

**For discussion
On 11 July 2012**

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Rodent Prevention and Control Measures

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the rodent prevention and control measures implemented by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) in the past year, and the major initiatives this year.

Rodent Surveillance Programme

2. To effectively monitor the situation of rodent infestation and flexibly deploy resources, FEHD has been conducting territory-wide rodent infestation rate (RIR)^(Note 1) surveys in public areas annually since 2000. This is done by setting baits in selected localities to gather statistics on the ratio of baits bitten by rodent. The localities in the surveys cover rodent infested spots or areas likely to have rodent problems in all districts in the territory. Twice a year, FEHD will place around 100 baits in selected localities in each district. Each bait is placed at least 50 metres apart from other baits to ensure that a sufficiently large area is covered. The RIR of a district is calculated with reference to the ratio of baits bitten at that district. The results of various districts, when aggregated, will give the overall RIR. When the RIR of a district is 10% or above, FEHD will strengthen rodent

^(Note 1) Rodent Infestation Rate = $\frac{\text{Number of baits bitten by rodent}}{\text{Total number of baits collected from the selected areas}} \times 100\%$

disinfestation operations there. For a district with a RIR reaching 20% or higher, FEHD will set up a task force to liaise and coordinate anti-rodent work among relevant departments and local organisations. Rodent disinfestation, cleansing and publicity as well as education in the community will also be strengthened.

3. There is no internationally adopted RIR. FEHD has made reference to the practices adopted by different countries / cities and tried out different methods when devising its RIR. The aforementioned method is found to be the most suitable to the local situation and environment in Hong Kong. Apart from using the RIR for reference, FEHD's frontline staff also take into account the trails left by rodents, complaint figures and the views of the local community and the public in identifying problematic locations for rodent prevention and control actions.

4. The RIRs recorded between 2001 and 2011 were lower than 10% (details of which are at Annex 1), indicating that the rodent problem in public areas of Hong Kong has been largely under control. The annual overall RIR for 2011 was 1.7%, with Sham Shui Po District yielding the highest RIR of 3.2%. The lowest RIR of 0% was recorded in Islands District. Annex 2 shows the annual RIRs for various districts in 2011. The number of rodent complaints received in 2011 was 6 633. This is about 10% lower than the figure in 2010 (7 371 complaints).

Rodent Prevention and Control Measures

5. FEHD has been adopting a comprehensive approach in its rodent prevention and control work. Targeting districts with relatively high RIRs, FEHD will take a variety of rodent control measures, including

poisoning and trapping of rodents and destroying rat holes in related rear lanes, strengthening street cleansing, encouraging active participation of the public in anti-rodent work, and strengthening publicity and education programmes in rodent prevention and control. A summary of the number of rodents collected, rat holes destroyed and warnings^(Note 2) issued in 2011 is at Annex 3.

6. Given the high adaptability and reproductive rate of rodents, active participation of the community is a must to achieve the best results in rodent control. To enhance public awareness of the importance of rodent prevention and control as well as to promote active public participation, FEHD launches an anti-rodent campaign in two phases annually. During the campaign period, FEHD will step up inspections at target areas and rodent disinfestation work to achieve a more long-lasting effect in rodent prevention and control. Besides, since April 2009, FEHD has deployed an additional health inspector to each district to promote and coordinate district pest control operations and to conduct public education and publicity activities at the district level in order to strengthen liaison with other government departments and local organisations (including District Councils, Area Committees and Owners' Committees). To disseminate messages on rodent prevention and control, a total of 190 talks were organised in 2011 and 1 006 visits were conducted to private housing estates, shopping malls, markets, cemeteries, construction site offices, hotels, housing estates, hospitals, schools, restaurants, centres for the elderly, non-government organisations, District Councillors' offices and other government departments etc. These activities have drawn positive feedback from the community.

