

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)945/14-15
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Minutes of meeting held on Tuesday, 13 January 2015, at 2:00 pm in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** :
- Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP (Chairman)
 - Hon Steven HO Chun-yin (Deputy Chairman)
 - Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
 - Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
 - Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP, PhD, RN
 - Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
 - Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
 - Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
 - Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS
 - Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
 - Hon Claudia MO
 - Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
 - Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
 - Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
 - Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP
 - Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
 - Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
 - Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
 - Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
 - Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
- Members attending** :
- Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
 - Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
- Members absent** :
- Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
 - Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
 - Hon WONG Yuk-man
 - Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP

Public Officers : Item IV
attending

Dr KO Wing-man, BBS, JP
Secretary for Food and Health

Mrs Marion LAI, JP
Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Miss Hinny LAM Shuk-yee
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 3

Dr LIU Kwei-kin, JP
Assistant Director (Agriculture)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Mr FORK Ping-lam
Assistant Director (Operations)3
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item V

Dr KO Wing-man, BBS, JP
Secretary for Food and Health

Mrs Marion LAI, JP
Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

Miss Hinny LAM Shuk-yee
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 3

Dr LIU Kwei-kin, JP
Assistant Director (Agriculture)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Attendance : Item IV
by invitation

香港活家禽鮮宰商會

Mr PUN Fuk-loi
Chairman

Hong Kong Local Live Chickens Wholesalers
Association

Mr LIN Tak-hing
Chairman

軍地蔬菜產銷有限責任合作社

Mr FUNG Kin-chung
Director

Federation of Hong Kong Agricultural Associations

Mr CHAN Kin-yip
Chairman

香港雞苗發展協會

Mr WONG Yuet-tai
Deputy Chairman

Vital Health Livestock Development Limited

Mr KWOK Ming-cheung
Managing Director

Hong Kong and Kowloon Poultry Dealers and Workers Association

Mr WONG Wing-nam
Chairman

Hong Kong Poultry Wholesalers Association

Mr TSUI Ming-tuen
Chairman

Kowloon Poultry Transporter and Poulterer Association

Mr YEUNG Chi-lun
Chairman

Kowloon Poultry Laan Merchants Association

Mr LIAO Lin-zhong
Manager

Individual

Mr LEE Leung-kei

The New Territories Chicken Breeders Association
Limited

Mr TANG Wai-lun
Director

Clerk in attendance : Ms Alice LEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (2) 2

Staff in attendance : Ms Wendy LO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 2 (Acting)

Mr Richard WONG
Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Emma CHEUNG
Legislative Assistant (2) 2

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I. Confirmation of minutes
(LC Paper No. CB(2)566/14-15)

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2014 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)607/14-15(01), CB(2)610/14-15(01) and CB(2)611/14-15(01))

2. Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting -

- (a) Letter dated 9 January 2015 from Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kwok-long on the public consultation on "Proposed regulatory framework on nutrition and health claims on infant formula, follow-up formula, and prepackaged foods for infants and young children under the age of 36 months in Hong Kong";
- (b) Letter dated 9 January 2015 from Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan expressing her concern on the progress of the "Consultancy study on wholesale markets" commissioned by the Administration; and

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- (c) Letter dated 9 January 2015 from Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan regarding the Administration's follow-up action on food safety incidents in McDonald's Japan.

III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)568/14-15(01) and (02))

Policy briefing on 21 January 2015

3. The Chairman reminded members that a meeting had been scheduled for 21 January 2015, from 8:30 am to 10:00 am, to receive a briefing by the Secretary for Food and Health ("SFH") on the Chief Executive's 2015 Policy Address in respect of food safety, environmental hygiene and agriculture and fisheries.

Regular meeting in February 2015

4. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 10 February 2015 -

- (a) Public consultation on the proposed regulation of nutrition and health claims on formula products and prepackaged food for infants and young children under the age of 36 months in Hong Kong;
- (b) Review on fees for slaughterhouse services provided by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department; and
- (c) Review on fees for cemeteries and crematoria services provided by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

5. Members noted that Prof Hon Joseph LEE and Hon Vincent FANG suggested the Panel to invite deputations to give views on item (a) in paragraph 4 above at the next regular meeting. Members agreed to the suggestion and to advance the meeting to start at 2:00 pm and end at 5:00 pm to allow sufficient time for discussion.

