

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2727/11-12
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Minutes of meeting
held on Wednesday, 11 July 2012, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room 2A of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon WONG Yuk-man

Members absent : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC

Public Officers attending : Item III

Dr KO Wing-man, BBS, JP
Secretary for Food and Health

Mrs Marion LAI CHAN Chi-kuen, JP
Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Mr Christopher WONG Kwok-bun, JP
Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 1

Miss Diane WONG Shuk-han
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP
Director (Acting)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr SO Ping-man
Assistant Director (Fisheries)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Item IV

Dr KO Wing-man, BBS, JP
Secretary for Food and Health

Mrs Marion LAI CHAN Chi-kuen, JP
Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Mr Christopher WONG Kwok-bun, JP
Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 1

Miss Diane WONG Shuk-han
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2

Ms CHU Lan-ying, JP
Assistant Director (Operations) 3
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr YUEN Ming-chi
Pest Control Officer-in-charge
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item V

Dr KO Wing-man, BBS, JP
Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Philip CHAN Kwan-ye, JP
Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2

Dr Gloria TAM Lai-fan, JP
Controller, Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Dr LEE Siu-yuen, JP
Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control),
Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Clerk in attendance : Mrs Sharon TONG
Principal Council Secretary (2)

Staff in attendance : Mr Jove CHAN
Senior Council Secretary (2) 8

Ms Mina CHAN
Council Secretary (2) 7

Ms Michelle LEE
Legislative Assistant (2) 7

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I. Confirmation of minutes
(LC Paper No. CB(2)2533/11-12)

The minutes of the special meeting held on 16 March 2012 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

2. Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting.

3. This being the first Panel meeting since the new-term Government came into being on 1 July 2012, with the consent of the Chairman, Secretary for Food and Health ("SFH") gave members a broad overview of his work priorities in policy areas covered by the Food Branch of the Food and Health Bureau, including the following subjects as detailed at **the Appendix** -

- (a) food safety;
- (b) supply of columbarium facilities;
- (c) municipal services and environmental hygiene;
- (d) sustainable development of agriculture and fisheries; and
- (e) animal welfare.

III. Review of the moratorium on issue of fish culture licence
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2520/11-12(01) and FS30/11-12)

4. SFH briefed members on the current state of the Administration's review of the moratorium on the issue of new fish culture licences and the extension of existing fish culture zones, including the development of WATERMAN which was an analytical tool for assessing the environmental acceptability of fish culture activities.

5. The Deputy Chairman welcomed the Administration's review of the moratorium on the issue of new licences for mariculture operations. He took the view that the development of local aquaculture could be further boosted through the promotion of pond fish culture, re-exploration of idling marine fish culture rafts and the issue of new marine fish culture licences. He pointed out that most of the fishery products sold in Hong Kong came from the Mainland. Fish prices had risen sharply following the fishing moratorium imposed by the Mainland authority in the South China Sea. Consumers would benefit if sizeable marine fish farms could be developed in Hong Kong. He had visited some locations such as Lai Chi Wo and Kat O with scholars to identify suitable sites for marine fish culture. Tolo Harbour had been assessed by fisheries experts of the Mainland as a potential site for the development of a huge marine fish culture zone. He called on the Administration to re-issue new marine fish culture licences and review the management of the existing fish culture zones. Local fisheries resources were always considered limited. The Administration should carry out studies on the expansion of fish culture zones and the rotation of raft locations so as to address future mariculture development. The Deputy Chairman supported the changes in feeding regime as the supply of trash fish might dry up with the ban on trawling. Efforts should also be made by the Administration to study how the composition of fish feed could prevent fish diseases. He advised that some young people, particularly the trawler fishermen, were interested in engaging in mariculture. However, the moratorium on the issue of new marine fish culture licences and the high cost of transfer of a licence barred them from entering the industry. He urged the Administration to explore possible ways to assist the trade.

6. SFH assured members that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") would work closely with the trade on the sustainable development of the local fisheries industry. With the introduction of the new analytical tool, the public could be provided with objective and scientific assessments on the environmental acceptability of the existing and potential fish culture zones. A trial scheme would be launched to assess the merits of any proposed measures.

