

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)21/15-16

(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, 9 June 2015, at 2:15 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
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
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
- Member attending** : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP

**Member
absent** : Hon Claudia MO

**Public Officers
attending** : Item IV

Professor Sophia CHAN Siu-chee, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Kenneth CHAN Siu-yum
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 1

Dr LEE Siu-yuen, JP
Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control),
Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Dr HO Yuk-yin, JP
Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment
and Communication), Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item V

Professor Sophia CHAN Siu-chee, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

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

Mr Mickey LAI Kin-ming
Assistant Director (Fisheries)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Item VI

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

Mrs Cherry TSE LING Kit-ching, JP
Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)

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

Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP
Deputy Director
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

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

Attendance : Item IV
by invitation

Session one

The Democratic Party

Ms CHAN Shu-ying
Spokesperson

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of
Hong Kong

Mr Benny C B POON
Deputy Spokesperson on Food Safety and Environment
Hygiene Affair

North Kwu Tung Development Concern Group

Mr LEE Siu-wah
Chairman

Individual

Mr NG Cheuk-hang

Hong Kong Pig Raising Development Federation

Mr FUNG Kin-chung
Chairman

Designing Hong Kong

Mr Paul Zimmerman
Chief Executive Officer

Individual

Ms Emily WONG

Pay Back 40% Organic Veggie Self-Sufficiency Ratio
and Land Rehabilitation with Rights to Decide Our
Own Food Alliance

Miss WONG Yuk-ting
Chief Executive Officer

Produce Green Foundation

Ms LAU Yuen-yee
Executive Secretary

Hong Kong Bird Watching Society

Miss WOO Ming-chuan
Conservation Officer

Society for Indigenous Leaving

Mr CHAN Chi-man
Farmer Trainee

The Conservancy Association

Mr LEUNG Tak-ming
Campaign Officer

AuLaw Organic Farm

Mr WONG Yu-wing
Chief Executive Officer

Mapopo Community Farm

Miss Becky AU
Member

Individual

Mr CHUNG Chi-ho

Individual

Mr CHAN Gar-sun

Individual

Miss WONG Suk-wai

Individual

Mr AU Lau-kan

Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden Corporation

Mr Andy Brown
Executive Director

WWF- Hong Kong

Mr Tobi LAU Shiu-keung
Conservation Officer

Tin Shui Wai Production

Miss FAN Pui-ying
Community Organizer

Concerning CSSA and Low Income Alliance

Miss PANG Lok-yan
Community Organizer

Department of Civil Engineering, School of Design,
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Mr Markus Wernli
PhD Researcher Environmental Design

Individual

Ms Maria PO

Management Committee of COME

Mr CHEUNG Chun-pong
Member of COME

Ngau Tam Mei West Farmers Group

Miss TANG Lai-heung
Representative

Individual

Miss Ivy CHAN

Individual

Mr WU Ying-lun

Session two

Land Justice League

Mr CHONG Lap-pan
Officer

Individual

Mr NG Chung-tat

Tin Shui Wai Community Development Network

Miss LEUNG Lai-yan
Community Organizer

HomelandGreen

Ms MAK CHEN Wen-ning
Chairman, Board of Directors

Individual

Ms CHIN Hoi-yan

Individual

Ms CHU Lai-sum

Individual

Miss CHOI Siu-ying

Individual

Ms LI Yin-fong

Individual

Mr CHAN Che-ping

Individual

Ms KO Tai-tse

Individual

Mr HOR Wah

耕作人

Ms LI Fung-mei
Member

Farms for Democracy

Mr Rishi Kukreja
Member

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. Information paper issued since the last meeting
(LC Paper No. CB(2)1571/14-15(01))

Members noted that a referral arising from the meeting between Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members and Wan Chai District Council members on 30 April 2015 regarding the regulation of feeding wild pigeons in urban area had been issued since the last meeting.

II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1621/14-15(01) and (02))

2. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 14 July 2015 at 2:30 pm -

- (a) Enforcement against illegal outside seating accommodation by restaurants;
- (b) Public consultation on the proposed regulation of safety of edible oil; and
- (c) Nutrition and health claims on infant formula, follow-up formula and pre-packaged foods for infants and young children under the age of 36 months.

