provision of infrastructural support, technical assistance and advice, credit facilities and vocational training for local farmers and fishermen. These support measures are mainly provided by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, and the department has earmarked a total of about \$38 million for these tasks in 2008-09.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)131

Question Serial No.

2589

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Have resources been earmarked in 2008-09 for collaborating with the Mainland Authorities to explore the feasibility of applying information technology to enhance the traceability of food?

Asked by: Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply:

FEHD has earmarked about \$2.4 million in 2008-09 for collaborating with the Mainland Authorities to explore the feasibility of applying information technology to enhance the traceability of pig supply.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 20 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)132

Question Serial No.

2590

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

During 2008-09, the Bureau will "introduce a Food Safety Bill to incorporate new food safety control tools". When is the Bill expected to be introduced? How will the Bureau assist the industry to adapt? What will be the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply:

Our plan is to introduce the Food Safety Bill into the Legislative Council in the 2008-09 legislative session. The Bill will incorporate new food safety control tools and tighten up food safety controls. We have consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on the legislative proposal on 11 December 2007. The Administration is now conducting consultation on the proposed legislative framework. To minimize the burden of the various mandatory requirements on the trade, the Government will fully consult the trade.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has been allocated recurrent funding of \$21 million (involving 12 posts) to enhance food safety work before enactment of the Bill. The actual resource requirements for implementing the Food Safety Bill will be worked out after the proposed regulatory measures are endorsed by LegCo.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____ Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date _____ 25.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)133

Question Serial No.

2662

Head: 139 Government Subhead (No. & title):
Secretariat: Food and
Health Bureau (Food
Branch)

Programme: (3) Environmental Hygiene

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The Government will review the hawker licensing policy in 2008. Would the Administration inform us of the details of the measure and the expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

The review will address various issues of hawker licensing, including the transfer and succession arrangements for hawker licences and the efficient use of vacant fixed hawker pitches. We will consult various stakeholders, including hawker associations, the Legislative Council and District Councils concerned in the course of the review. Existing resources are deployed to work on the review and no additional expenditure will be incurred.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 20.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)134

Question Serial No.

2663

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title):
Food and Health Bureau
(Food Branch)

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Food safety is an important aspect of the daily life of the public. In recent years, avian influenza has struck in the Mainland and South East Asia successively. Will the Administration advise what measures will be taken in 2008-09 to enhance the traceability of food and prevent the outbreak of avian influenza? What will be the manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. CHAN FANG On-sang, Anson

Reply:

We will introduce a Food Safety Bill in 2008-09 to incorporate new food safety control tools. The Bill will require all food importers and distributors to register with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and to keep records of the movement of food to facilitate food traceability. A two-year time-limited Administrative Officer post, involving an annual expenditure of \$0.7 million, will be created to provide support on the Bill.

Whilst the Food and Health Bureau formulates policies relating to the prevention of avian influenza outbreak, the relevant measures are implemented by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the FEHD. The measures to be implemented by these two departments in 2008-09 include:

- (a) monitoring and surveillance of local poultry farms;
- (b) inspection of poultry farms in the Mainland and liaison with the Mainland authorities to ensure that requirements on animal health, quarantine and farm conditions are complied with;
- (c) inspection of every consignment of imported poultry, including verifying Animal Health Certificates and collecting blood samples and cloacal swabs for laboratory testing of avian influenza H5;
- (d) enforcement of the ban on keeping of backyard poultry;
- (e) enforcement of the two rest days every month at retail markets to reduce virus load;
- (f) inspection of poultry retail outlets and pet bird shops;
- (g) collection of dead wild birds for avian influenza testing;
- (h) maintaining comprehensive surveillance by engaging a local university to take environmental swabs for analysis; and
- (i) carrying out public education and publicity programme on avian influenza preventive measures.

The expenditure involved would be about \$63 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date 25 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)135

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

1190

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The financial provision for enhancing food safety and public health for 2008-09 is \$117.2 million (16.9%) higher than the revised estimate for 2007-08. Please advise on how the provision will be allocated.

Asked by: Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply:

The increase in financial provision under this Programme will be mainly used in the following areas –

- (a) creation of posts and departmental expenses relating to enhancement of food safety regulatory functions and pest control services (\$97.7 million);
- (b) meeting increase in capital expenditure for items such as population-based food consumption survey, integrated mass spectrometer system (\$15.3 million); and
- (c) procurement of additional equipment for operation in slaughterhouse (\$4.2 million).