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7. The Deputy Chairman said that several hundreds of fishermen would lose their jobs following the ban on trawling. The Administration should formulate a long-term plan for the sustainable development of Hong Kong fisheries industry. He called for the early implementation of fisheries loans to help fishermen switch to other operations. The Deputy Chairman further said that he was not opposed to the trial scheme, but a concrete timetable had to be made for the development of new fish culture zones. SFH reassured members that the Administration would consult the trade on this in the near future.

8. Mr TAM Yiu-chung echoed the Deputy Chairman's view that the policy on moratorium on the issue of new marine fish culture licences should be reviewed. He pointed out that there was a rapid growth in the mariculture in the Mainland and the Southeast Asian countries while the industry remained underdeveloped in Hong Kong. Hong Kong was surrounded by sea. Coupled with a variety of fisheries management measures such as the introduction of WATERMAN and biofilters, Hong Kong possessed favourable conditions for the development of marine fish culture. Mr TAM requested the early review on the moratorium on the issue of new marine fish culture licences so that the fishermen affected by the trawl ban could be provided with alternative livelihood. The Administration should also include in its review the studies on the development of recreational fishing such as leisure fishing and eco-tours in order to create more local tourist attractions.

9. Apart from the trawl ban, SFH said that the Committee on Sustainable Fisheries had recommended that further measures should be put in place to promote sustainable development of the local fisheries industry, including developing eco-tourism and recreational fishing in Hong Kong. In view of the Committee's recommendation, the Administration, in cooperation with the tourism industry, was providing training to help interested fishermen to develop or switch to eco-tourism. The issue had been covered in the Administration's review and consideration would also be given to extending the training programme.

10. Mr TAM Yiu-chung was concerned that some government departments might have different views on the strategy for the sustainable development of the local fisheries industry, and hence affecting the progress of the work. SFH stressed that the Administration attached importance to matters relating to people's livelihood, and would strengthen inter-departmental communication in implementing the policies.

11. Dr Joseph LEE said that he was not aware of any Government's policy that facilitated those fishermen who would be affected by the trawl ban to switch from capture fisheries to mariculture. Noting the media reports on

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new species of freshwater fish and organic fish farming, he enquired whether the Administration had a comprehensive plan for the development of local fish farming, particularly pond fish culture and freshwater fish farming. He further said that the suggestion about recreational fishing had been under discussion for years, but progress was not observed in its implementation. With the new technologies to reduce pollution and extension of the existing fish culture zones, the Administration should be able to show the fishing community a good prospect and further development in local aquaculture. SFH noted the calls for reviewing the adequacy of existing support measures for fish farming in Hong Kong.

12. Mr Fred LI pointed out that a package of fisheries management measures, such as banning trawling and containing the growth in the number of fishing vessels in Hong Kong waters, had been adopted to control the fishing efforts of local capture fisheries. Under such circumstances, mariculture might be a possible alternative for the local fisheries industry to achieve its sustainable development. However, the Administration had still made insufficient efforts to promote the industry. He expressed strong support for the development of marine fish culture and freshwater fish farming in Hong Kong. He considered that AFCD might need experts in fisheries to assist the trade in developing new fish farming technologies. Reference could be made to the mariculture operations of the Mainland, which was very advanced technologically. Mr LI said that the local community absolutely supported domestic agricultural and fishery products, which currently accounted for only an insignificant proportion of food consumption in Hong Kong. As such, there was room for further development in the agricultural and fisheries industries. To facilitate fishermen to switch to other sustainable modes of operation, he urged the Administration to provide the fishing community with assistance in terms of resources and technology. Mr LI suggested that technical experts should be deployed to the relevant bureaux for facilitating the exchange of views between the professionals and the officials on policy matters.

13. The Chairman said that the Panel had all along expressed support for the sustainable development of the local agricultural and fisheries industries. In view of environmental protection and low carbon living, there should be an increase in domestic agricultural products. Consideration should be given to reviewing the existing policy on livestock farming in Hong Kong. With regard to the development of mariculture, people had refrained from consuming fresh water fish after the food incident of malachite green. The Administration's food safety monitoring system was reliable and there was still a local demand for quality species of fish. The Chairman pointed out that more people might engage in farming and fishing during economic downturn. He called on the Administration to explore how the agricultural

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and fisheries industries in Hong Kong could achieve sustainable development given that there was vacant agricultural land in the New Territories.