6. At the suggestion of the Chairman, members also agreed that the item "Update on the latest development on the supply of public niches and regulation of private columbaria", which was originally scheduled for discussion in February 2015, would be deferred to the regular meeting in March 2015.

IV. Arrangements for separating imported live poultry from local live poultry
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)606/14-15(01) and (02))

Presentation of views by deputations

7. The Chairman reminded the deputations/individual attending the meeting that they were not covered by the protection and immunity provided under the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382) when addressing the Panel. At the invitation of the Chairman, 12 deputations/individual presented their views on the arrangements for separating imported live poultry from local live poultry. A summary of their views is in the **Appendix**.

The Administration's response to deputations' views

8. SFH made the following points in response to the deputations' views -

- (a) upon confirmation of the positive H7 avian influenza ("AI") samples found in a batch of live poultry imported from the Mainland on 30 December 2014, the Administration had taken a series of measures to prevent the spread of the virus including culling of the live poultry concerned and closure of the Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market ("CSWTWPM") for 21 days thereafter for complete disinfection. The Administration noted that in the light of a similar incident which occurred in January 2014, there had been calls from the poultry trade that the Administration should segregate imported live poultry from local ones, and hold imported live poultry at a suitable location until the AI testing results were available before releasing them to the wholesale market. After assessing various proposals, the Administration considered that it was not feasible to identify a suitable site for this purpose. Against this background, the Administration decided to pursue the proposal of establishing a check-point at the Government farm in Ta Kwu Ling ("TKL Check-point"). In the event of an AI incident which led to the closure of CSWTWPM, local live chickens could be dispatched to retail outlets via the TKL Check-point, thereby ensuring as far as possible the continued supply of local live chickens and minimizing possible impact on the trade;
- (b) the Administration noted the requests from different quarters for the relocation of CSWTWPM. However, the Administration was not optimistic about finding suitable sites for relocating CSWTWPM and establishing another long-term facility for

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holding imported live poultry as local residents in the vicinity of any possible sites so identified might raise concerns despite the stringent AI risk management measures put in place;

- (c) through continued dialogue, various parties understood that the TKL Check-point was only an emergency and temporary arrangement to ensure the supply of local live poultry when CSWTWPM was closed due to AI incidents. The Administration also explained to TKL resident representatives that the facilities (quarantine system, sewerage facilities, traffic flow and noise level management etc.) and operation of TKL Check-point were in compliance with prevailing biosecurity and environmental protection requirements designed to minimize possible impact on the neighbourhood. Although some TKL residents had concerns about the TKL Check-point proposal, they raised no objection to the temporary operation of the Check-point having considered the need of the trade and the demand for live poultry from the citizens. The Administration thanked them for their cooperation in this matter; and
- (d) in the long run, while the Administration would review the existing policy on supply of live poultry. Joint efforts by various stakeholders would be necessary if Hong Kong was to continue the practice of selling poultry in live form.

Discussion

9. Members noted the latest situation of the operation of the TKL Check-point as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)606/14-15(01)). Members also noted the information note entitled "Arrangements for separating imported live poultry from local live poultry" (LC Paper No. CB(2)606/14-15(02)) prepared by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat.

Operation of the TKL Check-point

10. The Chairman and Mr Vincent FANG asked whether the Administration would increase the daily ceiling of number of local live chickens supplying to retail outlets through the TKL Check-point. Mr FANG was concerned that the ceiling was set too low compared to the usual throughput of 12 000 live local chickens a day.

11. The Deputy Chairman said that the local live poultry trade was willing to co-operate with the Government to ensure the smooth operation of the TKL Check-point. He condemned a poultry trader for threatening to release

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chickens in the city area during the deliberation process. He opined that the TKL Check-point had the capacity to handle more than 6 000 chickens daily. He hoped that the Administration would further liaise with TKL residents on raising the ceiling if the delivery arrangement of chickens proved to be satisfactory.

