

**For Discussion on
26 October 2004**

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Importation of Live Poultry and Progress Report on Voluntary Surrender
of Live Poultry Retail Licences or Tenancies**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the importation of live poultry and reports the latest progress of voluntary surrender of live poultry retail licences or tenancies.

Importation of Live Chickens from the Mainland

2. Following the outbreaks of avian influenza in the Mainland in January 2004 and, in the light of the recurrence of avian influenza outbreaks in the region, we have reviewed the risk management of live poultry in Hong Kong and concluded that we should reduce the total live chicken population in order to curb the risk of an epidemic outbreak in Hong Kong. We therefore consider it appropriate to maintain the maximum licensing capacity in local chicken farms at half the existing chicken population. We are currently maintaining a level of imports of live chickens at 30,000 a day and we hope to maintain an equivalent number from local chicken farms, having regard to the potential health risk posed by large quantities of live poultry in our markets. We will closely monitor the avian influenza outbreak situation in the region and review our position accordingly. In the meantime, both the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) have ceased to issue new poultry stall licences and poultry farm licences respectively.

3. As the demand for live chickens tends to surge around the time of traditional Chinese Festivals (e.g. Tuen Ng Festival and Mid-autumn Festival) the daily supply of imported live chickens from the Mainland had been allowed to temporarily increase to about 50,000 during these traditional festival periods to meet the market demand.

Importation of Live Ducks and Geese from the Mainland

4. As regards the resumption of importation of live ducks and geese from the Mainland, we have exchanged views and maintained close liaison with the Mainland authorities on the issue. We understand that the Mainland authorities are still looking into the management of the registered farms supplying live ducks and geese to Hong Kong as there is a higher risk of live ducks and geese carrying the avian influenza virus. We will continue to liaise with the Mainland Authorities on the progress..

Voluntary Surrender of Live Poultry Retail Licenses or Tenancies

5. As at 16 October 2004, FEHD approved a total of 165 applications for ex-gratia payment (EGP) (94 cases from FEHD market stallholders and 71 cases from fresh provision shop licensees) and 17 EGP applications are now being processed. FEHD has not received any applications for the unsecured loan to date.

6. On the retraining for affected live poultry workers, we have received 100 applications, of which 63 were approved, 31 were rejected and 6 were being processed. Four tailor-made courses, namely domestic helper integrated training, Chinese roasted food production cum self-employment training, security and property management cum gardening skills training and small business cum self-employment training could be made through the Employees Retraining Board. So far, 46 (76% of the approved cases) applicants have signed up for the four courses. One course on security and property management cum gardening skills with 15 trainees has already commenced on 18 October 2004 while arrangements are being made to hold one class each on domestic helper integrated training, and small business cum self-employment in the next few weeks.

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