

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1834/14-15

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

Report of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene for submission to the Legislative Council

Purpose

This report gives an account of the work of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene ("the Panel") during the 2014-2015 Legislative Council ("LegCo") session. It will be tabled at the Council meeting of 8 July 2015 in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure.

The Panel

2. The Panel was formed by resolution of the Council on 8 July 1998 and as amended on 20 December 2000, 9 October 2002, 11 July 2007 and 2 July 2008 for the purpose of monitoring and examining Government policies and issues of public concern relating to food safety, environmental hygiene and agriculture and fisheries. The terms of reference of the Panel are in **Appendix I**.

3. The Panel comprises 24 members, with Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan and Hon Steven HO Chun-yin elected as Chairman and Deputy Chairman respectively. The membership list of the Panel is in **Appendix II**.

Major work

Matters relating to food

Proposed regulation of nutrition and health claims on formula products and prepackaged foods for infants and young children under the age of 36 months

4. The Panel was briefed on the Administration's proposal to establish a regulatory framework to enhance the regulation of nutrition and health claims on formula products (i.e. infant formula and follow-up formula) and prepackaged foods for infants and children under the age of 36 months ("IYC foods") in Hong Kong and received deputations' views on the consultation document on the subject. Members in general considered that the Administration should ensure that the proposed regulatory framework was consistent with international standards. Some members considered that the Administration should make reference to regulations in countries that supplied formula products and IYC foods to Hong Kong. The Administration advised that in considering the regulatory framework, the Administration had taken into account the principles and guidelines set by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, practices of other jurisdictions, opinions of the Expert Committee on Food Safety set up under the Centre for Food Safety ("CFS") and views of various stakeholders including pro-breastfeeding groups and the trade.

5. Noting the World Health Organization's recommendation that infants should be exclusively breastfed for the first six months, some members took the view that Hong Kong should introduce stringent regulation on nutrition and health claims on formula products and IYC foods so as to prevent parents from believing that such food products were superior to breast milk. Some other members, however, considered that the Administration should avoid over-regulating the trade so as not to affect the supply of food for babies and infants. Members expressed diverse views on the implementation time of the proposed regulatory framework. While some members urged the Administration to expeditiously implement the proposed regulatory framework for the sake of public health, some other members considered that the trade should be allowed sufficient time to make the necessary adjustments for compliance with the new requirements.

6. The Administration advised that the proposed regulatory framework would allow certain claims on certain formula products /IYC foods while prohibiting others. The Administration would, following the practice in some overseas jurisdictions, establish a list of approved claims with a view to providing clear guidance for the trade to make nutrition and health claims on the relevant products legally. Claims that had been accepted in other jurisdictions would be considered for adoption in Hong Kong through a "fast-track" assessment mechanism. As regards claims that had never been approved by a recognized authority, traders were required to submit relevant documents on the scientific substantiation of the claims for detailed assessment by CFS. The Administration assured members that there would be a reasonable grace

period before any regulatory control on nutrition and health claims on formula products and IYC foods coming into force. The Administration was requested to report to the Panel on the outcome of the public consultation exercise and the way forward.

Supply chain of powdered formula

7. When receiving a briefing on the Administration's work in monitoring the supply and price levels of powdered formula, members noted that the latest results of the surveys conducted by the consultancy firm revealed that there was still a serious shortage of Friso and Mead Johnson products. Some members held the view that the Import and Export (General) (Amendment) Regulation 2013 ("the Amendment Regulation") should only targeted at these two brands and not all the other brands of powdered formula which were not in shortage. There was a view that the Hospital Authority should stop purchasing and providing the products of these two brands to new born babies in public hospitals with a view to relieving the demand for these products. Some other members took the view that the shortage problem of certain brand products might be attributed to the misleading and exaggerated health claims made in the advertisements of formula products. Noting that the overall percentage of local parents using the major powdered formula suppliers' pre-order services was still quite low, members also raised concern about the effectiveness of the pre-order services in ensuring sufficient supply for local infants and young children and the Administration's measures to promote such services.