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)136

Question Serial No.

1192

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

The Department has been reviewing the market policy for years. Which area(s) of review will be covered in 2008-09? Will the redesignation and planning of markets such as their number, locations and use be included? Will the review exercise be completed in 2008-09?

Asked by : Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply :

We are now conducting a review on the provision of public markets in Hong Kong, which covers issues such as the future provision of new markets as well as measures to deal with markets with low occupancy. We plan to complete the review in around one year's time.

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

19.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)137

Question Serial No.

1193

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

During 2008-09, the Department will consider further extending the scheme on contracting out market management to other districts. Please advise on details of the plan, the proportion of markets currently managed by the Department to those contracted out, their respective occupancy rate and whether a target is set on the ultimate percentage of markets being contracted out?

Asked by : Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply :

In 2008-09, we will contract out the management of 32 markets in six districts. For Central/Western, Wan Chai, Sham Shui Po and Yau Tsim Districts, the contracting out will commence in July 2008, whilst those for North District and Yuen Long District are scheduled for August and October 2008 respectively.

Currently, the Department operates a total of 104 public markets/cooked food centres (CFC) with 14 901 stalls. To date, the management of 25 markets/CFC in five districts has been contracted out. The average occupancy rate of public markets/CFC managed by the Department is 75.8%, compared with 78.7% for the 25 markets/CFC with management contracted out.

The Department will consider whether the scheme should be further extended to public markets in other districts in the light of experience gained.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)138

Question Serial No.

1194

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Does the Department need to subsidise market management? If yes, what is the amount of subsidy provided? Please advise on the markets that received the largest and the smallest amount of subsidy?

Asked by : Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply :

In 2007-08, the Department recorded a deficit of \$169.5 million in the management of public markets. Amongst the markets where deficit was recorded, Smithfield Market had the highest deficit and Kin Yip Street Cooked Food Market the lowest.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)139

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

1196

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

This question is about the work on controlling and containing on-street obstruction caused by shop extensions. In fact, since the implementation of the smoking ban, there has been a rising number of unauthorized extension of business beyond the shop premises in order to attract smoking customers, hence turning public places outside the shops and rear lanes into smoking areas. Yet it seems that no effective control actions have been taken against the situation. In this connection, please advise on the enforcement programme to be launched in 2008-09. Has provision been earmarked for additional manpower to step up the enforcement action? If yes, what is the manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply:

In 2007, we took out 9 820 prosecutions and issued 29 558 written warnings to control and contain on-street obstructions caused by unauthorized shop extensions. In relation to licensed food premises, 615 prosecutions were initiated against unauthorised extension of food business beyond licensed confines, and another 2 533 prosecutions against obstruction in public places. We will continue to deploy existing resources to address such problems and upkeep environmental hygiene in 2008-09, and will step up enforcement action as necessary.

There is no breakdown of resources spent on these enforcement works as they are subsumed in our overall control of on-street hawking and related activities as well as regulation of licensed food premises.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)140

Question Serial No.

2562

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please provide information on the following items regarding each of the four animal management centres (AMCs) under the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department in 2007: the number of dogs vaccinated against rabies; the number of applications for dog licences processed; the number of animals re-homed; and the number of animals taken up by animal organisations. What were the expenditures of each of the AMCs for 2007-08? What are their relevant estimated expenditures for 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. CHOY So-yuk

Reply:

The statistics for 2007 were :

AMC	No. of dog licences issued / vaccinated with rabies vaccine	No. of animals re-homed		
		Dogs	Cats	Other animals
Hong Kong	2 904	189	11	9
Kowloon	5 332	81	40	41
NT South	2 618	158	16	3
NT North	11 511	119	36	2
Total	22 365	547	103	55

All applications for animals to be re-homed from AMCs are processed through animal welfare organizations.

The expenditure spent on AMCs on animal care and dog licensing for 2007-08 was about \$21 million, comprising of \$3.5 million for Hong Kong AMC, \$4.9 million for Kowloon AMC, \$3.4 million for NT South AMC and \$9.2 million for NT North AMC. A provision of \$21 million has been earmarked for 2008-09.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 18 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)141

Question Serial No.

