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Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 8 May 2012

Mosquito control

Purpose

This paper provides a summary of discussions relating to mosquito control by the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene ("the Panel").

Background

2. Apart from causing nuisance to human being, some species of mosquitoes may pose threat to public health as vectors of diseases, such as dengue fever, Japanese encephalitis ("JE") and chikungunya fever. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") takes stewardship in organizing anti-mosquito campaigns annually on a territory-wide basis to heighten public awareness of the potential risk of mosquito-borne diseases, encourage community participation and promote cooperation among government departments concerned in anti-mosquito work.

3. Since 2003, FEHD has put in place an enhanced dengue vector surveillance programme to monitor the distribution of *Aedes albopictus* at selected areas, evaluate the effectiveness of mosquito prevention and control work carried out by various parties, and provide surveillance information to the public and for making timely adjustments to our mosquito control strategies and measures. Under the surveillance programme, two different indices, namely,

Area Ovitrap Index ("AOI") and Monthly Ovitrap Index ("MOI") are recorded. AOI indicates the extensiveness of the distribution of Aedine mosquitoes in the surveyed area while MOI is the average of all AOIs of the same month, which reflects the distribution and activity of *Aedes albopictus* in the territory.

4. According to the Administration, the records of 2011 revealed that a total of 13 areas had been recorded with AOIs reaching or exceeding the alert level of 20%. Under such circumstances, the District Anti-mosquito Task Forces has stepped up the coordination of government efforts in combating mosquito problem and mobilizing community participation in anti-mosquito activities in accordance with established practices. In addition to ovitrap surveys conducted in different districts, FEHD also carries out dengue vector surveillance in major port areas. In 2011, the ovitrap indices of all groups of port areas were below 20%. Port Monthly Ovitrap Indices ("PMOIs") in 2011 ranged from 0% (January to March, October to December) to the highest of 15.1% (May). The variation in PMOIs was in line with the trends in previous years. For areas with positive indices, the Administration would act jointly with other relevant organizations such as Airport Authority, the MTR Corporation Limited and freight forwarding companies in strengthening the anti-mosquito work.

5. In order to further strengthen the monitoring of the breeding of *Aedes albopictus*, starting from January 2011, FEHD has expanded the scope of the dengue vector surveillance programme to cover a number of densely populated or frequently visited areas as well as those areas where local dengue fever cases had occurred in the past. As a result of this extension, a total of 44 areas, including the six port areas, are currently covered under the surveillance programme.

Deliberations of the Panel

6. At its meeting on 14 June 2011, the Panel was briefed on the progress of the Administration's work in mosquito prevention and new control measures launched by the Administration in 2011. Concern was raised about the mosquito problem in the districts where cemeteries were located, such as Chai Wan West, Happy Valley and Pokfulam, etc. The Administration pointed out that the mosquito problem was not particularly significant in cemeteries and columbaria. High mosquito breeding also occurred at other locations such as

construction sites, countryside with stagnant water, etc. People should take precaution and control actions, especially during the peak season of mosquito breeding.

7. Referring to media reports in recent years that certain mosquito control teams had not duly performed their duties and certain ovitraps had been interfered, members expressed concern over the monitoring of the mosquito control work and the measures taken by the Administration to prevent the re-occurrence of the incidents. According to the Administration, around 700 in-house staff and 1 200 contractor staff were responsible for anti-mosquito work in FEHD. FEHD in-house staffs were supervised by officers of higher ranks, while contractors were required to submit regular operations plans and reports. Regular and surprise inspections were conducted to ensure that contractors followed the anti-mosquito work plan. As regards the precautionary measures for the interference of ovitraps, preventive measures, e.g. ovitrap cover, wind bridge, etc. had been put to ovitraps in recent years to lower the intentional and unintentional interference.

Relevant papers

8. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
2 May 2012

Appendix

Relevant papers on mosquito prevention and control

Meeting	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene	6.10.2006 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes CB(2)3153/05-06(01)
	8.4.2008 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes CB(2)1488/07-08(2)
	14.6.2011 (Item VII)	Agenda Minutes CB(2)1995/10-11(09) CB(2)1995/10-11(10)
Legislative Council	18.10.2006	[Question 18] Asked by: Hon James TO Placement of ovitraps for mosquito surveillance
	26.11.2008	[Question 7] Asked by: Hon Alan LEONG Anti-mosquito measures

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