^(Note 2) Written and verbal warnings were issued to the occupiers or owners of premises, including management offices of private housing estates and licensees of food establishments, to urge them to improve the environmental hygiene for better prevention of rodent infestation.

Enhancing Exchanges with Rodent Control Experts from Different Places

7. Rodent infestation is a common problem faced by various countries in the world. Following the World Health Organization (WHO)'s relevant recommendations and technical guidelines, FEHD's existing rodent prevention and control work is an integrated approach which consists of improving environmental conditions, applying poisonous baits and setting traps. This approach is basically the same as that adopted in major overseas and Mainland cities. To further enhance the methods and techniques for rodent prevention and control, FEHD maintains regular exchanges with relevant organisations of other countries / cities to share experience and best practices on pest control. In May 2011, a delegation of field epidemiologists from the Guangdong Province visited FEHD. Rodent control was one of the topics covered in the visit. FEHD also attended international conferences held in Poland and the United States in May and October 2011 respectively for the sharing of experience on rodent control with overseas experts. These overseas exchanges have helped us to ensure that the methodologies and technique currently adopted by FEHD are in line with those promoted in the international arena.

Work Plan for 2012

8. To promote sustained and active public participation in rodent prevention and control work, FEHD launched the First Phase of the 2012 Anti-rodent Campaign from 28 December 2011 to 24 February 2012. During the campaign period, FEHD carried out a total of 10 455 inspections in target areas, including markets / market buildings, hawker bazaars,

typhoon shelters, rear lanes close to licensed food premises and other problematic spots, with 2 720 dead rodents and 1 617 live rodents collected, 836 rat holes destroyed, and 383 warnings issued. In order to sustain the effect of the First Phase, FEHD will conduct the nine-week Second Phase of the Anti-rodent Campaign from 30 July to 28 September this year in the abovementioned target areas. Apart from disinfestation and publicity work to be carried out during the campaign period, FEHD will continue to monitor the situation of rodent infestation in districts and implement control measures accordingly.

9. In addition, FEHD staff will attend international workshop(s) and forum(s) in the Mainland and overseas this year. FEHD will also maintain its efforts in reviewing and improving the effectiveness of rodent control methods and techniques by making reference to the recommendations made by the WHO and the experience of other countries / cities.

Advice Sought

10. Members are invited to note and comment on the contents of this paper.

**Food and Health Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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Overall Rodent Infestation Rates (2001 - 2011)

Year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
RIR	8.8%	9.0%	5.6%	4.1%	4.4%	2.9%	4.8%	6.3%	6.1%	1.5%	1.7%

Rodent Infestation Rates for Various Districts (2011)

District	1 st half of 2011	2 nd half of 2011	Overall of 2011
Central / Western	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%
Eastern	0.0%	1.3%	0.6%
Southern	0.0%	3.2%	1.6%
Wan Chai	3.6%	0.0%	1.8%
Islands	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Kowloon City	0.0%	2.8%	1.4%
Kwun Tong	2.1%	4.2%	3.1%
Mong Kok	5.0%	0.8%	2.9%
Sham Shui Po	3.5%	2.9%	3.2%
Wong Tai Sin	1.0%	1.9%	1.5%
Yau Tsim	0.9%	2.7%	1.8%
North	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Sai Kung	1.8%	1.8%	1.8%
Sha Tin	3.4%	0.0%	1.7%
Tai Po	0.9%	0.9%	0.9%
Tsuen Wan	3.1%	2.0%	2.6%
Tuen Mun	1.7%	0.0%	0.8%
Yuen Long	3.5%	2.6%	3.0%
Kwai Tsing	4.1%	1.0%	2.6%
Overall Rodent Infestation Rate	1.8%	1.5%	1.7%

**Number of Rodents Collected, Rat Holes Destroyed
and Warnings Issued in 2011**

No. of dead rodents collected	No. of live rodents collected	No. of rat holes destroyed	No. of warnings issued
21 108	10 163	7 147	5 531