8. The Administration advised that it had urged the trade to improve the supply chain of powdered formula to ensure sufficient and stable supply. The Committee on Supply Chain of Powdered Formula would continue to follow up on the work of improving the supply chain by the major powdered formula suppliers and to encourage them to actively promote their pre-order services. According to the Administration, the supply of powdered formula at retail outlets had become more sufficient and stable after the implementation of the Amendment Regulation. The Administration would continue to commission surveys on the supply and price levels of powdered formula at the local retail level, and on the experience of local consumers in purchasing powdered formula and their readiness and preference to use pre-order services. It would take into account the progress on the improvements of powdered formula supply chain before deciding on the Government's position in respect of the Amendment Regulation.

Matters relating to food safety

Food safety issues of cooking oil

9. The Panel received an update on the Administration's investigation and follow-up work on the substandard lard incident in Taiwan. Some members pointed out that when the first Food Safety Order was gazetted on 14 September 2014 to prohibit the import into and supply within Hong Kong of all lard/lard products produced by Chang Guann Co., Ltd. on or after 1 March 2014 and food products made with such lard/lard products in Taiwan and Hong Kong, the Administration released on the same day a list of food traders who might have distributed or used lard/lard products as specified in the Order. Holding the view that consumers' right to know should be protected, these members queried why the Administration did not follow the practice of publicizing the list of food traders concerned when the second and the third Food Safety Orders were made.

10. The Administration explained that to protect public health, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene ("DFEH") announced on 9 October 2014 that precautionary measures would be taken to stop the import into and supply within Hong Kong all edible oils of animal origins produced in Taiwan with relevant powers under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). Subsequently, the coverage of the precautionary measures was extended to include all edible oils (of animal or plant origins) produced in Taiwan. To further safeguard Hong Kong's public health, DFEH made the second and the third Food Safety Orders on 29 October and 7 November 2014 respectively. After several rounds of marking and sealing of products and recall exercises, CFS estimated that the remaining stock of the products concerned in the local market would not be in a significant quantity. Therefore, the Administration considered it not necessary to follow the practice in September when the first Food Safety Order was made.

11. Most members considered that the Administration should implement expeditiously measures to ensure the safety of edible oil and set a higher level of penalty for breaches of relevant legislation to enhance deterrent effect. There was a view that that as gutter oil was made with used cooking oil recycled from restaurants and discarded animal parts or animal fat, the Administration could consider conducting a study on using DNA analysis as the testing method to detect gutter oil. According to the Administration, it would consider making it a statutory requirement that "used cooking oil" or "sub-standard oil" not intended for human consumption must not be used as ingredient for the production of edible oil and all edible oil must comply with the proposed legal standard.

The Administration was also considering requiring, through the licensing conditions for restaurant and food factory licence of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD"), all used cooking oil intended for disposal be handed over to collectors or recyclers recognized by the Environmental Protection Department and all records to be properly kept to prevent at source the used cooking oil from re-entering the food chain.

Implementation of the Food Safety Ordinance

12. According to the Administration, the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap. 612) ("FSO") introduced a food tracing mechanism to enable CFS to identify the source of food more effectively and take prompt action when handling food incidents. During the discussion on the implementation of FSO, members raised concerns about the follow-up actions of CFS on a number of food incidents occurred in Hong Kong and the neighbouring regions, including the illegal import of carrots from Chiba, Japan in March 2015 and the detection of excessive pesticides residues in tea leaves and floral tea samples in Taiwan in May 2015. Some members were concerned whether the number of food samples taken for testing was adequate and doubted the effectiveness of the existing sampling method to ensure food safety. In members' view, CFS should take prompt actions in ensuring food safety and safeguarding public health.

