

FEHD actively follows up on hygienic problems of a fresh provision shop in Ngau Tau Kok

In response to a media report about rodent infestation at a fresh provision shop (FPS) in Ngau Tau Kok, a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (June 24) that the department has been actively following up on the case and taking law enforcement actions. The FEHD will not condone any violation of laws and regulations.

The spokesman said that the FEHD has carried out inspections at the FPS. The FEHD conducted a blitz operation on February 24 this year, during which pig carcasses were found not properly handled and protected at the FPS. Prosecution was taken in accordance with the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) (the Regulation) and the relevant legal proceedings is ongoing. Subsequently, the FEHD received a rodent infestation complaint against the FPS on June 15, and deployed officers to carry out inspection. A warning was given to the responsible person requiring effective measures to be taken to maintain the hygienic condition of the shop. At the same time, rodent prevention and control measures were strengthened in public places near the FPS in order to eliminate the survival conditions of rodents.

The FEHD staff inspected the FPS yesterday and today, and found that some of the equipment in the FPS were damaged. As a result, prosecution action was taken against the responsible person. Furthermore, signs of rodent infestation were found at the public areas in the shopping arcade during the inspection of the FEHD and the management staff. A notice will be issued to the property owner in accordance with Section 47(1) of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), requiring him to take necessary steps within a specified time to destroy and remove any rodent infestation, or face prosecution.

The spokesman reminds the trade that according to section 5(3)(a) and 10(a) of the Regulation, every person engaged in any food business, including FPSs, shall not knowingly suffer or permit in any food premises, the presence of rats, mice or insects; and shall adopt appropriate measures to protect the food from risk of contamination or deterioration. Offenders are liable to prosecution and a maximum fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for three months. In 2022, the FEHD has made seven and 18 prosecutions respectively against individuals who have violated the above regulations. Moreover, upon conviction, demerit points will be registered against the food premises. The licence could be cancelled in serious situation.

Since last year, the FEHD has tightened the licensing condition to strengthen the regulations on handling and receiving meat and poultry of the FPSs. The new licensing condition has been introduced to all the FPSs by now. If licensed FPSs are found in breach of the licensing condition, their

licences will be cancelled. The new licensing condition stipulates that unless prior written approval for an alternative arrangement has been obtained from the FEHD, all fresh/chilled/frozen meat or poultry to be delivered to the licensed FPS for sale, no matter whether the meat or poultry is prepackaged, must be directly delivered into the premises, and at no time be left or kept outside the premises (including any street, pavement, alley, passageway, and space) pending further handling or sale. In any circumstances even under the approved alternative arrangement, the meat or poultry must at all times be properly handled and protected to prevent from the invasion or contamination by rodents or pests or the ambient environment.

The FEHD will continue to closely monitor the operation of FPSs and take active inspection and enforcement actions in order to safeguard public health.