14. The Deputy Chairman pointed out that currently, the number of fish ponds in Hong Kong could not meet the growing demand for local quality fish. He suggested that idling fish ponds could be rented to fish farmers so as to assist further development of the industry. He had visited Sha Tau Kok with scholars and identified some suitable sites for pond fish farming. He urged the Administration to review the existing policy on pond fish culture. The Deputy Chairman said that there were young people expressing interest in investing in rice cultivation. He was of the view that development of local agricultural produce would help enhance food safety in Hong Kong. The Panel had discussed the proposal on developing recreational fishing for eight years, but the Administration was still unable to resolve the licensing matters. He advised that in Japan, there was intensive promotion of recreational fishing activities that allowed tourists to experience the lives of fishermen. He considered such kind of tourist attractions a long-term development of local aquaculture, which would benefit other industries such as hospitality and tourism.

15. SFH thanked members for their views. He noted the general support for measures that were conducive to the further sustainable development of local agricultural and fisheries industries. He assured members that this was the general direction in which the Administration would be working. There would however be times when the Administration must come to terms with other overriding considerations such as the threat posed by avian influenza when it considered the future of poultry farming in Hong Kong.

IV. Rodent Control

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2520/11-12(02) and IN35/11-12)

16. SFH briefed members on the rodent prevention and control measures implemented by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") and the major new initiatives as detailed in the Administration's paper.

17. The Deputy Chairman said that although rodent infestation had been alleviated in recent years, rodents were still found in areas where restaurants conglomerated. The Deputy Chairman said that he, being a District Council member, often referred such complaints to FEHD for disinfestation operations. He enquired whether the Administration had consulted operators of restaurant on the rodent control measures. The Deputy Chairman further said that rodent infestation was particularly serious in the old areas. Mr TAM Yiu-chung echoed the Deputy Chairman's view that the highest

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Rodent Infestation Rates ("RIR") were recorded in old areas such as Sham Shui Po, Kwun Tong and Yuen Long. The Deputy Chairman and Mr TAM asked whether the Administration would step up the rodent prevention and control measures in such areas.

18. SFH responded that to deal with rodent infestation, in addition to disinfestation operations, street cleansing at rear lanes and localities of restaurants was important. FEHD would step up its anti-rodent efforts particularly in the three districts with higher RIR, i.e. Sham Shui Po, Kwun Tong and Yuen Long. SFH said that from the angle of environmental protection and rodent control, the reduction, processing and control of food waste were critical. The Environment Bureau was considering introducing measures to assist the public to better reduce and process food waste.

19. Mr TAM Yiu-chung asked about the data of diseases transmitted by rodent and whether the number of infections was increasing. Mr TAM further said that Dr Priscilla LEUNG had invited a rodent control expert from Guangzhou years ago who had subsequently trapped a great number of rodent in Hong Kong. He enquired whether the methods and techniques for rodent control adopted by the Administration complied with the practices of other countries / cities.

20. SFH responded that FEHD had been adopting a comprehensive approach in rodent control, i.e. tracing the trails left by rodents, taking a variety of measures including poisoning and trapping of rodents and destroying rat holes. The approach and measures were basically the same as those adopted in major overseas and Mainland cities. SFH further explained that the rodenticide used by FEHD were chronic anti-coagulants which would cause internal hemorrhage to rodents. This rodenticide was also widely adopted in different countries / cities.

21. Mr KAM Nai-wai expressed concern about the selection of bait locations under the Rodent Surveillance Programme and whether RIR could genuinely reflect the rodent problem of the localities. He said that the baits should be put at locations where rodent often appeared, such as market buildings, etc. Mr KAM enquired whether the bait locations were fixed or regularly rotated, and whether more baits would be placed at market buildings.