13. Concern was raised about how the Administration could prohibit the import of food from five prefectures of Japan most affected by the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident if importers only stated the countries of origin but not the cities/prefectures concerned in the relevant declaration forms. There was a view that the Administration should request the importers to make advance declarations for Japanese food products imported via marine channel to facilitate CFS to conduct checks before the products entered into the local market. The Administration advised that an importer was required to state the prefectures concerned for certain types of Japanese food and CFS would take follow-up actions if the requisite information was not provided by the importer. On members' concern about the absence of food inspection checkpoint at the Kwai Chung container terminal to conduct checks on food products imported via marine channel, the Administration advised that it was considering the feasibility of establishing such facility to step up surveillance of food products.

Implementation of the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation

14. When discussing with the Administration the implementation of the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM) ("the Regulation"), concern was raised about the effectiveness of the measures

taken by CFS and the Customs and Excise Department ("C&ED") to combat the smuggling of vegetables from vegetable farms not registered with the Mainland inspection and quarantine authorities. Some members considered that CFS should conduct surprise inspections to the Mainland registered vegetable farms supplying vegetables to Hong Kong so as to ensure the food safety at source.

15. The Administration advised that after the implementation of the Regulation, the Administration had taken a series of actions against vegetables supplied to Hong Kong from vegetable processing establishments not registered with the Mainland inspection and quarantine authorities at the Man Kam To Boundary Control Point. CFS would continue to conduct surprise checks jointly with C&ED and the Police to ensure the food safety of imported vegetables. Members were also advised that under the existing practice, the relevant local authorities in Mainland would inform the registered vegetable farms to be inspected of the visit schedule. The Administration would explore with the State General Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine the feasibility of carrying out surprise inspections to the Mainland registered vegetable farms.

Food Surveillance Programme for 2014

16. When the Panel was briefed on the food surveillance programme of CFS in 2014, some members expressed concern about the comprehensiveness of the food surveillance programme as many of the food incidents occurred in Hong Kong and the neighbouring regions were first reported by the media. In these members' view, the scope of the existing sampling programme of CFS was too narrow. There was a view that the Administration should include those types of food that were of public concern in its sampling programme to enhance its representativeness. CFS was urged to play a more active role in identifying potential food risk and take prompt actions to follow up on food incidents to safeguard public health.

17. The Administration advised that Hong Kong had the highest number of samples tested per 1 000 population when compared to other overseas countries. CFS adopted a risk-based principle in determining the types of samples to be collected, the frequency and number of samples taken for testing. The sampling programme was under regular review by CFS and would be adjusted taking into account factors such as local and overseas food incidents and new requirements under legislation. CFS also monitored daily the information available from media and overseas food safety institutions on food safety issues and food incidents. CFS would verify the information with the relevant authorities of the food

exporting country concerned and take follow up actions where appropriate.

Prevention and control of avian influenza ("AI")

18. Members were all along concerned that the wholesale poultry market might have to be closed for 21 days for thorough cleansing and disinfection if and when any samples from the imported poultry tested positive for AI. In members' view, the Administration should consider segregating the imported and local live poultry and holding the imported poultry at a suitable location until the AI testing results were available before their release to the wholesale poultry market. The Panel discussed the Administration's proposed arrangements for separating imported live poultry from local live poultry in the event of AI incident and received deputation' views. Under the Administration's proposal, a check-point for local live poultry would be set up at the Government farm in Ta Kwu Ling ("TKL"). In the event of an AI incident which led to the closure of the wholesale poultry market, local poultry could be delivered to the retail outlets via TKL Check-point during the closure period.

19. Some members shared the trade's concern that the daily ceiling of number of local live chickens supplying to retail outlets through the TKL Check-point was set too low compared to the usual throughput of live local chickens a day. The Administration was urged to improve the facilities at the TKL Check-point. The Administration was also called on to identify two separate sites to segregate imported live poultry from local live poultry to mitigate the AI risks in the long run. There was a view that the Government should 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.