3. To allow sufficient time for discussion of items (b) and (c) in paragraph 2 above, the Chairman suggested and members agreed that the next meeting would be advanced to start at 2:00 pm and end at 4:30 pm.

4. Dr Helena WONG expressed concern about the absence of food inspection checkpoint at the Kwai Chung container terminal and suggested that the Panel should discuss the surveillance mechanism for food products imported via marine channel at a future meeting. Dr WONG suggested and members agreed that the subject be included in the list of outstanding items for discussion.

III. Matters arising

(LC Paper Nos. IN09/14-15 and FS05/14-15)

Proposal to conduct an overseas duty visit to the United States

5. The Chairman said that pursuant to the decision made at the Panel meeting in May 2015, members' views on the objectives of the proposed duty visit to the United States were sought via LC Paper No. CB(2)1494/14-15 issued on 14 May 2015. Among the 20 members who had responded to the circular, 12 members agreed that the Panel should conduct the proposed visit to the United States to study both its regulation of food truck operations and its experience in the regulatory control of imported food products; one member considered that the visit should only aim to study the regulatory control of imported food products of the United States; three members did not agree to conduct the proposed visit and four members had no views on it. In light of the majority views of members, the Chairman proposed that the Panel should conduct a duty visit to the United States to study both its regulatory framework on food truck operations and its experience in the regulatory control of imported food products in the coming summer recess. Members raised no objection to the proposal.

6. Dr Helena WONG suggested that the delegation could visit U.S. Food and Drug Administration ("FDA") to learn about its implementation of the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act and regulation of imported food from China. The Chairman suggested that an informal meeting be arranged later to discuss the relevant arrangements of the visit. He invited members to put forward their suggestions regarding the visit programs in writing for the consideration of the delegation. Members raised no objection to such arrangement.

IV. Implementation of the Nutrition Labelling Scheme

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1621/14-15(03) and (04))

7. Members noted the implementation of the Nutrition Labelling Scheme ("NLS") which came into effect on 1 July 2010, as detailed in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(03)). Members also noted the updated background brief on the subject (LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(04)) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

8. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that the Centre for Food Safety ("CFS") announced on 5 June 2015 that the test results of 90 samples collected in a recently completed seasonal food surveillance project on rice dumplings were all satisfactory. However, there were media reports on 8 June 2015 that some

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rice dumplings with salted meat on sale were found to have discrepancies between their nutrient content and the nutrition information declared on their labels. He expressed concern about the different results in the above tests and sought details on how CFS conducted tests on seasonal food.

9. Under Secretary for Food and Health ("USFH") advised that CFS adopted a risk-based principle in determining the types of samples to be collected for testing under its food surveillance programme which covered, among others, seasonal food surveillance. For the seasonal food surveillance project on rice dumplings, CFS had collected samples of rice dumplings from different food premises for chemical and microbiological analyses. CFS would follow up on the case reported by the media and take appropriate actions.

10. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan expressed concern that the public did not know how to make use of the information on nutrition labels in making healthier food choices. She considered that the expression of units for the nutrients listed on labels should be standardized and legible information on the labels should be provided to help consumers make good use of nutrition information. She urged the Administration to step up publicity work to enhance public understanding of NLS, such as inserting promotional message in electricity and water bills.

11. USFH advised that CFS had been promoting public awareness of nutrition labelling through public education programmes, including devising a new nutrition labelling training kit for community organizations and teachers of primary and secondary schools in 2014. CFS would consider Dr CHIANG's suggestion and explore other publicity channels to promote nutrition labelling. As for the legibility of nutrient labels, CFS had issued the "Trade Guidelines on Preparation of Legible Food Label" ("the Guidelines") in May 2012 to assist the trade in providing clear and legible information on food labels. CFS would initiate prosecution if any non-compliance with the legibility requirements for nutrition labels was identified.

