

**For discussion  
on 13 June 2017**

**Legislative Council  
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Public Consultation on the Way Forward of Live Poultry Trade**

**INTRODUCTION**

This paper briefs Members of the views and comments collected during the public consultation on the way forward of live poultry trade in Hong Kong and the Government's position in the light of the views received.

**BACKGROUND**

2. As reported to this Panel at the meeting on 11 April 2017 (LC Paper No. CB(2)1121/16-17(01)), the Government launched a public consultation to gauge the views of the public on the key recommendations of the consultancy study on the way forward of live poultry trade from 3 April to 3 June 2017. During the period, the Government held consultation sessions with representatives from the live poultry trade (including chicken farmers, wholesalers, retailers and their associations) and relevant advisory bodies. The chairmen and vice-chairmen of District Councils (DCs) and Sham Shui Po District Council (SSPDC) were respectively consulted on 20 April and 1 June 2017. This Panel also held a special meeting inviting the Government to meet with deputations<sup>1</sup> on 16 May 2017.

3. By the end of the consultation period, a total of over 80 written submissions were received. The views and comments collected during the consultation exercise are summarised in the ensuing paragraphs.

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<sup>1</sup> A total of 22 participants, including representatives from political parties and trade, as well as health experts, attended the meeting.

## SUMMARY OF VIEWS AND COMMENTS

### *Supply of Live Poultry*

4. In overall terms, the public and the live poultry trade support maintaining status quo of the live poultry trade, i.e. continuing sale of live poultry at retail level and no need to ban the importation of live poultry from the Mainland.

5. At the two Panel meetings held on 11 April and 16 May 2017, Panel members opined that the people of Hong Kong had clearly shown continued demand for live poultry to meet their culinary preference and the live poultry trade on the whole had expressed clear preference to continue to service the market, and supported the Consultant's recommendation on maintaining supply of live poultry at retail level. The deputations (including political parties, trade representatives and some academics and experts) at the Panel meeting on 16 May 2017 echoed the Consultant's assessment that the existing avian influenza (AI) measures adopted by the Government were effective in keeping the AI risk in Hong Kong under control. Some members suggested consideration be given to raising rearing capacity of local chicken farms to increase local supply.

6. During the consultation with relevant advisory bodies, including chairmen and vice-chairmen of DCs, the Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene and the Livestock Subcommittee of the Advisory Committee on Agriculture and Fisheries, the consultees are unanimously supportive of maintaining status quo for the live poultry supply in Hong Kong.

7. The trade (including chicken farmers, wholesalers, retailers and their associations) agree with the Consultant's observation that the safeguard measures against AI currently adopted in Hong Kong are comprehensive and effective in keeping AI risk at bay, as evidenced by the fact that there has been no locally infected human case of H5 or H7 AI virus since the first outbreak in Hong Kong in 1997. None dispute the need to continue to maintain vigilance given the possible mutations of the virus and the outbreak situation in other parts of the world. Major views include support maintaining local production of chickens and supply of live poultry from local farms and importation from the Mainland to meet the market demand for live poultry, preserve and even

promote further development of the local poultry industry, and sustain the livelihood of live poultry trade workers. There are views that the overall rearing capacity of local farms could be increased, yet at the same time there are conflicting views on whether the cap on outlets for slaughtering and retailing of live poultry should be revisited.

8. Wholesalers and importers support the recommendation that importation of live poultry from the Mainland should not be banned, and look forward to early resumption of supply from the registered farms on the Mainland.

9. Health experts' views on whether supply of live poultry at retail level should be maintained are divided. Many health experts consider that the existing AI safeguard measures are well-recognised, and effective in controlling AI risk in Hong Kong. Some health experts agree that the sale of live poultry at retail level could continue if existing safeguarding measures are further enhanced, and consider that local chicken farms under stringent surveillance and control by the Government pose little zoonotic risk, and thus, support maintaining the local poultry rearing industry. On the other hand, some health experts are concerned about the potential risk of contracting AI through human contact with live poultry at retail outlets, and question whether it is in the overall public interest to use Government resources to meet the culinary preference of certain people, especially given the availability of alternative forms of poultry meats that pose lower AI risk.

### *Improvement Measures*

10. Regarding the improvement measures recommended by the Consultant, the trade, most notably local farmers, in general support the introduction of vaccination against H7N9 AI virus at farms, strengthening pre-sale AI test at farms through enhancing the PCR test from a monthly basis to each and every marketable batch of chickens before the chickens are delivered to the market, and reducing staying time of minor poultry at the wholesale market, to more comprehensively guard against AI risk in Hong Kong. The above measures are also supported by some health experts. Some of the trade representatives suggest that the Government should review the existing bio-security measures at farms in a holistic manner, including whether there is still

a need for placing sentinel (i.e. unvaccinated) chickens<sup>2</sup> in farms or conducting serology tests since the enhanced PCR test should already be able to ensure safety of chickens.

11. While some Panel members, and deputations support enhancing live poultry outlets to further segregate live poultry from human (“人雞分隔”), views from the trade are somewhat divided on how the live poultry retail outlets could be further enhanced to achieve this target. While the trade are in support of the principle of minimising AI risk at the retail outlets, some retailers question the need for further enhancement noting the effectiveness of the current measures as evidenced by the absence of any local outbreak after 1997. Some are also concerned about how existing retail stalls could be renovated to completely separate consumers from the live poultry in view of the limitation in space of most of the retail outlets. They suggest that the Government should consider providing either the necessary facilities for those stalls in the markets administered by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, or appropriate assistance to help retailers install such facilities. Some advisory bodies are supportive of introducing new modes of sale of live poultry to attain complete segregation between live poultry and consumers through the use of electronic or other technological means.

