



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]

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16 December 2019

(Attn: Ms Josephine SO)
Clerk to the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms SO,

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Follow-up to the briefing by the Secretary for Food and Health
on the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address**

I refer to your letter of 12 December 2019. With regard to the captioned matter discussed at the Panel meeting on 29 October 2019, our reply is as follows:

Provision and management of public markets

- (1) The seven new market projects that we are taking forward are at different stages of planning. The requested information is set out in the **Enclosure**.
- (2) Same as other public markets, the landlord of the Tin Shui Wai temporary market is the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), which will be responsible for determining rentals and entering into tenancy agreements with tenants. We plan to test out a new operation mode in the temporary market and consider ways to enhance the role of the service contractors in the management of the market, with a view to enhancing business vibrancy and meeting the needs of the public. On management, FEHD has all along been engaging service contractors for market cleaning, security and minor maintenance etc.. To enhance the market operation, we will consider expanding the scope of services to be provided by service

contractors such as exploring whether they can work on the market trade mix, enforcement of tenancy terms and formulation of publicity and development strategies. Besides, FEHD preliminarily does not incline to allow multiple tenancy holding with a view to promoting healthy competition among stalls of the temporary market. We will make a decision after giving due consideration to the views of different stakeholders.

As for the consultative framework for the management of the market, there is a Market Management Consultative Committee (MMCC) in each public market. Members include relevant District Councillors in addition to representatives of government departments and market traders to collect the views of different stakeholders. We plan to set up a MMCC for the temporary market and explore ways to enhance its function and representativeness. We will also consider collecting the views of stakeholders on the operation and management of the market from time to time through more channels.

Issues relating to food safety

- (3) Generally speaking, food may be contaminated by different substances in the environment. Whether contaminants will affect food safety depends on a number of factors, such as the storage conditions of the food, the duration of exposure and the concentration of contaminants, etc. No assessment on the health impact of consuming food contaminated by tear gas is conducted by international food safety authorities, and the relevant food safety risks are not mentioned in medical literature. Based on our information, international food safety regulatory authorities and agencies of other places have not set any regulatory standards regarding tear gas residues in food. According to the literature, chemicals produced after combustion of tear gas are not unique to tear gas. As such, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of FEHD is of the view that testing these chemical residues in food cannot help ascertain tear gas contamination.
- (4) The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) conducted inspection on the relevant outfalls in Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter and the nearby sea area on 29 October 2019 and no abnormal colouring of sea water was found. For the seawall and stormwater outfalls along the shore, there was no trace that they had been dyed blue either. Tracing the drainage system upstream from the outfalls, no sign of blue dye or suspected source of pollution was found by EPD. EPD also checked the water quality monitoring data of the Victoria Harbour and Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter and there were no irregularities. Besides, EPD has not received similar enquiries concerning the sea area in Aberdeen.

Over the years, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has been collecting samples in different areas of Hong Kong waters to monitor the planktonic algae in water and the water quality in fish culture

zones. AFCD will collect additional samples for testing and issue timely warnings to mariculturists in case of abnormal increase in the quantity of phytoplankton or irregularities in the water quality. Regarding the water samples collected by EPD from Causeway Bay Typhoon Shelter on 29 October 2019, testing was carried out by AFCD and no red tide or harmful algae were found.

Food safety management

- (5) CFS accepted all the recommendations in the report published by the Audit Commission (the Audit) in October last year on “Centre for Food Safety: Import control of foods” and the report published by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Legislative Council (LegCo) in May this year on its hearings on the Audit report. We submitted LegCo Paper No. CB(2)1594/18-19(03) to the Panel in June this year to introduce the measures adopted by CFS to implement the recommendations, and tabled a Government Minute (GM) in response to the PAC report at the LegCo meeting on 11 December this year, which sets out the progress in implementing the recommendations. The GM has been uploaded onto PAC’s website.