12. Ms Cyd HO suggested that "low sugars" in drinks be defined under NLS to prevent consumers from being misled by such claims. Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication), CFS ("C(CM)(RAC)/CFS") advised that NLS stipulated that a product with a claim of "low sugars" shall contain not more than five grams per 100 grams or milliliters of the food. USFH advised that CFS would check whether there was a discrepancy between the nutrient content and the information declared on the label through chemical analysis.

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13. Ms Cyd HO also expressed concern about the legibility of nutrition labels. She considered that the Administration should consider introducing legislative amendments to better regulate the legibility of nutrition labels. She suggested that tags carrying nutrition information should be affixed to the packaging of small-size food products so that the information could be easily read by consumers. C(CM)(RAC)/CFS advised that apart from issuing the Guidelines to assist the trade in providing clear and legible information on food labels (e.g. to use suitable font size with good contrast between the background and the text), CFS had also conducted a study in collaboration with the Consumer Council in 2013 on the legibility of the nutrition labels of prepackaged food products sold in Hong Kong with reference to the Guidelines. CFS would continue to remind the trade to improve the legibility of nutrition labels.

14. Ms Cyd HO requested the Administration to provide details of the case(s) which involved illegible nutrition label since the issuance of the Guidelines in May 2012 and the follow-up actions taken by CFS on the case(s). Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control), Centre for Food Safety ("AD(FSC)/CFS") advised that between 1 October 2014 and 15 May 2015, CFS had initiated prosecution in two cases which involved illegible expiration date on the food label and illegible nutrition label. She undertook to provide the requested information in writing after the meeting.

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15. Referring to the labelling information of a "health food" product, Dr Helena WONG asked whether "health food" products were required to comply with the nutrition labelling requirements. AD(FSC)/CFS explained that there was currently no specific legislation for regulation of "health food" products in Hong Kong. Nevertheless, orally consumed products sold in the market were classified into two categories, namely, medicine and food, according to the ingredients and subject to more specific regulation under different legislation according to the content of their claims. For instance, all products which fell within the definition of proprietary Chinese medicines were regulated under the Chinese Medicine Ordinance (Cap 549). Such products must meet the requirements in respect of safety, quality and efficacy before they could be registered. "Health food" products classified as general food products were required to comply with the requirements in respect of food safety, food standards and labelling, including nutrition labelling. Like other commodities, the claims of "health food" products were also subject to the regulation of the Trade Description Ordinance (Cap. 362). AD(FSC)/CFS advised that sometimes the classification of "health food" products could be quite difficult and expert advice would be sought in such cases. She said that Dr WONG could pass the case in question to CFS for follow up if necessary.

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16. As regards Dr Helena WONG's enquiry about the listing of quantities of the ingredients of "health food" products on labels, AD(FSC)/CFS supplemented that there were two main types of labelling on food products, namely, the food labelling (listing of the ingredients of prepackaged food products) and the nutrition labelling (listing of the nutrient content of a food in a standardized manner). The ingredients of a "health food" product should be listed in descending order of weight or volume on labels if the product was classified as a prepackaged food product.

17. Dr Helena WONG considered that the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) (Amendment: Requirements for Nutrition Labelling and Nutrition Claim) Regulation 2008 should specify whether nutrition labelling was required for "health food" products. USFH advised that as explained, there was no specific legislation governing "health food" products at present. The Administration would review the relevant food safety ordinances where appropriate.

Small volume exemption scheme ("SVE")

18. Noting that a prepackaged food product with annual sales volume in Hong Kong not exceeding 30 000 units could apply for exemption from the nutrition labelling requirement under SVE scheme, the Deputy Chairman enquired about the major types of food products that were exempted under the scheme and whether CFS had conducted inspections on these products to ensure their compliance with the relevant food safety requirements.

19. USFH advised that the application for SVE was not restricted to a particular type of food. CFS adopted the same risk-based approach in inspecting food products exempted from the nutrition labelling requirement. AD(FSC)/CFS supplemented that in terms of place of origin, Japan (55%), Hong Kong (9%) and USA (7%) took up a majority of the SVE applications approved and most of the exempted products were snacks. Products for ethnic minorities only took up a small number of applications. AD(FSC)/CFS stressed that samples of products exempted from the nutrition labelling requirement under the SVE scheme would also be taken for testing by CFS under its food surveillance programme. Besides, CFS would conduct checks on the eligibility of food products for applying exemption. At the request of the Deputy Chairman, the Administration undertook to provide information on the number of samples of SVE products taken for testing under the annual sampling programme of CFS over the past three years and whether there were any non-compliance cases with the relevant food safety legislation.