20. The Administration advised that due 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. Members were assured that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") would monitor the local live chicken stocks and their age profile to prevent a building up of overage chickens at farms. In the Administration's view, a balance had to be struck in reducing the impact on the trade and minimizing the nuisance to residents living in the vicinity of the TKL Check-point. The Administration also advised that the long-term cessation of imported poultry was considered not feasible. 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.

Columbarium facilities

Supply of public niches

21. Members remained concern about the adequacy of the supply of public niches in Hong Kong and urged the Administration to substantially increase the supply to meet the demand arising from the ageing population. Members expressed doubt about whether the Administration could solicit support from all District Councils ("DCs") to provide new public columbarium facilities in the 24 potential sites that the Administration had identified across the 18 districts for columbarium development. According to the Administration, the construction of 1 540 new niches in the Diamond Hill Columbarium and 1 000 niches in Cheung Chau Cemetery was completed in 2012 and 2013 respectively. The Administration had also consulted the relevant DCs on another five projects (five sites in Tuen Mun, Kwai Tsing, North and Eastern Districts) involving a total of 449 000 new niches. As regards the columbarium developments at the remaining 17 sites, the Administration's current target was to consult the relevant DCs on eight of them within the next few years and draw up time line for taking forward the remaining projects which were under planning.

22. Some members urged the Administration to expedite its allocation process of public niches by making reference to the recommendations of the Ombudsman in its investigation report on FEHD's arrangements in allocating public niches. These members suggested that the Administration should establish a waiting list mechanism or allocate public niches on a first-come, first-served basis to shorten the waiting time for public niches. Some other members called on the Administration to contemplate measures to fortify the mindset changes for turning green burials into the mainstream mode for handling human ashes and to step up publicity to promote "green burials", including the scattering of ashes in Gardens of Remembrance ("GoR") or at sea.

23. The Administration advised that public niches were allocated through computer balloting at present. It would consider the recommendation of the Ombudsman on using other allocation methods. The Administration would also enhance publicity to promote "green burials" and launch new publicity programmes in 2015. In addition, starting from 2 January 2014, FEHD had relaxed the cap on the number of sets of ashes that might be stored in a niche, allowing applicants to

deposit additional sets of ashes in a niche and to further expand the definition of "kinship". The Government also planned to amend the Chinese Permanent Cemeteries Rules (Cap. 1112A) to relax the eligibility for shared use of family niches and gravespaces in the Chinese Permanent Cemeteries.

Provision of columbarium and GoR at Tsang Tsui, Tuen Mun

24. The Panel was consulted on the proposed provision of columbarium and GoR at Tsang Tsui, Tuen Mun. Members noted that subject to the funding approval from the Finance Committee ("FC"), construction works were expected to commence in the first quarter of 2016 with the columbarium building and GoR scheduled for completion in late 2018 and early 2019 respectively. While expressing support to the proposed project, members raised concern about the traffic impact of the proposed project. They requested the Administration to carefully assess the estimated traffic flow induced by the project and the impact of the additional vehicular traffic on the performance of the adjacent road network in the vicinity of the project site. Members cautioned the Administration that it should implement traffic improvement measures and arrange connecting transport during grave sweeping periods to address the anticipated problems. Concern was also raised about the environmental impact assessment of the project and the determination of fees and charges for columbarium services.

25. According to the Administration, a Transport Impact Assessment study was conducted to assess the traffic impact of the proposed project. The study found that additional vehicular traffic arising from the proposed project would not adversely affect the performance of the key roads in the vicinity of the project site with the implementation of the suggested traffic improvement measures, and special transport, traffic and crowd control arrangements during peak periods. FEHD would work closely with the Police and other relevant departments to ensure that effective traffic and crowd control measures were implemented during the grave sweeping periods.