12. SFH advised that the Administration had been monitoring the operation of the TKL Check-point and noted that different delivery arrangements of local live chickens were adopted in the past few days (i.e. chickens remained on the same truck for inspection and delivery to retail outlets, or chickens, without being offloaded onto the ground, were transferred to different trucks for delivery after inspection). It was reported that the delivery arrangement did not cause too much nuisance to TKL residents. The operation so far was satisfactory and the delivery time to retail outlets had been shortened. On the advice of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD"), the Administration would increase progressively the daily ceiling handled by the Check-point from around 3 000 chickens to around 6 000 chickens. Starting from 13 January 2015, up to a total of 5 800 chickens would be distributed through the Check-point.

13. SFH assured members that AFCD was closely monitoring the delivery arrangement and the operation at the TKL Check-point. AFCD would also monitor the local live chicken stocks and their age profile to prevent a building up of overage chickens at farms. Given the new mode of operation of the TKL Check-point, the trade needed to temporarily adjust their mode of operation in trying out the arrangement. The Administration considered that a balance had to be struck in reducing the impact on the trade and minimizing the nuisance to residents living in the vicinity. SFH stressed that the Administration would maintain dialogue with TKL residents on the operation of the Check-point and other related issues to allay their concerns.

14. Mr Vincent FANG was of the view that the Government should ascertain that TKL residents had no objection to the TKL Check-point proposal before pursuing it. Noting the residents once had strong view on the operational arrangements of the Check-point, Mr FANG enquired about the consultation process between the Government and TKL residents on the matter.

15. SFH advised that the Administration had been maintaining close liaison with TKL residents on the TKL Check-point proposal. The Administration noted that the residents had not expressly given support for the setting up of the Check-point but they were not strongly against it when being consulted on the project. When the TKL Check-point was about to be put to operation, some TKL residents expressed concern about the potential impact on the neighbourhood. The Administration had set up meetings with

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the residents concerned to explain the arrangement in detail and arranged a site-visit to the Check-point for them to see the biosecurity and environmental protection measures in place. Having considered the need of the trade and the demand for live poultry from the citizens, the residents concerned expressed understanding and raised no further objection to the operation of the Check-point during the closure of CSWTWPM. SFH thanked again the residents concerned for their understanding and the efforts made by the trade to facilitate the smooth operation of the Check-point.

16. Mr Frederick FUNG said that TKL residents had indicated their opposition to the permanent use of the Check-point, and asked whether the Administration would identify another site as replacement. SFH advised that TKL residents agreed on the use of the TKL Check-point under certain conditions. Nevertheless, the Administration would continue to communicate with the residents concerned with the support and co-operation of the trade.

17. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen asked whether the facilities of the TKL Check-point would be improved and the way forward to tackle possible AI outbreaks in future. SFH advised that the Administration would review the operation of the TKL Check-point having regard to the logistic arrangements in the following days. The Architectural Services Department would install additional noise control facilities to minimize the nuisance caused to the neighbourhood.

Supply of local live chickens and financial assistance to affected poultry operators

18. Noting that the trade was concerned about the suspension of supply of day-old chicks to local chicken farms, the Chairman asked when the import of day-old chicks would resume. SFH advised that CSWTWPM would open for trading of live poultry on 22 January 2015. The supply of day-old chicks was expected to resume when the Mainland authorities decided to supply live poultry to Hong Kong. Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food) ("PSFH(F)") supplemented that the Administration had not suspended the import of day-old chicks from the Mainland. It was the decision of the Mainland authorities to suspend the supply of day-old chicks for the time being.

19. Pointing out that the Government would no longer issue licences to local poultry farmers and live poultry retailers (e.g. live poultry market stalls and fresh provision shops selling live poultry), the Deputy Chairman expressed concern about the limited supply channel for local live poultry. He asked how the Administration could ensure the sufficiency of retail outlets for local chickens. SFH replied that the present scale of the supply chain for live poultry and the rearing capacity of poultry farms in Hong Kong had

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stabilized after the introduction of measures against AI by the previous-term Government. The Administration considered that the local live poultry industry had been operating well on its present scale and any expansion of the trade would require careful consideration. The Administration had been monitoring the number of local live poultry farms as well as retail outlets and noted that there had not been any change to the number of retail outlets in recent years.