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20. Noting that the number of submission of SVE applications and renewal applications by electronic means had been increasing since April 2011, the Chairman hoped that other types of licence applications to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department could also be made by electronic means so that the trade could save time and money.

V. Implementation of the trawl ban

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1621/14-15(05) and (06))

21. USFH briefed members on matters related to the implementation of the trawl ban, including enforcement, the progress made in the disbursement of one-off financial assistance to fishermen affected by the trawl ban and measures being taken to assist the fisheries industry to switch to other sustainable operations (LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(05)). Members also noted the information note on the subject (LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(06)) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

Financial assistance to fishermen

22. Referring to paragraph 11 of the Administration's paper, Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed concern that the Administration had not processed any applications from inshore fisher collectors who wished to seek one-off assistance. Assistant Director (Fisheries)/Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AD(F)/AFCD") advised that the inter-departmental working group ("IWG") established to handle related matters started to invite applications in December 2014 and was in the course of processing the applications. The Administration expected that the ex-gratia payment as well as the interest subsidy would be disbursed to the first batch of eligible applicants in the first half of 2015. It was estimated that among the 161 applications received as at April 2015, about 60 to 100 applicants would be eligible for the one-off assistance, subject to the scrutiny and endorsement by IWG.

23. The Deputy Chairman expressed concern about the slow progress of the Fishermen Claims Appeal Board ("FCAB") in handling appeals from trawler owners against the decisions of IWG on their applications for ex-gratia allowance. Noting that there were still more than 800 outstanding appeal cases and only 32 cases had been scheduled for hearing in the first stage, the Deputy Chairman urged FCAB to speed up the appeal process.

24. USFH said that some appeal cases involved complex legal and technical issues. To expedite the appeal process, the Government had expanded FCAB to a pool of five Chairmen and 20 members, and appointed

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three additional legal advisers in mid-2014. Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 3 explained that to ensure that the appeal cases were handled in a fair manner, FCAB needed time to conduct hearings for cases to consider the representations from appellants and IWG. With the expanded pool of members and legal advisers, FCAB had expedited the appeal process. Of the 32 cases in the first stage which were extracted from a cross-section of the appeal cases, FCAB had commenced hearings for 25 cases and issued rulings on some cases. After completing action on the appeal cases in the first stage, the Administration hoped that the processing of appeal cases in the second stage could be speeded up.

Assistance to fishermen to switch to sustainable operations

25. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed concern that only 430 local fishermen affected by the trawl ban had received training in fisheries-related eco-tourism from 2010 to 2014 under a pilot scheme launched by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD"), with the participation of the local fishermen and the private sector. He was worried that a fisherman could hardly make a living by participating in such a small number of eco-tours (i.e. on average, a fisherman only participated in one tour joined by 40 participants). AD(F)/AFCD explained that the pilot scheme aimed to help fishermen gain practical experience and skills to switch to fisheries-related eco-tourism. In addition to the training course, AFCD would introduce other measures to assist fishermen in running the business in a sustainable manner.

26. The Deputy Chairman urged the Administration to liaise with the relevant Mainland authorities to simplify the application procedures for seeking fishing licences in the Mainland, so as to help speed up the process of approving the one-off loans under the Fisheries Development Loan Fund to fishermen for building new fishing vessels to continue their fishing operations in distant waters outside Hong Kong.