2563

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please provide information on the types and numbers of animals euthanised in 2005, 2006 and 2007? How many of these animals were healthy ones? What were the expenditures involved? What was the relevant expenditure for 2007-08? What is the relevant estimated expenditure for 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. CHOY So-yuk

Reply:

In the past three years, the types and numbers of animals euthanised by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department are as follows :

Year	Dogs	Cats	Other animals
2005	11,900	4,800	1,440
2006	11,500	4,760	4,880
2007	10,780	4,380	5,860

There is no further breakdown on the number of healthy animals among these.

In 2007-08, the expenditure on euthanasia of animals was \$1.4 million. The same level of expenditure is estimated for 2008-09.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 18 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)142

Question Serial No.

2564

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please provide information on the number of inspections conducted in 2007 by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department on premises and establishments where animals were kept for exhibition or trading purposes. How many irregularities were found and what was the nature of the irregularities? How many prosecutions were made? What were the penalties in general? What was the expenditure for the relevant work in 2007-08? What is the relevant estimated expenditure for 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. CHOY So-yuk

Reply:

In 2007, the Department carried out 10,300 inspections on pet shops, animal boarding establishments, riding establishments and venues for animal exhibition. A total of 27 irregularity cases were detected and successfully prosecuted, including 10 cases of illegal trading of animals or birds; 12 cases of breaching licensing conditions and 5 cases of illegal hawking of animals or birds. The penalties were between \$200 and \$1,500.

In 2007-08, the expenditure for enforcement of animal business licensing was \$4 million. The same provision has been earmarked for 2008-09.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 18 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)143

Question Serial No.

2618

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

How many applications have been received under the loan scheme for promoting offshore capture industry? How many of them have been approved and what is the amount of loan payment involved? Please also give the number of unsuccessful applications and state the reasons. What is the current balance of the loan fund?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

A total of 12 loan applications under the Fisheries Development Loan Fund and the special scheme under the Fish Marketing Organization Loan Fund have been received for the development of offshore/deep-sea fishing. Of the 12 applications, three loans amounting to \$3.63 million have been approved and issued, and one has been approved but subsequently withdrawn by the applicant. The remaining applications have been withdrawn or cannot be further processed due to insufficient information provided by the applicants. The balance as at 29 February 2008 was \$238.8 million for the Fisheries Development Loan Fund and \$18.7 million for the special scheme under the Fish Marketing Organization Loan Fund respectively.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 20 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)144

Question Serial No.

2619

Head: 22 Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead:

Programme: (1) Agriculture, Fisheries and Fresh Food Wholesale Markets

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The prolonged cold weather in January and February 2008 has caused losses to many fish farms and rafts and deprived their operators of any income for quite a period of time. Under the existing arrangements for emergency relief, is there any provision earmarked in the estimate for 2008-09 for helping those affected fish farmers to restart their operations? If yes, what are the specific plans and the amounts of fund involved? If no, does the government have any plans to help the fish farmers?

Asked by: Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply:

To provide urgent assistance to the fish farmers affected by the long cold spell in February 2008, we have made prompt arrangement for disbursement of primary producer grants under the Emergency Relief Fund (ERF). In view of the severity of the event, the ERF Committee has also approved a special grant to provide further relief to the affected fish farmers. Some 900 fish farmers have applied for the ERF and the total expenditure is estimated to be \$9.0 million. Sufficient provision has been made for the purpose in 2007-08.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MISS CHEUNG SIU HING

Post Title Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation

Date 19 March 2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)145

Head: 139 Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational
Food and Health Bureau expenses
(Food Branch)

Question Serial No.

2551

Programme: (2) Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Safety

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Under this Programme, the Administration will continue to collaborate with the Mainland Authorities to explore the feasibility of applying information technology to enhance the traceability of food in 2008-09. Has the Administration earmarked any funding in 2008-09 for developing the relevant technologies and supporting system so that the system can be tested within the year?

Asked by: Hon. LEONG Kah-kit, Alan

Reply:

FEHD has earmarked \$2.4 million in 2008-09 for further development of the Radio Frequency Identification technology and supporting system.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

Ms Olivia NIP

Post Title _____

Acting Permanent Secretary for
Food and Health (Food)

Date _____

25 March 2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB (FE) 146

Question Serial No.