20. The Chairman enquired whether the Administration would consider offering financial assistance to affected poultry operators (i.e. wholesalers, retailers and transporters) to help them tide over the financial hardship during the closure of CSWTWPM. SFH responded that statutory compensation would be granted to poultry operators affected by the culling of live poultry in accordance with the law. Any assistance, other than statutory compensation, would need to be assessed by AFCD and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

Separation of supply chains of imported and local live poultry

21. While recognizing the concerted efforts made by the Government and the poultry trade in handling this AI incident, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether the Administration would identify two separate sites to segregate imported live poultry from local live poultry to mitigate the AI risks in the long run. He also urged the Administration to move CSWTWPM away from the vicinity of CSW in view of the growing population there. He considered that the Administration should tackle these issues under its proposed new agricultural policy.

22. Echoing Mr WONG Kwok-hing's view, Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that as long as there was a continued need for live poultry from the citizens, the Administration should strive to identify sites (e.g. idle farmlands far away from city) for separation of imported and local live poultry. Mr Frederick FUNG said that the Administration should not use shortage of land as an excuse for evading this issue. While noting the public concerns on the operation of CSWTWPM, the Deputy Chairman was of the view that the public should appreciate the operational need of the trade in meeting the demand for live poultry from citizens.

23. SFH responded that the Administration noted the repeated calls from local residents for relocating CSWTWPM. He remarked that a suitable site for such purpose had yet to be secured. In response to the suggestion of segregating imported live poultry from local ones at two separate sites, the Administration had made endeavours to identify possible suitable sites, including the sites in Fu Tei Au and Yuen Long, for the temporary holding of imported live poultry until the testing results were available. However, due

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to scarce land resources and the possible opposition of local residents to the setting up of such facilities in their neighbourhood, the Administration considered the establishment of two separate facilities for imported and local live poultry not feasible.

24. SFH further explained that the site in Fu Tei Au was found not suitable for keeping imported live poultry or serving as a check-point for local live poultry when CSWTWPM was closed. The Administration hoped that the trade would appreciate the difficulties of finding suitable sites for the separation of imported and local live poultry and work with the Administration to improve the operation of the TKL Check-point. He added that although local live poultry took up a bigger market share than imported poultry, there was little room for the expansion of local live poultry industry due to various factors. The proposed new agricultural policy would therefore focus on the development of crop farming.

25. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether the Administration would identify a site near the boundary for the temporary holding of imported live poultry. SFH advised that the Administration had looked for such a site near the Man Kam To boundary crossing but no suitable place could yet be identified for keeping a few thousands imported live chickens for a couple of hours while waiting for the testing results before release to the wholesale market. SFH also clarified that the transfer of chickens from big trucks to smaller trucks without offloading them onto the ground was simply a temporary operation arrangement to facilitate the delivery of local chickens to retail outlets. The Check-point was not intended for the purpose of separating imported and local live poultry.

Supply of imported live poultry

26. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen asked whether the Administration would consider developing a self-sustained local supply of live poultry if there were further AI incidents on the Mainland or simply cease the selling of live poultry in the long run as indicated in paragraph 14 of the Administration's paper after a major local outbreak of AI.

27. Dr Helena WONG pointed out that with a growing consumption of chilled and frozen poultry, the average daily supply of live chickens in Hong Kong had reduced from over 100 000 in 2008 to about 15 000 in 2015 and local live chickens had already taken up about two-third of the market share. She urged the Government to consider increasing the rearing capacity of local poultry farms and ceasing the import of live poultry so as to avoid cross-infection of AI among chickens and satisfy the local demand for live poultry at the same time.

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28. SFH said that while a temporary suspension of imported live poultry might be manageable, the long-term cessation of imported poultry was considered not feasible due to the following reasons -

- (a) it should be noted that while some live chickens were produced locally, local farms still needed day-old chicks from the Mainland for the production of live chickens. The trade also requested the resumption of import of day-old chicks as early as practicable;
- (b) despite the fact that the surveillance and control measures put in place over the years had been effective in mitigating the risk of an AI outbreak in Hong Kong, there was still chance for local live chickens to get infected with AI virus. The Administration had reservation as to whether Hong Kong could develop a self-sustained local supply of live poultry with zero risk as there had been cases of AI among poultry in developed countries in recent years; and
- (c) the import of live poultry from the Mainland had been suspended for about eight months following the last AI incident in late January 2014, during which the market supply of live poultry had dropped and there were short-term fluctuations in the prices of live chicken. The public and the live poultry trade had raised concerns about this situation.