27. Ms Cyd HO expressed concern about the support services provided to assist the fishermen affected by the trawl ban to switch to other sustainable modes of fishing operations. AD(F)/AFCD advised that AFCD would continue to provide a range of support services to assist the fishermen to switch to other sustainable modes of fishing operations. While some fishermen would switch to other modes of operations, some might choose to stay in the industry to continue their fishing operations. At the request of Ms HO, the Administration undertook to provide information on -

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- (a) the respective number of trawler fishermen who had engaged in the following modes of fishing operations since the implementation of the trawl ban -
 - (i) pursuing fishing operations in distant waters outside Hong Kong;
 - (ii) pursuing aquaculture and recreational fisheries in Hong Kong; or
 - (iii) staying put (i.e. engaged neither in fishing operations in distant waters outside Hong Kong nor in aquaculture and recreational fisheries); and
- (b) whether there were support services provided to assist those fishermen affected by the trawl ban who were not engaged in the above three modes of fishing operations.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2056/14-15 on 31 August 2015.)

VI. Consultation paper on the new agricultural policy
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1621/14-15(07) and (08))

Presentation of views by deputations/individuals

28. The Chairman reminded the deputations 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.

29. At the invitation of the Chairman, a total of 41 deputations/individuals (28 in Session One and 13 in Session Two) presented their views on the consultation paper on the new agricultural policy. A summary of these deputations' views is in the **Appendix**. Members also noted that five written submissions from organizations/individuals not attending the meeting were received by the Panel.

The Administration's response to deputations' views

30. Secretary for Food and Health ("SFH") made the following points in response to the deputations' views -

- (a) at present, a high proportion of the 4 523 hectares of farmland in

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Hong Kong was privately owned. As it would not be feasible for the Government to use public moneys to buy up all the private farmland or acquire the farmland by legislative means, the Administration proposed to set up an Agricultural Park ("Agri-Park") of about 70 to 80 hectares by acquiring the lots required through land resumption as an initial step to promote agriculture. The resumed land would be put under the management of AFCD for leasing to local farmers engaged in commercial crop production;

- (b) operating an Agri-Park in this manner would enable AFCD to exercise appropriate control and apply management measures to its tenants to achieve the intended objective. Despite its modest scale, the Agri-Park would provide opportunities for local farmers with aspirations in pursuing farming activities to invest in and try out advanced production methods, thereby yielding successful examples that might be of useful reference to others following their footsteps;
- (c) the Agri-Park would not be positioned as a production base solely for those engaged in advanced farming practices, but also those engaged in more traditional farming practices. This said, to ensure that the farmland in the Agri-Park would be put to productive use, tenants would be required to meet certain production targets irrespective of the farming methods employed;
- (d) the Administration hoped that the Agri-Park would showcase how best to put farmland to good use with enhanced productivity. This in turn would help encourage landowners to release their farmland for agricultural use;
- (e) apart from the Agri-Park, the Administration proposed to establish a Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund to provide financial support to projects relating to agricultural development, including the promotion of wider adoption of technology in agricultural production and leisure farming; and
- (f) the Administration saw a strong case to adopt a more proactive policy towards the modernization and sustainable development of local agriculture. It was willing to explore ways to protect and preserve agricultural land under the new agricultural policy.

Discussion

31. Members noted the views and comments collected by the Government during the public consultation on the new agricultural policy which lasted from 29 December 2014 to 31 March 2015 (LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(07)). Members also noted the background brief entitled "New agricultural policy" (LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(08)) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

32. While expressing support for the implementation of the new agricultural policy, Miss CHAN Yuen-han considered that the Development Bureau and the Lands Department should carefully plan their land development work to avoid land hoarding by landowners so that there would be sufficient supply of farmland for agricultural development.

33. Mr Alan LEONG said that in his 2014 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced that the Administration would review the agricultural policy to upgrade the local agricultural industry and promote the sustainable development of agriculture. The Food and Health Bureau ("FHB") then conducted a public consultation on its new agricultural policy from 29 December 2014 to 31 March 2015. He wondered why the new agricultural policy, which involved the establishment of the Agri-Park through land resumption, was put under the purview of FHB and overseen by SFH. In his view, the new agricultural policy lacked clear policy objectives. He opined that the supply of farmland was the key to local agricultural development and the Administration should consider acquiring the lots for the Agri-Park by legislative means. SFH advised that as the territory-wide agricultural policy was under the purview of FHB, FHB would play a leading role in taking forward the policy. He said that the Administration fully recognized the need to identify farmland for the establishment of the Agri-Park.