2672

Head: 48 Government Laboratory Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Statutory Testing

Controlling Officer: Government Chemist

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Will the division of work in the Laboratory be affected after some of the tests have been outsourced?

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

Based on our assessment of the current market interest and readiness, food tests relating to preservatives, heavy metals, artificial sweeteners, organochlorine pesticide residues, and veterinary drug residues can be considered for outsourcing at the initial stage. The Government Laboratory (GL) will conduct a review on the cost-effectiveness of the first phase of outsourcing initiative implemented in 2008 in considering the way forward of the food test outsourcing programme. The resources spared from the outsourced services will be re-deployed to set up new testing services, including the development of new and advanced test methods, to cater for the more extensive and complicated testing demands arising from the Administration's stepped-up food control regime. The existing division of responsibilities of different divisions of GL will remain the same for the time being.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Dr T L TING

Post Title Government Chemist

Date 26.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)147

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2560

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please give a breakdown by district of the number of complaints about water seepage on ceilings/walls of residential premises received by the Joint Office of the Buildings Department (BD) and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in 2005, 2006 and 2007. Please advise on the number of Nuisance Notices issued; the number of prosecutions instituted; the number of convictions; the amount of fines in general; the number of cases that required application of Nuisance Orders from the court to order abatement of the nuisances; the number of complaints referred to BD or Water Supplies Department for follow up action; the average processing time for each complaint case that was not referred to other departments; the number of cases for which the source of nuisance could not be identified; the annual expenditure involved in handling complaints; and the resources earmarked for handling these complaints in 2008-09.

Asked by : Hon. CHOY So-yuk

Reply :

The breakdown by district of the number of water seepage complaints received by the Joint Office in 2005, 2006 and 2007 is set out at Annex. Up to end-2007, cumulatively, 835 Nuisance Notices were issued; 27 prosecutions were instituted; 17 convictions were recorded and nine Nuisance Orders were obtained. The amount of fines ranged from \$500 to \$2,500. The number of complaints referred to the Buildings Department and Water Supplies Department for follow up action is 487 and 377 respectively. In 370 cases, the source of seepage could not be identified. Information on the average processing time for complaint cases not referred to other departments is not available.

For the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the direct expenditure incurred by the Joint Office in 2005-06 and 2006-07 was \$3.1 million and \$14.8 million respectively. The estimated direct expenditure for 2007-08 is about \$17 million. The estimated expenditure for 2008-09 will be similar to that of 2007-08 and will be provided for from within the existing allocation.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008

Number of Complaint cases received by the Joint Office

District	Date of set up of the Joint Office	No. of complaint cases received			
		2005	2006	2007	
Sham Shui Po	31.12.2004	1380	1298	1512	
Eastern	1.2.2006	-	2311	2229	
Kowloon City	1.3.2006	-	2048	1974	
Wanchai	1.4.2006	-	826	857	
Kwun Tong		-	1048	1250	
Mong Kok		-	957	996	
Central/Western	1.7.2006	-	448	803	
Southern		-	281	662	
Islands		-	50	115	
Yau Tsim		-	590	810	
Wong Tai Sin		-	275	585	
Kwai Tsing		-	344	687	
Tsuen Wan		-	543	1033	
Tuen Mun		-	597	1135	
Yuen Long		-	186	404	
North		-	196	391	
Tai Po		-	186	476	
Sha Tin		-	503	1144	
Sai Kung		-	144	344	
Total		1380	12831	17407	

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)148

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2570

Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational expenses

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

It is stated that the refuse collection service in some districts is provided by contractors engaged by the Department. Please advise on the districts where contractors are engaged, the names of the contractors, the wages for cleansing workers and the contract value involved.

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

The Department is engaging 10 contractors in the provision of refuse collection service in all districts except Yau Tsim, Sham Shui Po and Southern districts. The 10 contractors are –

1. Asia Cleaning Service Company;
2. Hung Fat Cleaning Transportation Company Limited;
3. Johnson Cleaning Services Company Limited;
4. Lapco Service Limited;
5. Law's Cleaning Services Limited;
6. Lik Shun Services Limited;
7. Veolia ES Waste Collection (HK) Limited;
8. Waihong Environmental Services Limited;
9. Waylung Waste Services Limited; and
10. World Environmental Services Limited.

