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Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 13 July 2020**

**Administration's work in tackling
the threat of antimicrobial resistance in food animals**

In recognition of the threat posed by antimicrobial resistance ("AMR") to global public health, the Administration has set up a High Level Steering Committee on AMR ("HLSC"), chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health, to formulate strategies and action plans for tackling AMR in Hong Kong. The Expert Committee ("Expert Committee") under HLSC provides advice and recommendations to HLSC to assist the latter in the formulation of action plans.

2. Taking into account the recommendations of the Expert Committee and the "One Health" framework, which appreciates the correlation among human, animal and environment health and the concept that AMR must be tackled at all three levels, HLSC formulated and launched in July 2017 "Hong Kong Strategy and Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2017-2022" ("Action Plan")¹. According to an information paper provided by the Administration in August 2018 (LC Paper No. CB(2)1913/17-18(01)), the goals of the Action Plan include, among others, the following:

- (a) developing a territory-wide network across various sectors to strengthen surveillance on AMR and antimicrobial usage;
- (b) promoting appropriate therapeutic use of antimicrobials in humans and animals under the oversight of health and veterinary professionals and discouraging misuse and overuse;
and

¹ The Action Plan is available on the website of the Centre for Health Protection at: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/amr_action_plan_eng.pdf

- (c) encouraging collaboration among various stakeholders to enhance awareness of AMR.

To achieve these goals, key areas have been identified to slow down the emergence, and prevent the spread, of AMR. The key areas include, among others: (a) strengthening knowledge through surveillance and research; (b) optimizing use of antimicrobials in humans and animals; (c) reducing incidence of infection through effective sanitation, hygiene and preventive measures; and (d) improving awareness and understanding of AMR through education and training.

3. According to the Administration's replies to Members' questions in examining the Estimates of Expenditure for the 2020-2021 financial year, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") had commissioned a consultancy study in October 2017 to devise a programme to monitor antimicrobial usage as well as the prevalence of bacteria with AMR in local food animal farms including livestock and fish farms. The consultancy study was completed in mid-2019 and the recommended surveillance programmes for fish and livestock farms have been launched since June and July 2019 respectively. In addition, three projects under the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund and the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund have been approved for providing veterinary services to local pig farms, local chicken farms and local fish farms. These projects involve formulation of tailor-made farm-specific disease management plans for the purposes of disease prevention and promoting proper and prudent use of antimicrobials, and assisting farmers in sourcing vaccines and other veterinary medications.

4. The Administration provided the Panel with two information papers (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1913/17-18(01) and CB(2)1914/18-19(01)) respectively in August 2018 and September 2019 to brief members on the progress of AFCD's work in tackling the threat of AMR in food animals in Hong Kong. It will update members on the latest work progress of AFCD at the meeting on 13 July 2020. Issues relating to surveillance on antimicrobial usage (such as presence of antimicrobial residues in feed and faecal wastes of livestock, as well as the environment in fish farms) and monitoring of AMR in local farms will be covered.