22. SFH said that FEHD had made reference to the characteristics of localities, such as the number of licensed food premises, when deciding on the bait locations and carrying out anti-rodent operations. SFH and Pest Control Officer-in-charge/Food and Environmental Hygiene Department added that random rotation of bait locations would make it difficult to

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compare statistics when the basis were not the same. Therefore it was not preferred. FEHD reviewed the bait locations annually. Additional bait locations would be considered to ensure that they could genuinely reflect the rodent problem of the localities.

23. Mr KAM Nai-wai enquired whether the Administration would make known to the public a list of black spots of rodent infestation with reference to the target areas of the 2012 Anti-rodent Campaign. He also asked whether the information on the locations of inspection, number of rodents collected with yearly comparison, etc. would be provided to the relevant District Councils for further monitoring actions.

24. SFH responded that the Administration did not have any list of black spots of rodent infestation. When RIR of a particular area was high, FEHD would step up the anti-rodent operations. It would also enhance the promotion and education of rodent prevention and control measures.

25. The Chairman said that licensed food premises were often wrongly accused of causing the rodent problem. He pointed out that instead of food premises, markets and wharfs were indeed the major problematic spots of rodent infestation. He urged the Administration to properly target the source of the rodent problem. SFH stressed that RIR was used for executing anti-rodent operations, and publicity work relating to environmental hygiene. The Administration had no intention to label any premises with RIR.

V. Implementation of the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap. 612)
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2520/11-12(03) and (04))

26. SFH briefed members on the implementation of the Food Safety Ordinance ("FSO") (Cap. 612) as detailed in the Administration's paper.

27. Mr TAM Yiu-chung enquired whether the small-scale retailers had encountered difficulties in satisfying the requirements of record keeping. Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2 ("DSFH(F)2") responded that under FSO, food retailers (including restaurants) who only supplied food to ultimate consumers by retail were only required to keep acquisition records. As members of the public could usually identify the relevant retailer where they bought the food, the Centre for Food Safety ("CFS") would then be able to trace the respective sources from which the food was supplied through the food acquisition records of the retailer. In response to Mr TAM's enquiry, DSFH(F)2 explained that under FSO, any person who carried on a food retailer business and failed to comply with the record keeping requirement was liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and to imprisonment for three

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months. The Administration had launched a six-month publicity and education exercise for the food trade to enhance their awareness of the requirements.

28. Mr TAM Yiu-chung asked whether the Administration had conducted any food surveillance exercise on the high risk food, such as sashimi, sushi and raw oyster, sold in supermarkets. Controller, Centre for Food Safety ("Controller, CFS") explained that any food premises which sold restricted food such as sashimi, sushi and raw oyster should obtain the relevant permits. Operators of the food premises would be legally liable if it failed the microbiological assessment under the Food Surveillance Programme of CFS. She said that operators of food premises should properly implement the prevention measures as set out in the licensing conditions to avoid food incidents.

29. Mr KAM Nai-wai enquired how CFS prioritized its enforcement actions and the number of inspections conducted. Mr KAM asked about the information on the categories of food traders who were found not registered or not keeping transaction records in accordance with FSO. He also asked whether the overall percentage of non-compliance was similar to the results of the inspections, and whether the Administration would review the selection criteria for inspection.

30. Controller, CFS responded that CFS had targeted to select suspicious food traders for the inspections between 1 February and 6 June 2012. Therefore, the percentage of non-compliance might be higher than the overall average. She said that the concerned food traders were co-operative and had rectified the irregularities before the deadline upon receiving verbal warnings. Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control), Centre for Food Safety ("AD(FS&C)/CFS") said that the concerned food traders included distributors at wholesale markets, stalls at markets and small retail shops. The priority and frequency of inspections were determined in accordance with a range of factors including risk classifications and modes of operation of the food premises. Food businesses dealing in high-risk foods, small shops, shops selling traditional foods and food distribution websites were the main focus of inspections. AD(FS&C)/CFS added that the 47 food traders who did not keep transaction records in accordance with FSO were food importers, food distributors and food retailers. The 46 food traders who did not register under FSO were food importers and food distributors.

31. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the number of farmers who had registered under FSO. He said that the agriculture and fisheries trade was annoyed that farmers had to pay the three-year registration fee of \$195, while food retailers were not required to register. The Deputy Chairman also asked

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whether the Administration would consider regulating agriculture, fish farming at fish ponds and oyster culture through a licensing mechanism which, in his view, could facilitate those operators to apply for imported labour.