The current wages for the contractors' workers range from \$5,000 to \$7,000. The estimated total contract value in 2008-09 will be about \$110 million.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)149

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2571

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please advise on the number of plastic bags used in refuse collection and the expenditure involved each year from 2005 to 2007.

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

The number of plastic bags used by the Department (including those used by our contractors) in refuse collection in 2005, 2006 and 2007 was about 5.66 million, 5.31 million and 4.49 million respectively.

The expenditure incurred by the Department in the corresponding years was about \$2.13 million, \$1.84 million and \$1.42 million respectively. There is no record of the expenditure incurred by the contractors in this regard.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

W H CHEUK

Post Title _____

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date _____

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)150

Question Serial No.

2583

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

The number of food complaints received in 2007 is 499 higher than that in 2006. Please advise on the types of complaints that contribute greatly to the increase.

Asked by : Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply :

The number of food complaints received were 5 861 in 2006 and 6 360 in 2007. The increase in number of complaints was mainly due to some 700 complaints made against oilfish in January 2007.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)151

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2584

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Provision for 2008-09 has increased by \$354.4 million, mainly due to increased expenses for cleansing services and purchase of specialised vehicles. How much does each of these two items account for the additional provision, and what is the amount of increase for cleansing services? Please also advise on the specialised vehicles to be purchased, and whether some existing vehicles of a similar type will be replaced.

Asked by: Hon. FANG Kang, Vincent

Reply:

The increase is attributed to increased operating expenses for environmental hygiene services which include mainly cleansing services (\$270 million) and capital expenditure for replacement of specialised vehicles (\$84.4 million). For specialized vehicles, 62 refuse collection vehicles and 1 street washing vehicle will be procured to replace retiring ones, and 2 additional street washing vehicles will be procured to meet shortfall in operational requirements.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

W H CHEUK

Post Title _____

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date _____

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)152

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2598

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The financial provision for food safety and public health for 2008-09 will be increased by 16.9%. Please advise on the major use of the increased provision and give a breakdown of the expenditure.

Asked by: Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply:

The increase in financial provision under this Programme will be mainly used in the following areas –

- (a) creation of posts and departmental expenses relating to enhancement of food safety regulatory functions and pest control services (\$97.7 million);
- (b) meeting increase in capital expenditure for items such as population-based food consumption survey, integrated mass spectrometer system (\$15.3 million); and
- (c) procurement of additional equipment for operation in slaughterhouse (\$4.2 million).

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)153

Question Serial No.

2599

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

What is the estimated financial provision for taking food samples for testing in 2008-09? By how much has it increased or reduced as compared with the provision in 2007-08?

Asked by : Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply :

The revised estimated expenditure is \$40.7 million for 2007-08. The estimated expenditure for 2008-09 is \$45.4 million, which is a rise of \$4.7 million (11.5%).

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)154

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2600

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What are the specific plans for prevention of avian influenza in 2008-09? What is the financial provision for taking blood samples from poultry?

Asked by: Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply:

The control measures taken to prevent the introduction of avian influenza into Hong Kong include : poultry farm inspections and liaison with the Mainland authorities to ensure that requirements on animal health, quarantine and farm conditions are complied with; inspection of every consignment of imported poultry including verifying Animal Health Certificates; and collecting blood samples and cloacal swabs for laboratory testing of avian influenza H5.

A financial provision of \$9.4 million has been included in the 2008-09 Estimate for inspection and blood sampling at the border control point.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

W H CHEUK

Post Title _____

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date _____

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)155

Question Serial No.

2601

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

What is the establishment of staff responsible for inspecting imported vegetables at Man Kam To? In this connection, what is the financial provision earmarked for 2008-09? How is it compared to the provision in 2007-08? What are the plans in 2008-09 to ensure vegetables imported to Hong Kong are safe for consumption and also the manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply :

In 2008-09, 17 Health Inspectorate Officers will work at the Man Kam To Food Control Office. To ensure the safety of imported vegetables, the Department will continue to inspect inbound vegetable vehicles at Man Kam To Border Control Point, check the relevant import documents and take random samples for pesticides.

The estimated expenditure for the work on import control is \$86.1 million in 2008-09, representing a rise of \$13.6 million (18.8%) from the revised estimate of 2007-08. Separate breakdown on resources and manpower provided for inspection of vehicles conveying vegetables from the Mainland is not readily available.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)156

Question Serial No.

