

Government to step up territory-wide anti-rodent operations

As rodents are vectors of a number of diseases, the Government spares no effort to step up rodent prevention and control operations in the territory and will further strengthen inter-departmental co-operation so as to sustain the effectiveness of rodent prevention and control work at the district level and raise public awareness of rodent prevention and control.

Apart from taking the Rodent Infestation Rate as a reference, the Government will continue to take into account signs of rodent infestation, complaint figures and the views of the local community, and will conduct targeted anti-rodent operations at problematic locations in collaboration with relevant departments and organisations. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) will strengthen liaison with the Housing Department (HD) and relevant organisations to organise joint cleaning operations in various districts. The Home Affairs Department and relevant departments will also provide necessary assistance.

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, said, "The Government has always been concerned about rodent prevention and control. I visited Choi Wan Estate in Wong Tai Sin as well as Tsuen Wan and Kwun Tong districts last Saturday (September 29) and was briefed by FEHD and HD colleagues on rodent infestation in those areas. I have proposed that the rodent prevention and control work should be enhanced throughout the territory, and co-ordination and co-operation among different departments and organisations should be strengthened.

"To prevent rodent infestation effectively, we should eliminate the three survival conditions of rodents, namely food, harbourage and passages, meaning the elimination of food sources and hiding places of rodents, as well as blockage of their dispersal routes. In addition, the FEHD will enhance publicity and education and step up enforcement actions against illegal acts."

She added, "I hope that continued anti-rodent operations will raise public awareness of rodent prevention and control, which will enhance the overall effectiveness of anti-rodent work. I also call on the community to actively support and participate in the anti-rodent operations and work together for a clean and hygienic community."

In view of the fruitful results of the first round of the anti-rodent operations in designated target areas held in April 2018, the FEHD will conduct another round of two-month anti-rodent operations in designated target areas starting from October 8 to continue to intensify the district rodent prevention and control work.

Each District Environmental Hygiene Office of the FEHD, taking into

account factors including rodent infestation rates, the number of rodent complaints received, views of the local community and the number of food premises and "three-nil" buildings, will identify target areas in each district and continue to adopt multi-pronged strategies, including improving environmental hygiene and stepping up rodent disinfestation and enforcement actions for carrying out targeted anti-rodent operations.

FEHD staff will enhance street cleaning services and cleaning of public markets and hawker bazaars in the target areas, including sweeping and cleaning of streets and rear lanes, clearing refuse and waste, emptying and cleaning of litter containers, and clearance of miscellaneous articles and waste in public markets and hawker bazaars, so as to keep the environment clean.

The FEHD will also strengthen rodent disinfestation work at problematic spots such as rear lanes, refuse collection points, markets, hawker bazaars, cooked food markets and peripheral areas of construction sites by placing poisonous baits and traps, destroying rat holes and implementing rodent-proofing measures.

In addition, inspections of food premises will be stepped up. Enforcement actions against food premises causing poor environmental hygiene conditions, scullery and food preparation at rear lanes, and improper handling and disposal of rubbish will be strengthened. The FEHD will also adopt a zero-tolerance approach against common public cleanliness offences and take stringent enforcement actions against illegal disposal of refuse and waste.

As regards enhancing public education and publicity, apart from the broadcast of TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest and display of posters on public transport, the FEHD will collaborate with District Councils and District Offices of the Home Affairs Department to organise anti-rodent promotional activities. The department will also arrange health talks for building management offices of private buildings, persons-in-charge of food premises, and market and hawker stall operators to provide information and technical advice on rodent prevention and control.