



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
The People's Republic of China

[English Translation]

12 November 2018

Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attention: Ms Wendy LO)

Dear Ms LO,

**Government's Response to Motion Passed at
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

Thank you for your letter regarding the captioned matter on 13 December 2017. With respect to the motion raised by Hon CHAN Han-pan at the meeting on 12 December 2017 on the control of mosquitos and biting midges, our response is as follows:

Mosquito Control

Since 2003, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") has put in place an enhanced dengue vector surveillance programme for monitoring the distribution of *Aedes albopictus* at selected areas, and for evaluating the effectiveness of mosquito prevention and

control work carried out by various parties. The ovitrap index of *Aedes albopictus* can effectively monitor the activity level of albopictus that can potentially spread dengue fever. FEHD will continue to monitor the latest advice from the World Health Organisation (“WHO”) on mosquito surveillance. Meanwhile, FEHD will continue to monitor dengue fever vector mosquitos based on the ovitrap index.

At the same time, FEHD carries out monthly *Japanese encephalitis* vector surveillance at relatively high risk areas.

With respect to the recent local cases of dengue fever, FEHD immediately stepped up targeted mosquito prevention and control work at the relevant districts in accordance with the established mechanism, and deployed staff to carry out inspections as well as prevention and control work including conducting fogging operations to reduce the number of adult mosquitoes, applying larvicides, clearing stagnant water and disused articles and conducting grass cutting to eliminate potential mosquito breeding grounds in areas within a 500-metre radius of the residences of the patients and the places visited by them during the incubation period. FEHD also collected samples of *Aedes albopictus* for virus testing with a view to identifying the infection source of the dengue fever cases. All relevant Government departments will cooperate and enhance their mosquito control in areas under their purview.

In view of the implementation of the All-out Anti-mosquito Operation by the FEHD in all districts, we have allocated extra funding of \$4 million to the FEHD to facilitate the additional anti-mosquito work to be carried out by the District Environmental Hygiene Offices, as well as to strengthen the co-operation with the environmental hygiene committees of the District Councils to eradicate the black spots of mosquito breeding grounds in the districts immediately. The funding will be used for the purchase of ultra-low-volume foggers, the engagement of additional Pest Control Teams and the enhancement of publicity and educational work on mosquito prevention and control.

Furthermore, in order to accelerate the announcement of the ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* with a view to enhancing the awareness of residents in taking mosquito preventive measures, the FEHD adopted a

new arrangement in the release of the ovitrap index starting from September. The figures for individual locations will usually be uploaded to the FEHD website in phases days after the collection of ovitraps so that members of the public may obtain the latest information on the situation of mosquito infestation as early as possible.

Biting Midge Control

For more effective inter-departmental co-ordination, the Anti-Mosquito Steering Committee, chaired by the Under Secretary for Food and Health, is now renamed as the Pest Control Steering Committee. Issues on pest control other than mosquito control, such as rodent and biting midge control, are also discussed by this Steering Committee.

As for biting midge, they are not vectors of mosquito borne diseases such as dengue fever, *Japanese encephalitis* and Zika virus infection. WHO has not published guidelines for systematic surveillance of biting midges. According to our understanding, other places like the Mainland, Singapore as well as countries in America and Europe have not formulated any surveillance programmes for biting midges. So far, the midges species identified in Hong Kong are not primary vectors of any vector borne diseases. Nonetheless, with respect to the biting midge problems in recent years, upon the advice of expert from the Mainland, renowned for studying biting midges, FEHD has commenced a one-year territory-wide survey to investigate the distribution and species diversity of the blood sucking midges with a view to confirming the presence of any disease carrying biting midges. FEHD will continue to closely monitor the situation of biting midge infestation in public areas via channels such as routine inspection and handling of complaints by frontline staff, and enhance the work of biting midge control on a need basis.

[signed]
(Irene CHEUNG)
for Secretary for Food and Health