

EEB meets trade representatives on Government's anti-rodent work (with photo)

The Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) today (August 28) met trade representatives on the Cross-sectoral Territory-wide Anti-rodent Action, to share with them the Government's latest anti-rodent experiences and to strengthen co-operation among the Government, businesses and the community while encouraging various sectors to continue to adopt effective rodent prevention and control measures in the coming year.

Through a multipronged approach, the anti-rodent work has gradually shown achievements. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) caught around 72 600 live rodents in the past year (from August 2023 to July 2024), about 24 per cent more than the 58 400 rodents caught in the corresponding period of the previous year (from August 2022 to July 2023). If both live and dead rodents are considered, the FEHD caught a total of around 106 100 rodents from August 2023 to July 2024, about 19 per cent more than the 89 500 rodents caught in the corresponding period of the previous year (from August 2022 to July 2023).

The FEHD will continue to conduct anti-rodent operations targeting 97 priority rodent black spots with a view to achieving the target of reducing the number of black spots by 60 per cent by the end of 2024 as set out in the 2023 Policy Address.

Representatives from different sectors (including markets, licensed hawkers, property management, catering industry and construction sector) were informed of the latest progress of the Government's rodent control work, and they expressed that they will continue to share the relevant information with various stakeholders. The FEHD and the pest control sector also expressed that they stand ready to provide more in-depth briefings as needed.

Regarding the new rodent surveillance programme implemented by the FEHD this year, the survey results for the first half of 2024 of various districts have been announced earlier. The overall Rodent Absence Rate was 95.1 per cent (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/rat_free_percentage.html). This marks the first time the department has adopted thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence technology for surveillance of rodent activities in all districts. Compared to the previous survey method, the new technology offers higher sensitivity and precision, broader coverage, and lower susceptibility to environmental factors. The surveillance results provide useful information and data on rodent infestation, reflecting the overall rodent infestation situation. The FEHD will also implement targeted rodent prevention and control measures according to the survey results at individual locations and take follow-up actions including collaborations with other departments, relevant shop operators concerned and residents for joint actions in effective rodent prevention and control. The programme covers

public places where pest control services are provided by the FEHD this year and will be extended to venues managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and the Housing Department (HD) in the coming year depending on the actual circumstances.

The work of the overnight rodent control roving teams implemented in various districts since mid-2022 has been notably effective. Among the 72 600 live rodents caught from August 2023 to July 2024, around 36 400 live rodents were caught by the FEHD's overnight rodent control roving teams, accounting for about 50 per cent of the total number of live rodents caught by the FEHD across the territory in the same period. Currently, the FEHD has a total of 36 overnight rodent control roving teams established across different districts. Besides sharing the experiences with other departments (including the LCSD and the HD), the FEHD and the pest control sector also stand ready to provide more in-depth briefings for interested stakeholders.

Regarding food waste recycling, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has also made remarkable progress. As of June this year, the EPD has installed a total of 740 food waste smart recycling bins (FWSRBs) covering all of the 213 public rental housing estates in the territory. In addition, about 200 FWSRBs have been installed in 62 private housing estates under the support from various schemes. The EPD expects that about 400 FWSRBs will be put into service in more than 100 private housing estates within this year. The EPD has set up around 60 food waste recycling spots at suitable locations in proximity to residential areas for residents living in buildings without sufficient space to install food waste recycling bins (including single-block and "three-nil" buildings) and street-level restaurants, to provide night-time food waste collection services for households and restaurants at fixed time and locations. Meanwhile, the EPD has already installed FWSRBs at GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities near residential areas, including GREEN@SHAM SHUI PO, GREEN@SAI KUNG, GREEN@EASTERN, GREEN@SHA TIN and GREEN@TUEN MUN, for public use.

The EPD and the FEHD have also installed "Food TranSmarter", a food waste pre-treatment system, at Tai Po Hui Market and Tai Kok Tsui Market, and they plan to trial other food waste pre-treatment systems at Shek Wu Hui Market. A FWSRB was installed at Lockhart Road Market and it will be installed at Fa Yuen Street Market in October this year. The EPD has also set up food waste recycling points at 96 public refuse collection points to collect food waste generated by nearby restaurants and households. Looking forward, they are progressively expanding food waste recycling facilities to other suitable FEHD markets and suitable public refuse collection points. The FEHD will incorporate relevant knowledge of food waste recycling into the Hygiene Supervisor Training Courses starting from the fourth quarter of this year.

The EPD will continue to expand the food waste collection network to enable the public and various sectors to provide food waste for turning into energy or resources, and to enhance environmental hygiene by eliminating the food sources of rodents.

Regarding mosquito infestation, with the onset of the rainy season, the

Gravidtrap Indices have been relatively higher since April. Under the collaboration of various parties, the monthly index in July recorded a significant drop, which was at the lowest Level 1, indicating that the distribution of *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes in the areas surveyed was not extensive. Nonetheless, the Government, various sectors and members of the public should continue to make relentless efforts and remain vigilant. In response to the four local cases of dengue fever recorded this year, the FEHD has continued to intensify the mosquito prevention and control work with relevant government departments in areas under their purview, including eliminating mosquito breeding places, applying larvicides, conducting fogging operations to eradicate adult mosquitoes, and placing mosquito trapping devices at suitable locations. The FEHD has also provided departments with professional advice and technical support to assist them in swiftly formulating and implementing effective anti-mosquito measures while strengthening publicity and education at the same time. The FEHD will continue to monitor the mosquito infestation in all districts, and will conduct prompt and effective mosquito prevention and control work.

In the meeting, trade representatives reported the progress of various areas of work under the Action, including complying with the rodent control guidelines and management rules; keeping their premises free from rodent infestation; applying new techniques and tools more widely; and participating in training seminars and promotional activities on rodent prevention and control. Representatives from the construction and pest control sector also shared the latest progress of anti-rodent and anti-mosquito work.

The Action has been introduced since the end of 2022 to consolidate strengths from the Government and various sectors of the community for a cross-sectoral, multidisciplinary, and community-wide approach to anti-rodent work. While various sectors and government departments are consolidating the rodent control work, the public is encouraged to actively participate in rodent prevention and control actions by eliminating the food, harbourage and passages of rodents.

The meeting was chaired by the Under Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Miss Diane Wong. Participants of the meeting came from 15 organisations or institutions, namely the Hong Kong Housing Society, Link, People's Place, the Hong Kong Property Services Alliance, the Hong Kong Association of Property Management Companies, the Federation of Hong Kong Property Management Industry, the Hong Kong Association of Property Services Agents, the Pest Control Personnel Association of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Pest Management Association, the Federation of Hong Kong, Kowloon, New Territories Hawker Associations, the Hong Kong Federation of Restaurants and Related Trades, the Association for Hong Kong Catering Services Management, the Association of Restaurant Managers, the Hong Kong Construction Association and the Hong Kong General Building Contractors Association.