12. Some trade operators have reservations about relocating the Cheung Shan Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market (CSWTWPM) to Fu Tei Au, which, due to the latter’s relatively remote location in Sheung Shui, would inconvenience the trade and potentially increase their operating costs. On the other hand, some members of the public, especially those from Sham Shui Po and SSPDC, urge the Government to announce a timetable for the relocation of CSWTWPM.

13. A summary list of the submissions received during the public consultation period is at **Annex**. Copies of written submissions received have been uploaded to our website.

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<sup>2</sup> All farms are required to keep 60 chickens without any AI vaccination, known as “sentinel chickens”, with each batch of chickens to enable early detection of any AI virus.

## **GOVERNMENT'S POSITION**

14. The Consultant's recommendation of maintaining status quo of the live poultry trade is made having regard to the culinary preference of the Hong Kong people, Hong Kong's comprehensive safeguards against AI and the hitherto efficacious system with no locally infected human case of H5 and H7 AI virus for about two decades. Having carefully considered the Consultant's findings and recommendations, as well as views collected during the public consultation period, the Government agrees with the broad direction that the status quo should be maintained, i.e. sale of live poultry at retail level should be continued and import of live poultry from the Mainland should not be banned.

15. On possible enhancement measures to improve bio-security recommended by the Consultant, the Government sees merits in introducing vaccination against H7N9 AI virus and strengthening pre-sale AI Test at local farms. We also agree that we should seek to reduce staying time of minor poultry at the wholesale market.

16. As for the other enhancement measures (i.e. upgrading of live poultry retail outlets to improve the segregation between consumers and live poultry as well as relocating CSWTWPM), we have taken note of the divergent views received. The Government would proceed to identify options; and in doing so, would engage the trade so that the options developed would be pragmatic and feasible.

**Food and Health Bureau  
June 2017**

## Way Forward of Live Poultry Trade in Hong Kong

### List of Written Submissions Received During the Public Consultation Period

No.	Name of Senders
1.	Federation of Hong Kong Agricultural Associations
2.	Federation of Hong Kong Kowloon New Territories Hawker Associations
3.	Hong Kong and Kowloon Poultry Dealers and Workers Association
4.	優質雞發展促進會 and Hong Kong Kowloon Poultry Dealers Guild
5.	Hong Kong Catering Industry Association
6.	Hong Kong Chilled Fattener Retailers Association
7.	Hong Kong Local Live Chickens Wholesalers Association*
8.	Hong Kong Poultry Wholesalers Association
9.	Kamei Chicken Sales and Promotion Association Limited*
10.	Kowloon Poultry Laan Merchants Association
11.	The New Territories Chicken Breeders Association*
12.	Vital Health Livestock Development Limited*
13.	World's Poultry Science Association Hong Kong Branch
14.	活家禽產供銷聯席會議 (Joint submission from China Hong Kong Food Safety Association, Hong Kong and Kowloon Poultry Dealers and Workers Association, Hong Kong Local Live Chickens Wholesalers Association, Hong Kong Chilled Fattener Retailers Association, 香港活家禽鮮宰商會, Kamei Chicken Sales and Promotion Association Limited, Vital Health Livestock Development Limited, Hong Kong Kowloon Poultry Dealers Guild & 優質肉雞發展促進會)
15.	香港活家禽鮮宰商會*
16.	偉鳴公司
17.	廣南行有限公司
18.	聯署信 (由雞農提交)

19. School of Veterinary Medicine, City University of Hong Kong
20. Professor Joseph Sriyal Malik PEIRIS, SBS, The School of Public Health, The University of Hong Kong\*
21. Professor Leo POON, School of Public Health, The University of Hong Kong\*
22. Dr David LUNG
23. Consumer Council
24. Labour Party
25. Liberal Party
26. The Civic Party
27. Joint Submission from Office of the Legislative Council Members Hon Starry LEE Wai-king and Hon CHIANG Lai-wan & Office of Sham Shui Po District Council Member, CHAN Wai-ming (Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong)
28. Joint Submission from Sham Shui Po District Council Members, CHOW Wing-heng, Zoé, CHUM Tak-shing, YEUNG Yuk & YUEN Hoi-man
29. LI Ki-fung, Bruce (Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong)
30. Sham Shui Po District Council Member, YUEN Hoi-man (The Democratic Party)
31. Benny\*
32. William CHAU
33. Sherman CHUNG
34. Viann FU
35. KWOK Chi-shing
36. Gindy LAI
37. LAI Man-duck
38. Lorrit LAM
39. Samson LAM
40. LAU Chi-wai
41. LAU Siu-lun
42. LAW Sum-ling

43. LEE Leung-kei
44. Patrick LEE
45. LEUNG Wai-tong
46. LI Kin-sun
47. LIN Wan-ki
48. LIU Yuen-ting
49. Bonnie LO
50. Mabel LO
51. MAI Ai-ming
52. NG Wing-chung
53. Nicky
54. Pat Rez
55. Peter WONG Chun-kow
56. Shiweiyu
57. Jelly TSE
58. Candy WONG
59. Hera WONG
60. Queenie YU
61. 毛先生
62. 火慢
63. 阮明麗
64. 杜健豪
65. 李富洋
66. 周桂美
67. 林庭威
68. 吳詠怡
69. 吳詠琪
70. 梁月芳
71. 郭文嘉
72. 郭有勝

73. 梅永雄
74. 黃沛文
75. 張開英
76. 張營盈
77. 詹書凡
78. 葉凱峰
79. 鄭俊鴻
80. Anonymous
81. Anonymous
82. Anonymous

*Remarks: \* Respondent submitted more than one written comment*