34. Dr KWOK Ka-ki considered that the Government should protect farmland in the New Territories and prevent landowners/developers from converting farmland into other uses. There was no need for the Government to implement the new agricultural policy promoting modern farming practices such as hydroponics to support local agriculture if farmland in the New Territories were put to genuine agricultural use by farmers. He also queried whether the Agri-Park was destined only as a reception cluster for accommodating farmers displaced by the Government development project in North East New Territories.

35. SFH reiterated that the Administration hoped that the Agri-Park would set an example showcasing the productive use of farmland and could

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encourage landowners/developers to release their farmland for agricultural purpose. He said that the Administration would take into account the views of tenants in considering the development of the Agri-Park. The Administration was inclined to adopt a diversified approach in promoting farming activities in the Agri-Park and would not merely focus on leisure farming or applications of advance technology.

36. The Deputy Chairman shared some deputations' views that the Administration had taken a lax approach in vetting applications for conversion of agricultural land into other uses. He urged the Administration to review the policy in this regard and restrict the use of farmland for other purposes through statutory zoning. He considered that the Administration should explain to the public on the development plan of farmland outside the Agri-Park. Apart from setting up the Agri-Park through land resumption, the Administration should also consider acquiring farmland by entering into long-term rental agreements with the landowners.

37. The Deputy Chairman further said that the Government should consider providing subsidy to farmers to increase their income so that they would be able to stay in the industry to contribute to agricultural development. FHB should also work with the Development Bureau to enhance communication with farmers to better handle issues arising from Government development projects. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether a self-sufficiency target would be set for local agricultural production under the new agricultural policy. He was worried that the local market could not absorb a sudden increase in the supply of local produce if a high self-sufficiency target was set.

38. SFH advised that the Administration would not set any self-sufficiency target for local agricultural production at present since a high proportion of the agricultural land was not under the control of the Government. He stressed that the Administration aimed to operate the Agri-Park in a relatively modest scale, with a view to yielding successful examples that would be of useful reference to the pursuit of farming activities outside the Agri-Park.

39. Ms Cyd HO considered that the scale of the Agri-Park was too small to meet the demand for agricultural land from farmers. The proposed five-year term tenancy agreement was also too short and could not give certainty to tenants to make long-term investment in their farms. She opined that a self-sufficiency target should be set for local agricultural production and enquired under what circumstances the Administration would consider expanding the scale of the Agri-Park.

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40. SFH advised that the Agri-Park, though relatively modest in scale, could provide opportunities for tenants to pursue agricultural activities. AFCD would also provide support to tenants of the Agri-Park through the provision of essential agricultural infrastructure, such as access footpaths and irrigation channels. The Administration would take into account the sustainability of the agricultural operation in the Agri-Park and the farmland released for agricultural rehabilitation after the implementation of the new agricultural policy in mapping out the long-term way forward.

41. Noting that some deputations had expressed concerns on food safety of vegetables imported into Hong Kong from the Mainland, the Deputy Chairman said that many vegetable farms in the Mainland were operated by Hong Kong farmers. He considered that both local farmers and the Mainland farmers should be respected. As regards the food safety concerns of hairy gourd produced by Mainland farms raised by one of the deputations, SFH advised that during the period from 1 August 2014 when the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM) came into operation to the end of May 2015, CFS completed pesticide residue tests for about 60 000 food samples collected at import, wholesale and retail levels in Hong Kong. The overall satisfactory rate was about 99.6%. Assistant Director (Agriculture) of AFCD added that generally speaking, hairy gourd could be stored for seven to 10 days at room temperature.

