

FEHD releases Rodent Infestation Rate for 2020

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (May 13) that the overall Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) for 2020 was 3.6 per cent, lower than the figure recorded in 2019 (4.2 per cent).

An FEHD spokesman said, "Rodent infestation was not extensive during the survey period in most districts, as the RIRs of all districts were below 10 per cent for 2020."

Starting from this announcement, the RIRs of all survey locations in each district will be released together with the district RIRs so as to enhance transparency and to ensure that the public would be more informed of the rodent infestation situation in each survey location. Moreover, in order to strengthen rodent surveillance, the FEHD has increased the number of survey locations from 41 (around 2 300 baiting points) to 50 (around 2 700 baiting points) since the second half of last year to cover more locations that may be infested with rodents, such as new development areas, residential areas, back alleys and industrial areas.

In response to the results of the Rodent Infestation Survey, the FEHD will conduct specific rodent control operations in individual survey locations, such as strengthening cleansing service, enhancing enforcement actions against illegal activities such as the accumulation of articles and improper handling of litter and food remnants, conducting joint inspections with relevant government departments and property management companies and strengthening publicity and education. For survey locations with more serious rodent infestation, the FEHD has strengthened follow-up actions since the second half of 2020, implemented mitigation measures for a month to strengthen rodent prevention and control work at the relevant locations, and conducted a new round of the Rodent Infestation Survey at these locations afterwards to closely monitor the rodent infestation and evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation measures. The relevant measures were found to be effective and the index significantly decreased. In addition, apart from the current arrangements for releasing the survey results of individual survey locations to relevant departments via email, the FEHD is finalising the details with the Lands Department regarding the dissemination of detailed data on rodent infestation at survey locations to various departments through the Government's Geospatial Information Hub platform by mid-year, so that the relevant departments can deploy targeted rodent prevention and control operations at sites they are responsible for.

The FEHD's overall RIR is calculated from the RIRs of all survey locations, while the district RIR is calculated from the RIRs of all survey locations in that district. The relevant RIRs assess the extensiveness of the rodent infestation in public places within the survey locations concerned during the surveillance period. The RIR is divided into three levels. Level 1 (less than 10 per cent) indicates that rodent infestation is not

extensive. Targeted anti-rodent operations will be arranged mainly at locations where rodent activities are detected. Level 2 (10 per cent to less than 20 per cent) indicates that rodent infestation is slightly extensive, and block/area control covering the activity areas of an entire rodent population will be conducted. Level 3 (20 per cent or above) indicates that rodent infestation is extensive. An inter-departmental working group is needed to co-ordinate anti-rodent operations at the district level, including strengthening cleansing services, assisting relevant departments in carrying out anti-rodent work in areas under their purview and promoting rodent prevention and control in the community.

The spokesman said, "Apart from making reference to the district RIRs, the FEHD makes appropriate adjustments to the work in individual districts from time to time, taking into account reports from front-line staff and the views of the local community and residents when conducting rodent prevention and control operations."

The FEHD is continuing to roll out the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign in two phases this year. The first phase was launched in early January and ended on March 12. The second phase, to last for 10 weeks, will be launched in July. During the campaign period, the FEHD steps up rodent control work and inspections in target areas, including markets, municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, typhoon shelters, lanes adjacent to food premises and other problematic spots and their peripheries to enhance the effectiveness of the overall rodent prevention and control work in the districts and to achieve sustainable results.

In addition, the FEHD will also conduct an eight-week anti-rodent operation in designated target areas in various districts after each phase of the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign this year, during which multi-pronged strategies, including improving environmental hygiene and stepping up rodent disinfestation and enforcement actions, will continue to be adopted to strengthen rodent prevention and control at the district level. The FEHD will strengthen the application of thermal cameras to detect rodent activities in all designated target areas across the territory and survey locations where rodent infestation is more severe, with a view to making anti-rodent operations more targeted and effective.

The FEHD has also strengthened collaboration with various government departments and district organisations, such as the Housing Department, the Home Affairs Department, the Lands Department, the Highways Department, District Councils, Area Committees and building owners' committees, and launched more public education and publicity of pest prevention campaigns in different districts in order to promote pest control work more effectively at community levels.

The spokesman stressed that removal of rubbish and keeping clean is the crux of anti-rodent work, and effective rodent prevention and control hinges on sustained co-operation between the community and the Government. Apart from enhancing the rodent prevention and control work in all districts, the FEHD will also step up public education and publicity targeting different sectors of the community, including co-organising promotional activities with

District Councils, to encourage the public to actively participate in the anti-rodent campaigns and prevent rodent infestation by eliminating the three survival conditions of rodents, 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.

For more information on rodent prevention and control measures and the RIR, please visit the FEHD website at www.fehd.gov.hk.