2602

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

The actual number of prosecutions taken by the Department against food premises in 2007 increased significantly by 44% over 2006, and the figure for 2008 is expected to remain at the same high level as 2007. What is the reason for that? Apart from prosecution actions, are there any other initiatives to facilitate compliance with the law by food premises? What are the expenditure and manpower involved?

Asked by : Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply :

The number of prosecutions in respect of food business is determined largely by breaches of statutory provisions committed by offenders. Compared with 2006, there was an increase in 2007 in the number of prosecutions against unlicensed food premises; unauthorized extension of food business beyond the licensed area; improper storage of open food; and use of open space for food business activities. The number of prosecutions in 2008 is an estimation based on the 2007 figure with rounding off.

To promote and facilitate compliance with statutory provisions, we conduct seminars for, and disseminate health education information to, food handlers and food business licensees. We will also continue to streamline licence application procedures to make the licensing regime more business-friendly without compromising food safety and environmental hygiene.

Enforcement against food business-related offences is undertaken by some 290 Health Inspectors in 19 District Environmental Hygiene Offices as part of their environmental hygiene duties. There is no separate breakdown of the expenditure and manpower involved in the work mentioned above.

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)157

Question Serial No.

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

2603

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

What is the Department's estimated expenditure on cleansing services for 2008? What is the proportion of the services to be contracted out? What is the total number of staff to be employed by the cleansing contractors in 2008? How is it compared to the number in 2007-08?

Asked by: Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply:

In 2008-09, FEHD's estimated expenditure on public cleansing services will be \$1,752 million. In terms of manpower deployed, about 64% of street cleansing services is being provided by contractors. It is estimated that 5 390 workers will be employed by contractors in 2008-09 for providing public cleansing services, compared to 5 070 in 2007-08.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

W H CHEUK

Post Title _____

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date _____

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)158

Question Serial No.

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

2604

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

During 2008-09, the Department will take forward plans to provide more crematoria and columbaria facilities. Please advise on the specific plans as well as the expenditure and manpower involved.

Asked by: Hon. TAM Yiu-chung

Reply:

The Department is planning to re-build the Wo Hop Shek Crematorium and the Cape Collinson Crematorium to provide for eight and 10 new cremators respectively. The details including expenditure and manpower are being worked out.

For columbarium facilities, the construction of 3 200 niches in the Kwai Chung Columbarium and another 18 500 in the Diamond Hill Columbarium at a cost of \$14.8 million and \$113.6 million respectively is due for completion in 2008 – 09. The management of these new facilities will be absorbed by existing resources. We plan to build new columbarium facilities providing for some 30 000 niches and a Garden of Remembrance at the Wo Hop Shek Cemetery for completion by around 2012. The details including expenditure and manpower are being worked out.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

W H CHEUK

Post Title _____

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date _____

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)159

Question Serial No.

2612

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Regarding the food samples taken for testing, the Department estimates that the figure for 2008 will be similar to that for 2007, which are 65 000 and 65 206 respectively. However, in view of the spread of viruses on a global scale, did the Department take any measures to enhance the safety of imported food? If yes, please advise on the details, and the manpower and expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply :

A proactive three-tier approach involving routine, targetted and seasonal food surveillance has been adopted since 2007. In planning the food surveillance programme, various factors including the risk of food items, consumption level, past surveillance data, and previous local/overseas food incidents are taken into consideration. In 2008, the Centre for Food Safety will maintain this approach. The estimated expenditure on food surveillance is \$45.4 million. The manpower involved is 96 staff, including health inspectors, administration and supporting staff.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

Reply Serial No.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)160

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Question Serial No.

2613

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the Department's initiatives to introduce an amendment regulation on nutrition labelling for pre-packaged food and take steps to introduce a new Food Safety Bill in 2008-09, please advise on the estimated staffing, expenditure and workload involved.

Asked by: Hon. LEE Kok-long, Joseph

Reply:

The FEHD has been allocated recurrent funding of \$21 million (involving 12 posts) to enhance food safety work before enactment of the Food Safety Bill. For nutrition labelling, the resources for implementing the new legislation after the grace period will be worked out after the passage of the amendment regulation.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)161

Question Serial No.