Regulation of private columbaria

26. Regulation of private columbaria was a subject of concern to the Panel. Citing Kerry Logistics's application to the Town Planning Board for redeveloping its 15-storey warehouses in Chai Wan into a columbarium with 120 000 private niches as an example, some members expressed concern that there might be many planning permission applications submitted to the Town Planning Board for the development of columbarium before the enactment of the Private Columbaria Bill

which aimed to introduce a licensing scheme for regulating private columbaria. The Administration stressed that all private columbaria which were not exempted or given temporary suspension of liability must obtain a licence and private columbaria seeking a licence must comply with all statutory and government requirements.

27. Some members reminded the Administration of the need to protect consumers' interests as unauthorized private columbaria would continue to market their niches to the public prior to the enactment of the Private Columbaria Bill. The Administration advised that while the Private Columbaria Bill was still under scrutiny and had yet to come into operation, enforcement actions could be taken against malpractices of private columbaria by relevant departments in accordance with the existing laws. The Administration would enhance public awareness about the risks of using the services of unauthorized private columbaria through publicity.

Agriculture and fisheries

New agricultural policy

28. The Panel was consulted on the Administration's consultation document entitled "The New Agricultural Policy: Sustainable Agricultural Development in Hong Kong". The Administration proposed to develop a 70-80 hectares Agricultural Park ("Agri-Park") as a base for experimenting with new agricultural practices for commercial production, and promoting applications of advances in technology to agricultural uses, thereby fortifying the development and adoption of modern and diversified production methods in local farms. Many members shared deputations' view that the proposed size of the Agri-Park could not meet the growing need for farming activities, and expressed concern about the criteria for selecting the site for setting up the proposed Agri-Park. As regards the proposed five-year term tenancy agreement for the prospective tenants in the Agri-Park, members considered that the Administration should consider extending the tenancy duration so as to encourage the tenants to make longer-term investment in their farm production. The Administration was also urged to adopt a flexible approach in handling the tenancy renewal applications and keep the relevant procedures simple. Some members pointed out that for operational reason, farmers might need to live close to the farms to take care of the crops in the Agri-Park. These members requested the Administration to consider arrangements to facilitate the needs of the farmers.

29. According to the Administration, 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. 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. 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. The Administration stressed that it would give due consideration to the views expressed during the public consultation exercise before finalizing the proposal.

30. Members noted that of the 4 523 hectares of agricultural land, only 729 hectares were under active farming. They asked about the Administration's measures to encourage the rehabilitation of other fallow farmland. Some members considered that the Administration should consider taking punitive measures (e.g. imposing tax) to prevent landowners from leaving their farmland idle. Some other members shared the view of some deputations that the Administration should consider setting a self-sufficiency target for local agricultural production under the new agricultural policy. The Administration advised that it would adopt a proactive and incentive-based approach to promote local agriculture. 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, it 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.

Implementation of the trawl ban

31. The Panel was briefed on matters related to the implementation of the trawl ban and the progress made in the disbursement of one-off financial assistance to fishermen affected by the trawl ban. Members noted that the legislation for the trawl ban came into operation on 31 December 2012. To help fishermen affected by the trawl ban, FC approved in June 2011 a one-off assistance package which included making ex-gratia allowance payment to affected trawler owners, voluntary buying out of inshore trawlers, and providing one-off assistance to affected local deckhands and inshore fish collector owners. An Inter-departmental Working Group ("IWG") had been established to handle matters relating to the processing of applications received under the one-off assistance package. Noting that there were still more than 800 outstanding appeal cases against the decisions of IWG, some

members expressed grave concern about the processing progress of these outstanding cases and urged the Administration to speed up the appeal process. Concern was also raised about the support services provided to assist the fishermen affected by the trawl ban to switch to other sustainable modes of fishing operations.

32. The Administration advised that the Fishermen Claims Appeal Board ("FCAB") had received 858 appeal applications. To expedite the appeal process, the Government had hitherto expanded FCAB to a pool of five Chairmen and 20 Members, and appointed three additional legal advisers in mid-2014. Of the 32 cases scheduled for hearing in the first stage, FCAB had conducted hearings for 22 cases and issued its rulings on two cases. After completing action on the appeal cases under the first stage, the Administration expected that the processing of appeal cases under the second stage would take less time. According to the Administration, the Government had been providing a range of support services to assist fishermen to switch to sustainable operations, including free training courses, credit facilities under the Fisheries Development Loan Fund and the establishment of the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund.