Regarding the direct investigation report of the Office of The Ombudsman on “Food and Environmental Hygiene Department’s System of Safety Control for Imported Fruits and Vegetables”, we submitted LegCo Paper No. CB(2)642/17-18(01) in January last year, informing the Panel that CFS had accepted and taken follow-up actions to implement all the recommendations made in the report. The Office of The Ombudsman confirmed in July last year that CFS had implemented all the recommendations in its report.

Promotion of the mariculture sector

- (6) Regarding relief support for natural disasters, urgent financial assistance is given to those affected in the agricultural and fisheries sectors, including fish farmers for resumption of their fish farm operations, through the Emergency Relief Fund. The Government adjusts the amounts of the grants annually, taking into account the operational situation of the sector as well as changes in expenditure. Mariculturists in need of capital to re-establish their business may apply to AFCD for loans from Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Loan Fund.

Management of public toilets

- (7) Currently, a total of 798 public toilets (PTs) are under the management of FEHD. Cleansing and minor repairs or replacement service for about 80% of these PTs (i.e. 631 PTs) are provided by outsourced service contractors. FEHD has no plan to outsource the management of PTs, but the Department will review the effectiveness of the existing management measures for PTs from time to time so as to enhance their cleanliness and hygiene.

Rodent control

- (8) In general, the average life span of rodents in urban environment is about one and a half year. The reproduction rate of rodents depends on a number of factors, such as environment, climate and food supply. In a suitable environment, about a dozen or more rat pups can be born in a litter. FEHD has not conducted any specific studies on the average life span and reproduction rate of rodents in Hong Kong. We will continue to improve environmental hygiene, strengthen public education and publicity, as well as step up anti-rodent work. We briefed Members on our work in this aspect at the Panel meeting on 10 December 2019.

Yours sincerely,

[signed]

(Gilford LAW)

for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c.: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

Progress of the Seven New Public Market Projects

Project	(i) Drawing up design and layout plans	(ii) Scope of development	(iii) Current development stage	(iv) Anticipated date of completion
1. Tin Shui Wai temporary market (Tin Sau Road)	A preliminary design was announced in a press release on 10 October 2019. Detailed design and layout plan are being prepared.	A market will be built at the open space adjacent to Tin Sau Road Park by adopting the Modular Integrated Construction method. It is expected to provide about 40 stalls focusing on sale of fish, meat, vegetables and fruit.	Detailed design and layout plan are being prepared.	Fourth quarter of 2020.
2. Tin Shui Wai Market (section of Tin Fuk Road)	A preliminary artist's impression was provided to the Yuen Long District Council in October 2018. Design drawings and layout plan are being prepared.	A covered market will be built at the section of Tin Fuk Road and is expected to provide at least 120 stalls.	A technical feasibility study is underway.	To be announced upon completion of the technical feasibility study and assessment.

Project	(i) Drawing up design and layout plans	(ii) Scope of development	(iii) Current development stage	(iv) Anticipated date of completion
3. Tung Chung Town Centre Market (Area 6)	This project will be taken forward by a private developer, and its design drawings and layout plan will be prepared in accordance with the Government's requirements and specifications.	To be located at the lower floors of a commercial building in Area 6 adjacent to Tung Chung MTR Station, providing at least 100 stalls.	A technical feasibility study on the whole commercial building development (including the public market portion) is underway.	To be announced upon completion of the technical feasibility study and assessment.
4. Tseung Kwan O Market	It is planned to announce the potential site in early 2020. The District Council concerned will be consulted on the potential site and the preliminary proposal.	To be determined upon completion of the site selection study.	A site selection study is underway.	To be announced upon completion of the technical feasibility study and assessment.
5. Kwu Tung North New Development Area Market	To be determined upon completion of preliminary planning.		Preliminary planning is underway.	The development of the public markets will be in tandem with the housing development programmes of respective districts.
6. Tung Chung New Town Extension Area Market				
7. Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area Market				