VII. Any other business

42. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:04 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
14 October 2015

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Meeting on Tuesday, 9 June 2015, at 2:15 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Item VI - "Consultation paper on the new agricultural policy"

Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations/individuals

No.	Name of deputation / individual	Submission / Major views and concerns
<i>Session one</i>		
1.	The Democratic Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1684/14-15(01)
2.	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The launch of the public consultation on the new agricultural policy was supported. The Administration should review its agricultural policy from a macro perspective and accord high priority to the development of the agriculture and fisheries industry. ● A modest scale of the agriculture and fisheries industry would help maintain a stable food supply, stabilize food price and ensure food safety in Hong Kong. ● The proposed establishment of an Agricultural Park ("Agri-Park") and a Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund, the provision of support for farmers in product marketing and brand building, and the promotion of auxiliary activities related to agriculture such as leisure farming were all supported. ● The Administration should review those out-dated policies and restrictions (such as the building height restrictions of farm premises) which hindered the development of agriculture.
3.	North Kwu Tung Development Concern Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should strive to protect and preserve the existing farmland for farming use instead of establishing an Agri-Park which was small in scale compared to the total agricultural land in Hong Kong.
4.	Mr NG Cheuk-hang	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The agricultural development in Hong Kong should not be controlled by the Government. Farmers should be allowed to decide how the agricultural industry should move forward. Farmers' markets should be established to facilitate farmers to reach out to consumers direct in order to protect their interests. ● The Government should pay heed to the aspirations of farmers to continue their farming in North East New Territories and withdraw the North East New Territories Development Plan.

No.	Name of deputation / individual	Submission / Major views and concerns
5.	Hong Kong Pig Raising Development Federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Overseas experiences indicated that the use of advanced technology in livestock rearing had successfully reduced the adverse impact on public health and the environment. The Government should review its policy on livestock keeping taking into account the present day circumstances and consider expanding the scale of the livestock keeping industry in Hong Kong.
6.	Designing Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(09)
7.	Ms Emily WONG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1684/14-15(02)
8.	Pay Back 40% Organic Veggie Self-Sufficiency Ratio and Land Rehabilitation with Rights to Decide Our Own Food Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should not acquire farmland through land resumption for other development projects. The lack of farmland for farming would result in over reliance on imported food with low safety standard. ● The proposed five-year term tenancy agreement for tenants of the Agri-Park was too short and could not give certainty to tenants to make long-term investment in their farms.
9.	Produce Green Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(10)
10.	Hong Kong Bird Watching Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(11)
11.	Society for Indigenous Leaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Food and Health Bureau ("FHB") should work with the Development Bureau and the Lands Department in reviewing the agricultural policy as it inevitably involved the use of land resources. The Government should protect and preserve agricultural land through better planning. ● The Government should consider designating certain areas of the Agri-Park for poultry keeping.
12.	The Conservancy Association	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(12)
13.	AuLaw Organic Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(15)
14.	Mapopo Community Farm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government's new agriculture policy should strike a balance among different considerations, such as social justice, economic development and environmental protection, with a view to maintaining the sustainable development of local agriculture. ● A self-sufficiency target should be set for local agricultural production under the new policy to reduce reliance on imported food and to enhance food safety standard. ● The Government should tackle the problem of land

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		hoarding by landowners/developers and explore effective means to release agricultural land for rehabilitation.
15.	Mr CHUNG Chi-ho	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should tackle the problem of land hoarding by landowners/developers and explore effective means to release agricultural land for rehabilitation. Farmland should not be converted into other uses for other development projects. ● A self-sufficiency target should be set for local agricultural production under the new policy to reduce reliance on imported food.
16.	Mr CHAN Gar-sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The consultation document on the new agricultural policy lacked vision and a comprehensive plan to develop the local agriculture. ● The 4 523 hectares of farmland should all be used for productive farming. The Government should acquire all private farmland for rehabilitation as an initial step for taking forward its new agricultural policy.
17.	Miss WONG Suk-wai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expression of concerns on the agricultural policies adopted by different Governments.
18.	Mr AU Lau-kan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Farmers needed years to invest in their farmland. The Government should protect the existing farmland and farmers instead of establishing the Agri-Park as a reception farmland cluster for accommodating farmers misplaced by Government development projects.
19.	Kadoorie Farm and Botanic Garden Corporation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(16)
20.	WWF- Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(17)
21.	Tin Shui Wai Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government's new agriculture policy only focused on economic development and adoption of new technology in local agriculture. The Government should also strengthen manpower training for the industry, create job opportunities for grass-roots workers and invite participation of the community in agriculture under its new policy. ● The Government should protect and preserve the existing farmland in the New Territories for the better development of local agriculture.
22.	Concerning CSSA and Low Income Alliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Farmers had great difficulties in identifying farmland for cultivation and securing stable tenancy agreements with landowners, making them unable to commit in long-term