The issue of stray cattle

33. The Panel discussed with the Administration and received views from deputations on the strategy adopted by the Government in tackling the issue of stray cattle. Members noted that AFCD launched in November 2013 the "Capture-Sterilization-Translocation" ("CST") pilot scheme whereby some of the stray cattle repeatedly captured on roads were relocated to a farther away location in another district. Since the launch of the CST pilot scheme, AFCD had captured a total of 50 cattle. Of these cattle, 29 had been relocated from Sai Kung to Shek Pik Reservoir on Lantau and 21 from South Lantau to Sai Kung High Island Reservoir. Members were concerned whether the relevant DCs and Rural Committees, the local communities and the animal welfare groups had been consulted before the implementation of the CST pilot scheme. Concern was also raised about whether the translocated cattle could adapt to the new environment and their health condition. Some members expressed support for the deputations' suggestion of developing cattle conservation centres on Lantau and urged the Administration to consider conducting a study of the proposed development.

34. According to the Administration, AFCD maintained close communication with residents in the local districts and communities concerned. AFCD had been monitoring the health condition of cattle under the CST pilot scheme, and the cattle were found in satisfactory

condition. The Administration advised that it did not have any plans for the time being to set up any cattle centres or open cowsheds. In considering the feasibility of the deputations' proposal, the Administration would need to take into account various factors, such as identification of appropriate site, the land use status of the site identified, construction cost of the project and the responsibility of ranchers etc.

Proposed legislation for the election of members from the veterinary profession to the Veterinary Surgeons Board of Hong Kong ("VSB")

35. The Panel was briefed on the proposed legislation for the election of members from the veterinary profession to VSB. While there was a view that it should be made a statutory requirement that candidates for the election should be restricted to Hong Kong permanent residents to ensure that they would endeavour to improve the standard of veterinary services in Hong Kong if elected, other members considered it not necessary to specify such requirement. The Administration was requested to further consult the trade on the voting arrangements before drafting the legislation.

36. The Administration advised that under the principle of professional autonomy, all registered veterinary surgeons who were registered under the Veterinary Surgeons Registration Ordinance (Cap. 529) ("VSRO") would be eligible to be nominated as candidates, except in certain circumstances. It was the plan of the Government to finalize the proposed arrangements taking into account the views received from VSB as well as members of the veterinary profession, and to table the relevant regulation at LegCo for negative vetting within 2015. The Administration undertook to report to the Panel on the results of the consultation with VSB and the veterinary profession on the Administration's proposal.

Review on fees and charges for facilities and services provided by FEHD

Fees for slaughterhouse services

37. The Panel discussed the fee revision proposals in respect of slaughterhouse licences and related services. According to the Administration, the fees for slaughterhouse licences and related services provided by FEHD had remained unchanged since the previous revision of fees conducted by the ex-Regional Council in 1997. Some members expressed strong reservation on the proposals. Pointing out that the Government had large fiscal surpluses and the proposed fees increase would probably have a larger effect on the retail price than anticipated, these members considered that the Administration should provide stronger justifications to support the proposed increase of fees.

38. The Administration advised that under the current proposal, while the examination fees to be paid by the slaughterhouse operators would increase, the licences renewal fees would be reduced by about 80% to 95%. Assuming that the three operators continued to slaughter the same number of swine (about 1.8 million each year), and that all the estimated fees increase (i.e. \$46 million) were passed on to retail customers, the estimated effects of the fees revision on the retail price of swine would be a mere increase of \$0.24 per catty. In the Administration's view, the magnitude of increase was moderate.

