



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

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(Translation)

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Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Mr Jove CHAN)
[Fax: 2185 7845]

Dear Mr Chan,

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Rise in the Rodent Infestation Rate

Thank you for your referral on 3 March 2014 of Hon. Christopher CHUNG's letter to the Chairman of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene on the captioned subject, requesting a response from our Bureau. I am authorised to reply as follows.

According to a survey conducted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") in 19 districts throughout the territory, the overall Rodent Infestation Rate ("RIR") for the second half of 2013 was 3.2%, almost the same as the figure in the first half of the year (3.0%). The overall RIR for 2013 was 3.1%. Whilst this represents a slight increase over the 2.4% recorded in 2012, it is still staying at a low single-digit level.

Overall speaking, rodent infestation in public areas in the city was generally under control. The state of rodent infestation in

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individual districts, which may vary with changes in environmental and hygiene conditions and the level of public participation in rodent prevention and control work over time, is reflected in the RIR. That the RIRs in some districts are relatively higher than in others is mainly caused by less satisfactory hygiene conditions at specific spots and rear lanes, including the accumulation of disused articles, indiscriminate disposal of refuse and improper handling of food remnants, which provide food and shelter for rodents.

FEHD has been adopting a comprehensive and targeted approach in its rodent prevention and control work. The rodent disinfection methods and rodenticide applied by FEHD are tested and have proven effective prior to use. Hon. CHUNG's letter made specific mention about signs of rodent infestation detected in the Chai Wan Market ("CWM"). According to the record of FEHD, the CWM has been using permitted rodenticide. In fact, trails left by rodents were noticed by the Department in the CWM after the Chinese New Year. Staff immediately took follow-up action and enhanced the rodent prevention and control measures in the CWM (including placing more rodenticide and cage traps, cleansing the CWM, clearing up disused articles and refuse) so as to reduce the food sources and hiding places of rodents). The situation has since improved. FEHD will continue to closely monitor rodent infestation in the CWM.

Apart from routine work, in 2013, FEHD continued with measures to strengthen its district-based rodent prevention and control efforts and encourage sustained and active participation of the public in related operations. These measures include:

- (1) strengthening rodent prevention and control efforts in districts, including eliminating and trapping rats in problem rear lanes, filling rat holes, and carrying out publicity and education programmes on rodent control;
- (2) conducting a territory-wide anti-rodent campaign bearing the theme of "Eliminate Rodent Nuisance - Take Preventive Measures" in two phases from 14 January to 15 March 2013 and from 2 July to 30 August 2013 respectively appealing for active public participation in rodent control;
- (3) apart from working with District Councils in organising publicity and educational events on pest control, FEHD has stepped up its territory-wide publicity and public education efforts, including issue of press releases, broadcasting TV and

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radio Announcements in the Public Interest, production of anti-rodent publicity materials, holding roving exhibitions and talks on hygiene practices; and

- (4) deploying health inspectors from various District Pest Control Sections to promote and coordinate pest control operations in the community. The work includes strengthening liaison with other government departments and local organisations, and taking forward more pest control campaigns and public education and publicity activities at the district level, with a view to effectively promoting pest control work on various fronts.

In FEHD's rodent prevention and control work in 2013, a total of about 19 420 dead rodents were collected and some 10 300 live rodents were trapped. The Department issued 30 warning letters on rodent infestation and organised over 980 talks and publicity and educational events at the district level.

When the RIR of a particular district is above 10%, relevant sections of FEHD will take joint actions to strengthen rodent disinfestation operations there. If a district has an RIR reaching 20% or higher, FEHD will immediately form a joint task force with the relevant government departments and launch a special rodent control operation which includes strengthening rodent disinfestation, environmental improvement and cleansing services comprehensively, as well as promoting messages on rodent control in the community and encouraging active public participation in rodent control.

FEHD will continue to strengthen its anti-rodent work in all districts, which includes enhancing street cleansing, eliminating and trapping rats in rear lanes and markets, filling rat holes, encouraging members of the public to actively participate in the prevention and control of rodents, and carrying out public health education and publicity on rodent control.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

(Vinci CHAN)

for Secretary for Food and Health

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