

FEHD actively follows up on three cases of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus

â€œIn response to the announcement by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health yesterday about three cases of human infection of rat Hepatitis E virus, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has immediately taken a series of follow-up actions today (May 15).

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "The FEHD has been very concerned about rodent infestation in different districts and has been adopting multi-pronged strategies including improving environmental hygiene, rodent disinfection and enforcement action to combat rodent problem.

"As regards the districts where the three patients reside, namely Tuen Mun, Southern District and Kowloon City, FEHD officers, together with the staff of the Housing Department and the property management company of the private housing estate, as well as other parties concerned, have already conducted inspections today at the concerned public housing estate, private housing estate and 'three-nil' buildings at the affected location to observe the rodent infestation situation and provide professional advice and technical guidance on prevention and control of rodent infestation, including stepping up refuse clearing work, proper ways of placing baits and traps, methods of destroying rat holes and improving rodent proofing measures in buildings, so as to strengthen the anti-rodent work.

"In addition, FEHD officers of relevant sections will also carry out joint operations at the districts concerned to enhance street cleansing services, intensify rodent prevention and control work at public places and take prosecution against illegal dumping of refuse.

"FEHD officers will also maintain close liaison with District Councillors and various stakeholders to inspect places which have drawn concern in the districts and organise publicity and educational activities to raise public awareness of rodent prevention and control."

Besides, the FEHD continues to carry out territory-wide anti-rodent work. The FEHD conducts the anti-rodent campaign throughout the territory in two phases annually, during which the department, together with other relevant government departments, will enhance targeted rodent prevention and control work at problematic spots and strengthen education and publicity.

The FEHD also launches the eight-week anti-rodent operations in designated target areas after the two phases of the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign. The first round of the anti-rodent operation in designated target areas has commenced on May 6. During the period, apart from strengthening rodent elimination work, FEHD staff has also enhanced street

cleansing services and cleansing of public markets and hawker bazaars in the target areas, including sweeping and washing of streets and rear lanes, emptying and cleaning of litter containers, and clearance of miscellaneous articles and refuse on the streets, in public markets and at hawker bazaars, so as to keep the environment clean. In addition, FEHD officers have also stepped up inspections of food premises, markets, hawker bazaars and cooked food markets and taken enforcement actions.

Since improper handling of food waste and remnants by food premises can give rise to rodent problems, the FEHD will start a five-week special operation from May 20, to target irregularities of food premises such as food preparation, scullery, improper storage of articles and illegal dumping of refuse at rear lanes (including dumping of bagged refuse in small hours), with a view to further enhancing the awareness of rodent prevention and control among the operators of food premises, by educating them to adopt measures to combat rodent problems and upkeep the hygiene condition of rear lanes as well as taking stringent enforcement action. The FEHD will also step up the cleansing and rodent elimination work at rear lanes, as well as public education and publicity.

The spokesman emphasised that cross sector co-operation is essential to sustaining effective rodent prevention and control. He called on members of the public to support and participate in the anti-rodent work, and to eliminate the three fundamental survival conditions of rodents in their daily life, namely food, harbourage and passages, meaning the elimination of the food sources and hiding places of rodents as well as blockage of their dispersal routes.

The FEHD will continue to work closely with relevant government departments and organisations, property management companies and different stakeholders, and take concerted and effective anti-rodent actions so as to improve environmental hygiene in districts.