Fees for cemeteries and crematoria services

39. Members generally considered that the proposed fees increase for cremation of human and skeletal remains, burial of human remains in public cemeteries and permission for placing of plaques in GoR was too high. Pointing out that the fees for cremation services were proposed to be increased from between \$90 to \$1,220 to \$6,560 within three years, many members strongly opposed the proposed fees revision. They queried the need for the fees revision when the Government had a huge fiscal surplus and requested the Administration to shelve the proposal. The Administration explained that the fees of crematoria services had remained at the same level since 1997 and the current cost recovery rate was only 18%. The Administration proposed to adjust the fees by phases over three years to recover the cost and reduce the deficit recorded arising from the operation of cremation services.

Review on fees and charges for services provided by AFCD

40. The Panel was also consulted on the Administration's proposal to revise 140 statutory fee items for services provided by AFCD. Members noted that of the 140 items, 129 items would adopt an increase ranging from around 6% to 20%, and the fee item prescribed in the Veterinary Surgeons Registration (Fees) Regulation (Cap. 529A) (i.e. the veterinary surgeons registration fee) would increase by 429% to \$4,100. Members in general expressed reservation about the fees revision proposals. Concern was particularly raised about the justifications for the proposed substantial increase in the veterinary surgeons registration fee. The Administration advised that the veterinary surgeons registration fee was currently \$775, which had only been increased once in 2001 from the fee level of \$725 set in 1997 when VSRO was enacted. As it was a one-off fee and the proposed fee level should still be affordable for a veterinary surgeon, the Administration considered it appropriate to increase the fee to achieve full-cost recovery in one go.

Other issues discussed

41. The Panel was consulted on the following financial proposals before their submission to the Public Works Subcommittee and FC -

- (a) FEHD Refuse Collection Point within a residential development at Fuk Wa Street/Fuk Wing Street/Camp Street site, Shamshuipo, Kowloon; and
- (b) reprovisioning of FEHD's Sai Yee Street Environmental Hygiene Offices-cum-Vehicle Depot to Yen Ming Road, West Kowloon reclamation area.

Other issues discussed by the Panel included reduction of sugar and salt content in food, Dengue and Japanese encephalitis vector surveillance programme and Anti-mosquito Campaign 2015, measures to enhance training and protection of law enforcement officers of FEHD, and implementation of the Nutrition Labelling Scheme.

Subcommittees set up under the Panel

42. The Panel had set up two subcommittees to study issues relating public markets and hawker policy, namely the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Public Markets and the Subcommittee on Hawker Policy. During this session, the Subcommittee on Issues Relating to Public Markets and the Subcommittee on Hawker Policy held four meetings and five meetings respectively. These two Subcommittees had obtained the permission of the House Committee to extend the period of their work until 30 September and 14 October 2015 respectively.

Meetings held

43. During the 2014-2015 legislative session (up to 8 July 2015), the Panel held a total of 10 meetings. The Panel has scheduled another meeting in July 2015. The Panel has agreed to conduct an overseas duty visit to the United States to study its regulatory framework governing the food truck operations and to understand its regulatory system for imported food products in September 2015.

Legislative Council

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Terms of Reference

1. To monitor and examine Government policies and issues of public concern relating to food safety, environmental hygiene and agriculture and fisheries.
2. To provide a forum for the exchange and dissemination of views on the above policy matters.
3. To receive briefings and to formulate views on any major legislative or financial proposals in respect of the above policy areas prior to their formal introduction to the Council or Finance Committee.
4. To monitor and examine, to the extent it considers necessary, the above policy matters referred to it by a member of the Panel or by the House Committee.
5. To make reports to the Council or to the House Committee as required by the Rules of Procedure.

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Membership list for 2014-2015 session

Chairman	Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Deputy Chairman	Hon Steven HO Chun-yin
Members	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 Claudia MO Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming (up to 27 October 2014) 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 (Total : 24 members)
Clerk	Ms Alice LEUNG
Legal adviser	Miss Carrie WONG
Date	27 October 2014