



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

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[English Translation]

29 May 2020

Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attention: Miss Josephine SO)

Dear Miss SO,

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Implementation of the Market Modernization Programme and
development of new public markets**

Regarding the motions passed at the panel meeting on 12 May 2020, our response is set out below.

Motion 1

Providing a new public market requires the use of scarce land resources and entails public financial commitment, both capital and recurrent. We are also aware of the diversifying choices for procuring fresh provisions and the evolving habits of the customers. Given these premises, in considering whether a public market should be built, we have to duly assess the need for the market and cost-effectiveness and to ensure proper use of public resources. Furthermore, temporary markets will also need to fulfill

the relevant hygiene and safety requirements. Considerable amount of resources will also be required to provide the basic facilities, such as ceiling, stall partitions, electrical installations, water supply system, drainage system, sewage system, ventilation facilities, lighting systems, fire safety system, refuse handling facilities, loading and unloading areas, etc. The difficulty in identifying suitable locations for the provision of temporary or permanent markets in developed areas cannot be underestimated.

As regards the suggestion of carrying out overhaul works by phases with a view to providing reasonable services during the works period, we will actively explore with the relevant departments including the Architectural Services Department. During the process, consideration should also be given to various factors, including the scale of the scope of works; possible increase in the construction time and cost; impact of the noise and dust generated as well as the travelling of construction vehicles during the works period on the operating environment of the market which is still in business; temporary works and control measures required to maintain existing electricity supply, water supply, drainage, fire services and security system, etc., as well as market public safety (including keeping the means of access and escape for the market) and hygiene in order to maintain normal operation of part of the market and to meet relevant statutory requirements. We will maintain liaison with stakeholders on the options of overhaul works having regard to the actual situation of individual markets, with a view to minimising the impact of the works as far as possible.

Motion 2

The Government launched the Voluntary Surrender Scheme and the Buyout Scheme in 2004-05 and 2008 respectively for the live poultry trade to reduce the numbers of live poultry stalls in Hong Kong and to minimise human infection of Avian Influenza (AI) through live poultry. As a result, the number of live poultry retailers dropped from over 800 in 2004 to 128 at present. To keep the risk of AI under control, the Government has since contained the size of the live poultry trade at the current level.

The consultancy study subsequently commissioned by the Government on the way forward of the live poultry trade in Hong Kong was completed in mid-2017. Taking into account the study's recommendation and the views collected during the public consultation conducted afterwards, the Government agreed to the broad direction of the recommendation, i.e. to maintain the status quo of continuing the sale of live poultry at retail level.

We have no plan to increase the number of live poultry retail outlets for the time being.

Under the existing arrangement, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) allows transfer of the licence/tenancy of a live poultry retail outlet to immediate family members (i.e. parents, spouse or children) of the licensee/tenant. To control and prevent AI, relocation of existing fresh provision shops selling live poultry is generally not permissible. However, if the fresh provision shops have to be relocated for continued operation due to reasons of force majeure (e.g. relocation of business premises necessitated by demolition) which are to the satisfaction of FEHD, FEHD will consider the cases on individual merits. In fact, in the past three years, a total of six fresh provision shops were issued licences to continue selling live poultry after relocation, and four live poultry market stalls were relocated to other public markets for continued operation due to consolidation of the public markets in which they were originally located.

As regards the suggestion of providing stalls in new public markets for live poultry retail business, we will consider it when determining the trade mix of each new public market in line with the abovementioned Government policy and having regard to other relevant factors.

Yours sincerely,

[Signed]

(Gilford LAW)

for Secretary for Food and Health

cc.: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene