

First stage Area Ovitrap Index for Aedes albopictus for September to be uploaded to FEHD's website from tomorrow

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (September 11) that it will release additional results for the Area Ovitrap Index for *Aedes albopictus* (AOI) in two more stages starting from September to keep the public abreast of the latest situation of mosquito infestation and enhance the function of the ovitrap indices in enabling them to stay vigilant. The FEHD will also continue to announce the monthly AOI of various areas in Hong Kong to give the public a monthly overview of the infestation level of mosquitoes to facilitate timely implementation of corresponding mosquito prevention and control measures. The AOI released at the first stage in September will be successively uploaded to the FEHD's website (www.fehd.gov.hk/english/pestcontrol/dengue_fever/index.html) starting from tomorrow.

"A number of local dengue fever (DF) cases have been recorded in Hong Kong since mid-August and members of the public are very concerned about mosquito problems in the areas in which they live. In view of this, the FEHD, starting from September, has enhanced the arrangement for announcing the AOI. Before the announcement of the monthly AOI, additional AOI results will be released in two preceding stages," an FEHD spokesman said.

Aedes albopictus is the main vector for DF virus transmission. The ovitrap indices indicate the extensiveness of the distribution of Aedine mosquitoes in various areas, which is useful in alerting the public to take anti-mosquito and personal protective measures.

At present, the FEHD conducts two-week surveillance to monitor the breeding of *Aedes albopictus* at 57 surveyed areas every month. During the surveillance period, all ovitraps will be retrieved after the completion of surveillance in the first and second weeks (i.e. two times) and examined immediately for the presence of larvae of *Aedes albopictus*. The ovitraps will then be incubated in the laboratory for another week to confirm if there are any undetected eggs that would hatch into larvae of *Aedes albopictus*. Hence, the whole survey period lasts for about three weeks.

Starting from September, the FEHD will release the data as soon as possible every time after the ovitraps are retrieved. Apart from the release of the AOI in those two stages, under normal circumstances, the AOI of each month will be available for uploading successively to the FEHD's website starting from the fourth week of the same month at the soonest. After the AOI results of all surveyed areas are uploaded to the FEHD's website, the monthly average Ovitrap Index of the territory will be announced. At every stage, the

FEHD will follow the established practice of notifying relevant government departments of the aforementioned indices so that they can carry out targeted mosquito prevention and control work promptly to strengthen the anti-mosquito efforts.

To prevent the spread of DF, the Government will continue the All-out Anti-mosquito Operation relentlessly. The spokesman also urged members of the public to keep on taking effective mosquito prevention and control measures at home, including clearing stagnant water, scrubbing vases and pot plant saucers at least once a week and disposing of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes properly, to prevent mosquito breeding. In addition, they should also adopt personal protective measures, including avoiding staying in the vicinity of shrubby areas for a long time and wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers and applying DEET-containing insect repellent when outdoors. The public can make reports to government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.