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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2020-21

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Food and Health

Session No. : 13

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-FHB(FE)001

(Question Serial No. SV009)

Head: (22) Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
(Dr LEUNG Siu-fai)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Regarding the combat of illegal fishing activities, please state the strategies to be adopted and resources to be allocated by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven

Reply:

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) enforces the relevant legislation through a risk-based approach, deploying resources flexibly to conduct random and targeted patrols in local waters (including marine parks and marine reserve), particularly at blackspots of illegal fishing activities, having regard to the circumstances to combat illegal fishing activities. AFCD also maintains close liaison with the Marine Police with a view to mounting joint operations (including using “vessel arrest systems” to intercept trawlers who refuse to stop for inspection) as and when appropriate. AFCD will continue to enhance enforcement, exchange information and intelligence with the relevant government departments and Mainland authorities, adjust its enforcement strategy from time to time in the light of circumstances and intelligence gathered, and collaborate with the relevant parties to combat illegal fishing.

To enhance the effectiveness of the enforcement action, AFCD plans to apply technology in its enforcement work, such as using real time satellite information to help identify fishing vessels. AFCD also plans to collaborate with fishermen to gather intelligence regarding illegal fishing in Hong Kong waters to formulate more effective enforcement operations.

The expenditure (revised estimate) and manpower involved in combating illegal fishing by AFCD was \$17.3 million and 18 staff members respectively in 2019-20. Similar resources will be allocated in 2020-21 to combat illegal fishing. AFCD also plans to consolidate the internal resources on enforcement operations at sea and set up a dedicated enforcement team at sea with a view to achieving synergy and combating illegal fishing more effectively.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-FHB(FE)002

(Question Serial No. S075)

Head: (22) Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (3) Animal, Plant and Fisheries Regulation and Technical Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
(Dr LEUNG Siu-fai)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

In respect of “strengthening measures for stray animals management”, would the Government advise of the following:

- (a) Please tabulate the expenditure of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) on capturing stray animals and euthanasia of animals in 2020-21.
- (b) Please tabulate AFCD’s expenditure on procurement and maintenance of animal traps in 2020-21.

Asked by: Hon KWONG Chun-yu

Reply:

- (a) and (b) In 2020-21, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department has earmarked \$36.1 million, \$1.2 million and \$120,000 for capturing stray animals, euthanasia of animals and procurement and maintenance of animal traps respectively.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-FHB(FE)003

(Question Serial No. S074)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

It was stated in the reply that “cleansing workers will wear protective gear such as face masks, gloves, sleeves, aprons, non-slippery rubber boots, face shields or goggles, coveralls and caps/hats as appropriate.”

In this connection, please provide supplementary information on the following:

1. Does “as appropriate” mean it necessary as purported by the workers or at the discretion of the management?
2. What criteria does the management base on to determine the circumstances under which protective gear such as face masks, gloves, sleeves, aprons, non-slippery rubber boots, face shields or goggles, coveralls and caps/hats is to be worn by workers as appropriate?
3. Is the protective gear such as face masks, gloves, sleeves, aprons, non-slippery rubber boots, face shields or goggles, coveralls and caps/hats disposable or reusable? Is every worker provided with a full set of gear?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ka-ki

Reply:

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department attaches great importance to the safety as well as occupational safety and health arrangements of staff (including in-house cleansing workers and those employed by outsourced contractors). The Department and contractors conduct risk assessments based on working environment settings, take appropriate precautionary measures, and provide cleansing workers with adequate and suitable personal protective equipment (PPE). Cleansing workers will use different PPE for different working environment settings as appropriate, e.g. face masks and gloves for routine street sweeping; face masks, gloves, aprons, non-slippery rubber boots, goggles or face shields, etc. for routine street washing. For street washing in the vicinity of the buildings with confirmed cases by cleansing workers under the instructions of the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, face masks, gloves, aprons, non-slippery rubber boots, goggles or face shields, coveralls, caps/hats, etc. will be used. Generally speaking,

the PPE used by cleansing workers in performing routine cleansing duties, including gloves, sleeves, aprons, non-slippery rubber boots, goggles and face shields, is reusable.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-FHB(FE)004

(Question Serial No. SV012)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Follow-up question to Reply Serial No. FHB(FE)165:

In the light of the slow progress of the Private Columbaria Licensing Board in processing licence applications, does the Department have any administrative measures to expedite the processing of the applications and streamline the relevant administrative procedures?

Asked by: Hon OR Chong-shing, Wilson

Reply:

With a view to expediting the processing of applications for specified instruments, the Private Columbaria Licensing Board (PCLB) promulgated on 30 August 2019 the implementation of three measures, namely granting exemption without requiring the applicant to restore the ash interment quantity first, making administrative arrangements for "Approval-in-principle for Temporary Suspension of Liability (TSOL) Application", and requiring applicants to submit the documents/information required for their TSOL applications on or before the deadline of 31 December 2019. After the expiry of the deadline, the PCLB has carefully examined the status of the documents/information received and has decided to cease the vetting of the TSOL applications submitted by 15 private columbaria, and will hold open meetings to determine these applications by batches. The list of the private columbaria concerned has been uploaded to the dedicated website for public information. As for other applications for specified instruments being processed, the Private Columbaria Affairs Office (PCAO) will continue to closely liaise with the applicants and the relevant departments, striving to assist the PCLB in expediting the vetting work.