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		investment in their farms. ● FHB should work with the Development Bureau to tackle the problem of land hoarding by landowners/developers and explore effective means to release agricultural land for rehabilitation.
23.	Department of Civil Engineering, School of Design, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University	● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(18)
24.	Ms Maria PO	● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(19)
25.	Management Committee of COME	● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(20)
26.	Ngau Tam Mei West Farmers Group	● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(21)
27.	Miss Ivy CHAN	● LC Paper No. CB(2)1708/14-15(01)
28.	Mr WU Ying-lun	● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(22)
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29.	Land Justice League	● The Government should review the existing agricultural land use and protect the farmland through better planning. FHB should work with the Development Bureau in preserving farmland. ● The Government should improve the existing Town Planning Ordinance (Cap. 131) to ensure that all agricultural land was reserved for agricultural use only. ● The Government should provide landowners with incentives that would induce them to release farmland for farming, e.g. by offering rental subsidy if eco-friendly measures were taken for land protection. ● Punitive measures (such as imposing tax) should be introduced to prevent land hoarding by landowners/developers.
30.	Mr NG Chung-tat	● The Government should strive to protect and preserve the existing farmland for farming use instead of establishing an Agri-Park which was small in scale compared to the total agricultural land in Hong Kong. ● The Government should take measures to prevent land hoarding by landowners/developers and release private farmland for farming use, thereby reducing reliance on imported food and enhancing food safety.

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31.	Tin Shui Wai Community Development Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1734/14-15(01)
32.	HomelandGreen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(23)
33.	Ms CHIN Hoi-yan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should allow farmers to continue their farming in North East New Territories to maintain stable supply of local produces instead of setting up the Agri-Park through land resumption. The Agri-Park only served as a reception farmland cluster for accommodating farmers who might be misplaced by the North East New Territories Development Plan.
34.	Ms CHU Lai-sum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expression of concerns on whether farmers misplaced by the North East New Territories Development Plan could adapt to the new environment in the Agri-Park as they used to live close to the farms to take care of the crops and whether other farmers affected by other Government development projects would be admitted into the Agri-Park.
35.	Miss CHOI Siu-ying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should cease acquiring agricultural land through land resumption in the North East New Territories for economic development purposes in order to reduce reliance on imported food which were of low safety standard.
36.	Ms LI Yin-fong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should allow farmers to continue their farming in North East New Territories to maintain stable supply of local produces instead of setting up the Agri-Prk through land resumption. The Agri-Park only served as a reception farmland cluster for accommodating farmers who might be misplaced by the North East New Territories Development Plan.
37.	Mr CHAN Che-ping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should protect and preserve farmland to maintain the sustainable development of local agriculture for the overall interests of the society.
38.	Ms KO Tai-tse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should shelve the relocation of farms in Kwn Tung.
39.	Mr HOR Wah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should allow farmers to continue their farming in North East New Territories to maintain stable supply of local produces instead of setting up the Agri-Park through land resumption. The Agri-Park only served as a reception farmland cluster for accommodating farmers who might be misplaced by the North East New Territories Development Plan.

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should tackle the problem of land hoarding by landowners/developers and explore effective means to release agricultural land for rehabilitation.
40.	耕作人	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should make reference to overseas experience and implement measures to attract young people to join the agricultural industry. Some suggestions included providing subsidies and incentives to farmers, improving the production techniques of farmers and strengthening marketing of local agriculture produce. ● The Government should protect and preserve farmland to maintain the sustainable development of local agriculture.
41.	Farms for Democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1684/14-15(02)
<i>Written submissions from organizations/individuals not attending the meeting</i>		
42.	Federation of Hong Kong Agricultural Associations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1644/14-15(01)
43.	Mr SO Chi-fung	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(13)
44.	Humanist Association of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(14)
45.	A member of the public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(24)
46.	Tai Po District Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● LC Paper No. CB(2)1621/14-15(25)