29. Mr Frederick FUNG said that while he did not oppose the import of live poultry, he considered that the local poultry trade had good potential to build up its own brand for long-term development given that there was no local poultry infection with AI in the past five years. SFH agreed that the local poultry trade had built up its own reputation and the public had greater confidence in local live chickens.

V. Sustainable agricultural development

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)528/14-15(01) and CB(2)568/14-15(03))

30. Members noted the Administration's paper setting out the major issues highlighted in the consultation document entitled "The New Agricultural Policy: Sustainable Agricultural Development in Hong Kong" ("consultation document") released on 29 December 2014 (LC Paper No. CB(2)528/14-15(01)). Members also noted the background brief on agricultural development in Hong Kong (LC Paper No. CB(2)568/14-15(03)) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

Policy objectives of the proposed new agricultural policy

31. The Deputy Chairman, Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Mr Michael TIEN, Miss CHAN Yuen-han and Miss Alice MAK welcomed the public consultation on the new proposed agricultural policy on modernization and sustainable development of local agriculture. They considered that the new policy represented a step forward of the current-term Government to promote local agriculture which had been diminishing over time.

32. Ms Cyd HO and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired about the objectives of the new agricultural policy. They suggested that a public hearing should be held to invite views of deputations and stakeholders of the agricultural sector on the consultation document. Mr CHAN said that should a public hearing be held, the relevant bureaux/departments concerned should also be invited to join the discussion, having regard to the scope of the agricultural policy.

33. SFH advised that the new agricultural policy had multiple objectives which included: (a) providing support for the local agricultural sector which had been diminishing over time; (b) maintaining a vibrant local agricultural production to help diversify food supply and reduce reliance on imported food, whilst meeting consumer' aspiration and demand for food with high safety standard; and (c) increasing the self-sufficiency ratio for local crop supply; (d) strengthening the support for farmers in identifying suitable farmland for cultivation, developing new farming techniques and improving varieties of agricultural products etc.; (e) promoting a healthy lifestyle amongst citizens who were interested in manual farm work; and (f) promoting the development of a diversified economy in Hong Kong. SFH added that as the territory-wide agricultural policy was under the purview of the Food and Health Bureau ("FHB"), FHB would play a coordinating role and consolidate the views of Government bureaux/departments concerned on the new policy. To address members' concerns, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide written response on the objectives of the new agricultural policy.

Admin

Establishment of an Agricultural Park ("Agri-Park") and other supportive measures

Land acquisition for setting up the Agri-Park

34. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the criteria in land resumption and site selection for the setting up of the proposed Agri-Park. He suggested that the Administration should also invite views of the agricultural sector on certain restrictions concerning the use of land stipulated in laws such as building development restrictions. SFH advised that the Administration would acquire the lots required for establishing the Agri-Park in accordance with statutory procedures. He said that although a lot of land in rural New

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Territories were zoned "Agriculture" or considered suitable for agricultural use, many landowners were unwilling to enter long term tenancy agreements with farmers as they wanted to optimize their land for development and maximize the land value. In identifying the site for establishing the Agri-Park, the Administration would try to avoid areas that had been planned for development, reserved for other purposes or had high potential for development due to their location or infrastructural facilities, etc. Meanwhile, AFCD was collecting information about farmland in the New Territories for consideration as the potential site for the Agri-Park.

35. Miss Alice MAK cautioned that the Government should be careful in handling land resumption and the possible issue of land developers hoarding land. SFH advised that having considered the conflicting interests involved, the Administration would not disclose the potential site for the Agri-Park and the relevant amount of compensation at the present stage.

Tenancy management

36. Noting that AFCD would devise five-year terms standard tenancy agreements for prospective tenants in the Agri-Park, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether the Administration would consider extending the tenancy (e.g. seven to 10 years) such that the tenants would be able to make longer-term investment in their farm production. The Deputy Chairman shared the view that farmers were unable to commit long-term investment in their farms due to the relatively short tenancy tenures signed with the landowners. He hoped that the Administration could adopt a flexible approach in handling the tenancy renewal applications in the Agri-Park and keep the relevant procedures simple. He considered that the Administration should also encourage landowners outside the Agri-Park to rent out their land for agricultural use and enter longer tenancy agreements with farmers to facilitate local agricultural development.