Since the implementation of the Private Columbaria Ordinance (Cap. 630) (the Ordinance), the PCLB has formulated guidelines and procedures on various aspects. It has promulgated the Application Guide for Private Columbarium Licence and Other Specified Instruments, which set out in detail the requirements stipulated in the Ordinance and those specified by the PCLB for each type of application for specified instrument, and provided various templates (including those for the proposed plans, management plan and the

agreement for the sale of interment right, etc.) to assist applicants in making an application. Furthermore, to expedite the processing of the applications, the PCLB has continuously enhanced and updated these guidelines and procedures in the light of the circumstances encountered in the course of vetting the applications. The PCAO has also convened inter-departmental working meetings from time to time, during which the PCAO would discuss with the departments responsible for vetting applications on how to address the problems encountered and how to enhance the relevant process with a view to expediting the vetting work.

Notwithstanding the efforts of the PCLB and the PCAO to speed up the processing of applications for specified instruments and streamline the relevant process, the time needed to process a licence application depends on whether the private columbarium has complied with all the requirements for licence application stipulated in the Ordinance and those specified by the PCLB (including the requirements relating to planning, land, buildings, fire safety, electrical and mechanical safety, management plan, right to use the premises, environmental protection, etc.), and whether the applicant has submitted sufficient documents to prove that the private columbarium has complied with the requirements. Upon receiving the documents or information required for an application, the PCAO will invite the relevant departments to provide comments. The applicant will then be asked to take necessary follow-up actions and submit reports, which will be forwarded to the relevant departments for their vetting. After confirming that a licence application has complied with the application requirements, the PCAO will arrange for the submission of the application to the PCLB for determination.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-FHB(FE)005

(Question Serial No. SV013)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (3) Market Management and Hawker Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to the Market Modernisation Programme which aims to improve facilities of existing public markets, please provide the implementation timetable and workflow.

Asked by: Hon OR Chong-shing, Wilson

Reply:

The Government has earmarked \$2 billion for the implementation of the 10-year Market Modernisation Programme (MMP). The pioneering project of the MMP is the overhaul of Aberdeen Market. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) briefed the relevant committee of the Southern District Council on the details and progress of the project in February 2020. ArchSD is engaging consultants and will commence the detailed design of plan and preparation of tender documents, etc. as soon as possible. Upon completion of the preparatory work, we will seek funding approval from the Legislative Council as soon as practicable and expect to commence the overhaul works in 2021.

At the same time, we plan to overhaul another 3 public markets in Kowloon and the New Territories and expect to take forward the consultation and preparatory work later this year. We also plan to kick-start minor refurbishment and improvement works for at least 3 other public markets in different districts across the territory.

In implementing the MMP, FEHD will work closely with the relevant works departments to identify potential hardware improvement options. We will consult sitting tenants on matters including hardware improvement options, temporary decanting, permanent relocation, exit arrangement as well as management improvement measures, etc. We will also report to the District Councils concerned in a timely manner, and seek funding approval for taking forward the projects according to the established mechanism.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-FHB(FE)006

(Question Serial No. SV011)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department rolled out 20 refurbishment projects under the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme in 2019-20. How many contractors have undertaken these projects? Are they small and medium-sized contractors in Group A or Group B on the List of Approved Contractors for Public Works?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony

Reply:

Since the 20 toilet refurbishment projects are still at the design or tendering preparation stage, no contracts have been awarded. Under the current plan, the Architectural Services Department will invite contractors in Groups A and B on the Government's List of Approved Contractors for Public Works to tender for the projects.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-FHB(FE)007

(Question Serial No. SV010)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to import control of food, please list the game allowed for import as specified by the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

Asked by: Hon WONG Pik-wan, Helena

Reply:

According to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK) (the Regulations), "game" means the fresh or frozen carcass, flesh or other edible parts, including edible viscera and offal, of an animal other than an animal from which meat (i.e. beef, mutton, pork, veal or lamb) is derived and a bird (i.e. domestic fowl, duck, goose or turkey) from which poultry is derived. There is no specified list of "game" in the Regulations.

Under section 4(1)(b) of the Regulations, prior approval of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is required for the import of game. The import assessment conducted by the Department covers different aspects, among which due regard will be given to the potential public health risk of the food concerned, such as the surveillance, prevention and control of specific foodborne zoonoses undertaken by the authorities of the place of origin. Each consignment of imported "game" must be accompanied by an official health certificate issued by the government authorities of the place of origin attesting that it is fit for human consumption.

The "game" allowed for import in 2019 included the meat of goat, kangaroo, ostrich and crocodile, and the carcass of pigeon and feral pigeon, etc.

- End -

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-FHB(FE)008

(Question Serial No. SV004)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

With regard to feeding wild pigs by members of the public, please provide the number of prosecutions instituted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, as well as the number of successful prosecution cases, under the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570 of the Laws of Hong Kong) in the past 3 years.

Asked by: Hon YUNG Hoi-yan

Reply:

The core function of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is to upkeep environmental hygiene. Regulation of wild pig feeding does not fall within the purview of the Department. Any members of the public who are found to have littered public places while feeding wild pigs will be issued Fixed Penalty Notices by our enforcement officers under the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness and Obstruction) Ordinance (Cap. 570), with a penalty currently set at \$1,500. The Department does not maintain a separate breakdown of the number of prosecutions in this respect.

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