

**Discovery of *Vibrio Cholerae* in Retail Fish Stalls
and the Quality of Fish Tank Water**

At the Panel meeting held on 16 September 2003, Members were briefed on further measures to promote fish tank water quality and seafood safety and two incidents of presence of *Vibrio cholerae* in retail fish stalls. The Administration agreed to inform Members of the results of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's investigation in respect of the case which involved a fish stall inside a supermarket in Po Fu Lam.

2. The investigation was completed and there were no conclusive findings on the source of *Vibrio cholerae* in the water sample taken on 26 August 2003 at the premises concerned. The suspected causes included the contamination of *Vibrio cholerae* by the shellfish themselves.

3. A number of specific recommendations were put forward to the licensee to ensure the quality of live seafood and fish tank water. They included the following –

- (a) The licensee should exercise more stringent control (e.g. through staff training and strict managerial control) to avoid adding seawater accidentally from delivery trucks to the water tanks when new batches of fish are added. All shellfish should be thoroughly scrubbed clean before putting into the water tanks;
- (b) More stringent maintenance practice on the filtration and disinfection facilities, and proper staff training are required;
- (c) The licensee should continue to abstract seawater from locations recommended by the Environmental Protection Department. In the case of unsatisfactory weather condition which makes abstraction of seawater by boat from these recommended locations not possible, the licensee should consider using other means such as synthetic water;

- (d) The licensee should have a mechanism to ensure that live fish are supplied by fish farms located at sites with high seawater quality and that high quality seawater is used to transport the fish;
- (e) All live fish irrespective of the sources should be kept in the licensee's fish centre for a period of time so as to allow the disinfection systems at the centre to eliminate *Vibrio cholerae*;
- (f) When delivering fish to retail outlets, only disinfected water should be used in the delivery trucks which should be thoroughly cleaned after each delivery.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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