

(English translation)

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22 July 2014

Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Mr Jove Chan)

Dear Mr Chan,

**Follow-up action arising from the discussion at the
Panel meeting on 8 April 2014**

**Proposed Amendments to the Veterinary Surgeons Registration
Ordinance (Cap. 529)**

At the Panel meeting held on 8 April 2014, the Panel requested the Administration to provide the following information after the meeting –

- (i) a detailed breakdown on the number of complaints involving veterinary surgeons received by the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Hong Kong (VSB) between 1998 and 2013, the follow up actions taken by the Board on these complaint cases, the number of such complaint cases substantiated and the penalties imposed on the veterinary surgeons involved; and
- (ii) general market information on consultation fees and charges of veterinary services.

The Administration's response is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Regarding item (i) above, a detailed breakdown on the number of complaints involving veterinary surgeons received by VSB for the period from 1998 to 2013 is at Annex.

Regarding item (ii) above, the Administration has not collected information on the consultation fees and charges of veterinary services. Hong Kong is a free market economy. The consultation fees and charges of veterinary services are market-driven and determined by individual veterinary surgeons/clinics. This is also a common practice in other places.

Through the “Code of Practice for the Guidance of Registered Veterinary Surgeons” (CoP), VSB regulates the professional conduct of registered veterinary surgeons, including the principle of determining the consultation fees and charges. The CoP specifically stipulates that veterinary surgeons should make available to their clients or prospective clients a schedule of their normal fees and charges for consultations, routine tests and routine procedures. At the same time, the CoP also stipulates that veterinary surgeons should not charge exorbitant or unreasonable fees. If a registered veterinary surgeon does not comply with the requirements as set out in the CoP and becomes a subject of public complaint, the registered veterinary surgeon may be subject to inquiry hearing for he/her disciplinary offence(s).

Consumers are well advised to compare the consultation fees and charges of veterinary services of different veterinary surgeons before consuming the services, with a view to selecting veterinary services that suit their personal needs and budget.

Yours sincerely,

(Miss Jeanne CHENG)
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
(Attn.: Dr Michelle Yeung)

Complaints received by the Veterinary Surgeons Board for the period from 1998 to 2013 and the respective outcomes

Year	(a) No. of complaints received (a)= (b)+(c)+(d)	(b) No. of complaints being processed	(c) No. of complaints dismissed	(d) No. of complaints referred to the Inquiry Committee (d)=(e)+(f)	(e) No. of inquiry hearings being arranged	(f) No. of inquiry hearings completed (f)=(g)+(h)	Results of the inquiry hearings				
							(g) No. of complaints not substantiated	(h) No. of complaints substantiated (h)= (i)+(j)+(k)	Penalty		
									(i) Warning	(j) Reprimand	(k) Remove name from the register
1998	8	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1999	16	0	14	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
2000	11	0	9	2	0	2	1	1	0	0	1
2001	12	0	9	3	0	3	1	2	2	0	0
2002	34	0	29	5	0	5	1	4	2	2	0
2003	33	0	29	4	0	4	2	2	1	0	1
2004	51	0	45	6	0	6	4	2	1	1	0
2005	38	0	34	4	0	4	0	4	1	2	1
2006	56	0	51	5	0	5	2	3	0	3	0
2007	59	0	47	12	0	12	1	11	0	9	2
2008	49	0	42	7	0	7	3	4	0	4	0
2009	53	0	37	16	1	15	7	8	1	7	0
2010	52	1	46	5	1	4	0	4	0	4	0
2011	66	3	57	6	5	1	0	1	0	1	0
2012	45	9	34	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
2013	50	23	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	633	36	518	79	9	70	24	46	8	33	5^[1]

Remark: The above information reflects the situation as at 1 July 2014.

^[1] The names of the veterinary surgeons concerned were removed from the register for a period ranging from 3 to 12 months.