2677

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Please advise on whether an assessment has been made to see if the occupancy rate of public markets will continue to decrease in 2008-09, 2009-10 and 2010-11, the measures to be taken to enhance the competitiveness of public markets and the expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply :

The total occupancy rate for markets remained fairly stable at around 76% for the past two years. However, changes in shopping habits and increasing competition from private retail outlets will continue to affect the occupancy rate of public markets.

In 2008-09, the Administration will continue to carry out general improvement works in 13 markets, and plans to implement improvement works in four other markets at an estimated cost of about \$78 million with a view to enhancing their competitiveness. Other measures to improve the trading environment and attraction of markets include maintaining a high standard of cleanliness in the markets and the enforcement of monthly market cleansing day, conducting promotional activities (such as lucky draws, talks and exhibitions) and distributing regular market newsletters to attract customers.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

20.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09
CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)162

Question Serial No.

2678

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Please advise on the expenditure on subsidising public market management in 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yung-kan

Reply :

For 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08, the Department recorded deficits of \$145 million, \$157.5 million and \$169.5 million respectively in the management of public markets.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

W H CHEUK

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

25.3.2008

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2008-09

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

FHB(FE)163

Question Serial No.

2679

Head : 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer : Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Question :

Please advise on the following:

- a) whether detector dogs have been deployed at border control points to deter people from bringing illicit meat into Hong Kong? If yes, please state the results achieved;
- b) whether discretionary enforcement action is taken against people bringing a small amount of meat into Hong Kong for self-consumption. Please provide the details;
- c) the number of cases in which people bringing illicit meat into Hong Kong detected by the Department in 2007-08 and the ways in which these cases were handled in general.

Asked by : Hon. SHEK Lai-him, Abraham

Reply :

Since February 2008, the Centre for Food Safety, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has employed two detector dog teams to work at the major land control points in Hong Kong. The dogs are trained to detect raw and partially cooked meat, poultry and game. As at 12.3.08, seven interceptions have been made. All offenders were served warning letters.

Offenders are generally liable to prosecution. However, a first time offender who brings a small amount in his personal luggage may be served a warning letter instead. In all cases, the meat or poultry intercepted will be disposed of.

In 2007, there were some 3 100 interceptions against illegal importation of meat/poultry, with 114 offenders prosecuted.

Signature

Name in block letters

W H CHEUK

Post Title

Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date

20.3.2008

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

FHB(FE)164

Question Serial No.

2561

Head: 49 Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Please give a breakdown by district of the total number of complaints about on-street used clothes collection cages received by the Department in 2005, 2006 and 2007. How many unauthorized collection cages were removed? What was the annual expenditure on following up these complaints? How much resources will be earmarked for handling these complaints in 2008-09?

Asked by: Hon. CHOY So-yuk

Reply:

The number of complaints received in respect of on-street used clothes collection cages and the number of such cages removed by the Department in 2005, 2006 and 2007 are as follows –

District	2005		2006		2007	
	Number of complaints received	Number of cages removed	Number of complaints received	Number of cages removed	Number of complaints received	Number of cages removed
Central/Western	42	2	93	60	1	2
Wanchai	15	1	17	28	3	4
Eastern	24	9	83	82	7	6
Southern	7	0	3	35	0	0
Islands	0	0	10	14	0	0
Yau Tsim	1	0	1	2	1	1

District	2005		2006		2007	
	Number of complaints received	Number of cages removed	Number of complaints received	Number of cages removed	Number of complaints received	Number of cages removed
Mongkok	9	0	102	61	27	21
Sham Shui Po	21	2	103	96	12	8
Kowloon City	18	1	12	62	14	18
Wong Tai Sin	29	0	62	75	70	52
Kwun Tong	10	0	13	12	11	9
Kwai Tsing	24	1	82	141	89	79
Tsuen Wan	9	0	19	43	15	6
Tuen Mun	14	0	9	21	13	13
Yuen Long	8	0	24	38	3	0
North	2	0	10	8	1	3
Tai Po	13	3	1	19	0	2
Sha Tin	24	2	6	13	0	1
Sai Kung	3	0	1	37	3	4
Total	273	21	651	847	270	229

There is no breakdown of expenditure incurred for handling these complaints as it is subsumed in the recurrent expenditure for providing cleansing services. We will continue to handle these complaints by deployment of resources from existing allocation.

Signature _____

Name in block letters W H CHEUK

Post Title Director of
Food and Environmental Hygiene

Date 20.3.2008