

FEHD completes Rodent Activity Survey for first half of 2024

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (August 1) that it has completed the Rodent Activity Survey (RAS) for the first half of 2024, and the overall Rodent Absence Rate (RAR) was 95.1 per cent. The RAR of individual districts can be viewed on the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/rat_free_percentage.html).

"This marks the first time that the department adopted thermal imaging cameras with artificial intelligence technology to replace completely the conventional census baiting method 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 department will keep enhancing the RAS to better reflect the overall situation of rodent infestation," a spokesman said.

The spokesman pointed out that the useful information and data on rodent infestation provided by the RAS enable the department to effectively allocate resources. The RAR of a district only reflects the overall rodent infestation situation in the district and there may be a variance among individual survey locations. The FEHD will 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 and residents for joint actions in effective rodent prevention and control.

The department will also take into account the RAS results for the first half of the year and other factors to make necessary adjustments, such that the locations for installation of thermal imaging cameras will be even more representative during the survey for the second half of the year. The RAR of individual districts for the second half of the year will be published on the FEHD website in due course. The FEHD is also liaising with the Housing Department and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to extend the RAS to cover public rental housing estates, parks, leisure facilities, etc from next year onwards.

The spokesman stressed that effective rodent prevention and control hinges on co-operation among government departments, relevant sectors and stakeholders, as well as members of the public to strengthen anti-rodent work from their respective areas. Members of the public should maintain good environmental hygiene and eliminate the three fundamental survival conditions of rodents, namely food, harbourage and passages, i.e. the elimination of the food sources and hiding places of rodents as well as blockage of their dispersal routes.

The RAS will be conducted once every six months among the 19 districts of the FEHD across the territory. In consideration of the rodent habits,

during the survey period, rodent activities will be recorded by means of thermal images captured at two-minute intervals from 7pm to 7am the following day for three consecutive nights. The survey of 2024 covers public areas of which the pest control services are being provided by the FEHD. With reference to distribution of rodent complaints and rodent control statistics collected from regular disinfection operations carried out by the FEHD, the RAS makes use of a list of locations over the territory that are prone to risks of rodent infestation within public areas as the sampling frame. For each round of the survey, about 2 000 locations with rodent infestation risks are selected for installation of thermal cameras to record rodent activities.