37. Ms Cyd HO said that the proposed government rent for new small farms in recent tender exercises was much higher than that of existing farms and this was not conducive to encouraging people to engage in farming activities. She also considered that a five-year term tenure could not give certainty to tenants (particular new entrants) to make long-term investment in their farms.

38. SFH advised that, compared with the difficulties that existing farmers experienced in finding farmland for cultivation and securing stable tenancy agreements with landowners, the proposed five-year term tenancy agreement with prospect of renewal was considered conducive for giving tenants sufficient certainty to make investment in their farms. Besides, the tenancy agreements could be renewed if certain terms and conditions could be met to

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ensure the prudent use of public money for setting up the Agri-Park and the farmland was put to productive use. He welcomed public views on the proposed length of the tenancies. To address members' concerns, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide written response on the considerations for setting the standard tenancy agreements for tenants in the Agri-Park to five-year terms.

Admin

39. Noting from the consultation document that the provision of lodging regulated by legislation was also applicable to farms, Mr Michael TIEN enquired whether the Administration would review such restriction and allow the prospective tenants in the Agri-Park to stay overnight in the Park to facilitate their daily farming work. PSFH(F) responded that the Administration would consider the ancillary transport facilities and the infrastructure required in selecting the site for the Agri-Park. Due to time constraint, the Chairman requested the Administration to provide supplementary response in this regard after the meeting.

Admin

40. Miss Alice MAK asked whether the Government would lease the farmland in the Agri-Park to those people who enjoyed the lifestyle of being farmers. SFH replied that the Administration would not rule out the engagement of modern-day farmers/city farmers in agricultural activities in the Agri-Park on the basis that the tenancy conditions for the farmland and relevant requirements were met.

Operation of Agri-Park and other supportive measures

41. Miss CHAN Yuen-han considered that the proposed area of about 70 to 80 hectares of the Agri-Park could not cope with the growing need for farming activities. She asked whether the Administration would set medium and long terms targets (e.g. the land resumption plan and the estimated production capacity for crops) for the new agricultural policy and devise corresponding initiatives. Dr KWOK Ka-ki commented that the proposed scale of the Agri-Park was too small compared with similar projects in other major cities such as Singapore and Greater London. He queried whether the Agri-Park would only serve as a reception farmland cluster for accommodating farmers who might be displaced by Government development projects.

42. SFH responded that a modest scale of farming activities in the Agri-Park would be more suitable as an initial step to promote agriculture in a small city like Hong Kong. While the Administration would not confine the scope of the new agricultural policy, it would need to take into account the views collected during the consultation period before deciding on the way forward, including how to proceed with the implementation of the Agri-Park.

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43. Dr Helena WONG and Miss Alice MAK asked whether a self-sufficiency target would be set for local agricultural production under the new policy. SFH said that while the Administration would not set any self-sufficiency target for local agricultural production at present stage given the relatively modest scale of the Agri-Park, the Administration envisaged that the overall production capacity and production value of local vegetables would be scaled up in time after the operation of the Agri-Park. Miss MAK opined that the Administration should consider setting such target in future.

44. Mr Frederick FUNG hoped that the Administration could broaden the scope of the supportive initiatives and consider promoting aquaponics with reference to local and overseas experience. He suggested that apart from large-scale agricultural activities, small-scale farming/aquaponics at home should be promoted as well. Dr KWOK Ka-Ki asked whether the Administration would consider granting more land for rearing livestock given the higher production value and less land were required when compared with crop farming. SFH advised that while the new agricultural policy would focus on the promotion of crop farming, small scale aquaponics in the Agri-Park would not be ruled out. However, small scale aquaponics were different from chickens and pigs farming which would probably cause public concerns about AI risk management and the impact on neighbouring environment.

45. Mr Michael TIEN suggested the Administration to provide funding for universities to conduct scientific research and run courses on agricultural studies so as to improve farming techniques and the variety of high-valued agricultural products, such as growing salad vegetables by hydroponics production which was efficient and did not need to grow plants in soil. He considered that the Agri-Park could serve as a base for experimenting with these new agricultural practices for commercial production, thereby raising the self-sufficiency ratio for crop supply. SFH said that apart from the Agri-Park, the Administration also proposed other supportive measures such as setting up a Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund ("SADF") to provide assistance in these aspects.

