

First successful co-operation between Hong Kong Customs and FSD in working-dog breeding (with photos)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs and the Fire Services Department (FSD) have co-operated for the first time in a canine breeding programme, having successfully bred six Springer Spaniel puppies on February 12 this year (the first day of the Lunar New Year). This result is of great significance to not only assist the two departments in securing a stable source of working dogs, but also to facilitate the long-term development of both working-dog units.

Customs has always been committed to enhancing the quality of detector dogs and sustaining a stable supply. Apart from the successful self-breeding of six Labrador puppies last July, Customs has been exploring co-operation with local or overseas organisations in canine breeding. Customs joined hands with the Correctional Services Department and the Hong Kong Police Force in 2016 and 2019 respectively in working-dog breeding. This year the department co-operated with other disciplinary forces again and teamed up with the FSD to breed dogs for the first time.

The Deputy Head of Land Boundary Command (Customs Canine Force), Ms Gladys Ma, said at a press conference today (April 23) that the co-operative canine breeding programme with the theme "Together, we incubate the future" symbolises the injection of new blood into the dog teams of both departments, and the inheritance of professionalism in Customs detector dogs' law enforcement and FSD rescue dogs' commitment to serve the community. Senior Station Officer (Technical Rescue) of the Fire and Ambulance Services Academy Mr Eric Law said that Customs and the FSD also shared the experience in canine breeding and training to help enhance the working efficiency of dog handlers and working dogs, which was beneficial to the development of the two working dog units.

For this time, the English Springer Spaniel was chosen as the breed dog given its strong sniff sense and high obedience. An FSD rescue dog was chosen to become the father dog, while a Customs drug detector dog become the mother dog. Customs officers have taken full charge of duties, from taking care of the mother dog, to the birth, feeding and early training of the puppies. Representatives from the FSD were also sent to provide support and gain experience during the process.

Being the first batch of Springer Spaniels to be born at the Breeding Centre of Customs Canine Force at Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Base, the six puppies were born on the first day of the Lunar New Year. They are named in order of their age as Farris, Uma, Taco, Umi, Raisa and Effie, with "FUTURE" as the acronym, which has the implied meaning that they are the new generation of dog teams bred by Customs and the FSD. It is hoped that they will continue to inherit their mission and create a bright future.

The puppies will undergo regular training for 10 to 12 weeks when they reach 1 year old, and will officially perform duties after passing the examinations. Four of them will perform drug, explosive and cash detection for Customs while the other two will join the Search and Rescue Dog Team of the FSD to assist in mountain rescues as well as urban search and rescue missions.

The consecutive births of self-bred working dogs have proven the professionalism and determination of Customs in canine breeding and puppy nurturing. Customs will continue to explore different kinds of co-operation programmes to proactively develop detector dog management as a professional branch for the department in a bid to assist in upgrading its enforcement efficiency.