32. SFH said that the Administration would carefully consider the suggestion of a licensing mechanism for agriculture, fish farming at fish ponds and oyster culture to avoid affecting the livelihood of persons who engaged in such work but could not satisfy the licensing requirements.

33. The Deputy Chairman expressed worry about the over-expansion of oyster culture in Shenzhen Bay and the crimes arisen in the area. He urged the Administration to step up the regulatory measures for oyster culture.

34. The Chairman commended the Administration's consultation arrangements during the legislation of FSO. He expressed concern that stall operators in wet markets might not be able to keep their records of transactions systematically such that the source of supplies might not be traced in case of food incident.

VI. Any other business

35. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:15 am.

二零一二年七月十一日

立法會食物安全及環境衛生事務委員會會議

食物及衛生局局長發言備要

主席、各位議員：

首先，感謝主席，讓我有機會在此向食物安全及環境衛生事務委員會(事務委員會)說幾句話。

2. 雖然上任只有十多天，但我明白食物及衛生局(食衛局)局長這個職位責任重大，因為本局的工作與市民的生活息息相關。我很感謝局和部門的同事給予的支持。

3. 在未來的日子裏，我們會重點處理社會和事務委員會關心的各項議題，包括食物安全、骨灰龕、市政服務及環境衛生、漁農業及動物事宜等政策，也會虛心聆聽議員的意見，積極研究他們關注的議題，並希望在推展各項工作上，能獲得立法會的支持。

食物安全

4. 在提升食物安全水平方面，政府在過去五年做了多方面的工作，先後推出或修訂了 12 項相關法例，務求完善有關食物安全的法規，當中包括今年二月一日全面生效的《食物安全條例》。在未來幾年，我們會再接再厲，確保相關法例與時並進。

5. 內地是本港最重要的食物供應來源，特區政府與國家有關部門，特別是商務部、國家質檢總局及各地的檢驗檢疫單位，建立了非常密切的溝通聯繫機制，務求維持穩定及充足的食物供應以及保障食物安全。我們在未來的日子會進一步鞏固雙方的聯繫機制。

6. 防控禽流感是我們保障食物安全和公眾健康的重點工作之一。我們剛在今年六月的會議向事務委員會匯報了香港禽流感風險評估及有關本地雞場使用禽流感疫苗的最新發展。我們近日仍有檢獲帶有 H5N1 病毒的死野鳥，並在從旺角園圃街雀鳥公園抽取的環境樣本發現 H5N1 病毒，而需要暫時關閉雀鳥公園，顯示在自然環境中仍有一定的禽流感風險。我們會持續推行現時各項有效的禽流感防控措施，將整體風險保持在穩定的低水平。我們亦會盡快引入新的禽流感疫苗，加強對本地家禽的保護。我們亦繼續關注夏天可能帶來的不同疾病。

骨灰龕

7. 市民對骨灰龕政策檢討深表關注，這點我十分了解。我們會重點跟進規管私營骨灰龕的立法工作。

8. 在增加骨灰龕設施供應方面，政府在全港十八區物色到共二十四幅初步選址作新增供應之用，並自二〇一一年開始陸續徵詢各區議會的意見。在短期以至中長期確保本港的龕位供應。

市政服務及環境衛生

9. 食環署的一項重要工作是提供市政服務及保持清潔衛生的環境，包括食肆發牌、管理街市、清洗街道、防蟲滅鼠等。我們稍後會介紹防治鼠患的工作。

漁農業

10. 支援本地漁農業的可持續發展，是行政長官競選政綱的要點之一。漁農自然護理署一直協助農戶改善產品質素、提高生產力及競爭力。

11. 漁業方面，有關禁止拖網捕魚的附屬法例會在二零一二年年底生效。我們會協助受影響的漁民轉型至可持續發展的漁業模式，以及提供一次過的援助方案。

動物事宜

12. 在本年四月的會議上，我們已就進一步規管寵物買賣的建議措施諮詢事務委員會。

13. 我的簡介到此結束，希望各位議員對我們的工作提供更多意見。多謝各位。