The use of agricultural land

46. Noting that only 729 hectares (16%) among 4 523 hectares of agricultural land were under active farming, Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Dr Helena WONG, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen and Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed concern about the adequacy of the Administration's measures to encourage the rehabilitation of the 3 794 hectares (84%) of fallow farmland. Dr Helena WONG noted from the consultation paper that before 1990, there were no planning enforcement provisions under the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) regarding rural New Territories. She asked whether the

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Administration would plug this loophole by requiring landowners to put their land to active agricultural use under new lease conditions in future. Dr WONG and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen also expressed concern on whether punitive measures (e.g. imposing tax) would be taken to prevent landowners from leaving their farmland idle.

47. SFH advised that the Administration would adopt a proactive and incentive-based approach to promote local agriculture, with an aim to operating the Agri-Park in a relatively modest scale to set a successful example for consideration in future development. The Administration had no plan to take punitive measures against the misuse of agricultural land for the time being. He added that the proposed SADF could provide incentive for landowners who lacked resources to develop agricultural infrastructure to release their farmland for agricultural use.

48. Dr Helena WONG asked whether the Administration would acquire fallow farmland in rural New Territories through land resumption in future. SFH replied that as the land lease conditions involved might vary, the Administration had no such plan at present.

VI. Any other business

49. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:31 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
3 March 2015

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Meeting on Tuesday, 13 January 2015, at 2:00 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Item IV - "Arrangements for separating imported live poultry from local live poultry"

Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations/individual

No.	Name of deputation / individual	Submission / Major views and concerns
1.	香港活家禽鮮宰商會	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should maintain the existing policy that live chickens be supplied by local farms and the Mainland farms; and ● Hong Kong should continue the selling of live chickens in the long-run.
2.	Hong Kong Local Live Chickens Wholesalers Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)606/14-15(03)
3.	軍地蔬菜產銷有限責任合作社	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expressed support for the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint as a contingency measure; and ● The Government should maintain the existing policy that live chickens would be supplied by local farms and the Mainland farms.
4.	Federation of Hong Kong Agricultural Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expressed support for the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint as a contingency measure; and ● Expressed disapproval of the poultry trader threatening to release 5 000 chickens in the city area as a way to protest against the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint.
5.	香港雞苗發展協會	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should not cease the import of days-old chicks from the Mainland; ● Expressed support for the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint as a contingency measure; and ● Expressed disapproval of the poultry trader threatening to release 5 000 chickens in the city area as a way to protest against the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint.
6.	Vital Health Livestock Development Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)606/14-15(04)
7.	Hong Kong and Kowloon Poultry Dealers and Workers Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expressed support for the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint as a contingency measure; ● The Government should maintain the existing policy that live chickens be supplied by local farms and the Mainland farms;

No.	Name of deputation / individual	Submission / Major views and concerns
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expressed disapproval of the poultry trader threatening to release 5 000 chickens in the city area as a way to protest against the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint; and ● The Administration should consider providing special assistance to poultry operators and workers to help them tide over the financial hardship during the closure of the Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market.
8.	Hong Kong Poultry Wholesalers Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should maintain the existing policy that live chickens be supplied by local farms and the Mainland farms; and ● The surveillance system built up over the past decade had been effective for the control of avian influenza.
9.	Kowloon Poultry Transporter and Poulterer Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should maintain the existing policy that live chickens be supplied by local farms and the Mainland farms; ● Expressed support for the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint as a contingency measure; and ● The Administration should consider providing special assistance to poultry operators, say for example, providing a waiver of one-month rental.
10.	Kowloon Poultry Laan Merchants Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should maintain the existing policy that live chickens be supplied by local farms and the Mainland farms; and ● The surveillance system built up over the past decade had been effective for the control of avian influenza.
11.	Mr LEE Leung-kei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expressed support for the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint as a contingency measure; and ● Expressed disapproval of the poultry trader threatening to release 5 000 chickens in the city area as a way to protest against the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint.
12.	The New Territories Chicken Breeders Association Limited	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expressed support for the operation of the Ta Kwu Ling Checkpoint as a contingency measure; ● The import of day-old chicks from the Mainland should be resumed as early as practicable; and ● The Government should consider expanding the scale of local chicken farming.