

May's monthly ovitrap index for Aedes albopictus rises

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (June 14) announced that the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for May rose to 11 per cent from 5.4 per cent in April, indicating that mosquito infestation was slightly more extensive in the areas surveyed. The FEHD reminded the public to carry out effective anti-mosquito measures as the hot and rainy weather of summer is favourable for massive mosquito breeding within a short period of time.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "*Aedes albopictus* is a kind of mosquito that can transmit dengue fever (DF) and Zika virus. In view of the 29 local DF cases recorded in Hong Kong last year and the high prevalence of DF in neighbouring areas, and that Hong Kong is expecting an above-normal temperature and rainfall this summer which is favourable for proliferation of mosquitoes, the community must work with the Government to continue to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures."

Among the 57 areas surveyed last month, the Area Ovitrap Index (AOI) in six areas exceeded the alert level of 20 per cent. They were Wong Tai Sin Central (39.6 per cent), Tuen Mun West (32 per cent), Sheung Shui (29.3 per cent), Yau Tong (24.3 per cent), Deep Water Bay and Repulse Bay (22.3 per cent) and Tin Shui Wai (22 per cent). As for the port areas, the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for May also rose to 1.7 per cent from 0.8 per cent in April.

The spokesman said, "The FEHD is very concerned about mosquito infestation, and an inter-departmental anti-mosquito response mechanism has been activated in the above-mentioned areas for co-ordinating relevant departments and stakeholders to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures. Relevant departments have also individually notified the groups that had voluntarily subscribed to the ovitrap rapid alert system when the AOI reached the alert level of 20 per cent. Subscribers have been invited to post specially designed alert notices in the common parts of their premises to urge occupants and staff to carry out mosquito prevention and control measures promptly."

The FEHD and relevant government departments have launched All-out Anti-mosquito Operations in April to carry out anti-mosquito work throughout the territory. The major measures include carrying out fogging in scrubby areas within a 100-metre radius around residences weekly to kill adult mosquitoes; carrying out inspection, removing stagnant water, applying insecticide and disposing of abandoned water containers weekly to prevent mosquito breeding; and trimming of grass to discourage resting of adult mosquitoes on the site. The FEHD and relevant government departments will continue the above mosquito prevention and control work in areas under their purview, particularly in the areas with AOI reaching the alert level, and strengthen publicity and

education campaigns in the coming months.

In addition, the FEHD is conducting the second phase of the Anti-mosquito Campaign. The district offices of the FEHD have targeted at areas which have drawn particular concerns, such as public markets, cooked food centres and hawker bazaars, single-block buildings, streets and back lanes, common parts of buildings, village houses, construction sites, vacant sites and road works sites, and stepped up publicity at those places as well as mosquito prevention and control work at relevant public places. The FEHD will, after the second phase of the campaign, conduct territory-wide thematic mosquito prevention and control special operations to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign.

The FEHD has also handled mosquito complaints promptly and taken out prosecutions under the relevant ordinance against mosquito breeding. The Pest Control Inspection Teams have stepped up inspection of construction sites and enforcement action against mosquito breeding. This year (as at June 9), the FEHD instituted 64 prosecutions for mosquito breeding found in relevant premises under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), comprising 58 cases involving construction sites and six cases involving other premises.

In order to keep the public abreast of the latest situation of mosquito infestation and assist them to take timely mosquito prevention and control measures, the FEHD is releasing two additional phased AOI for *Aedes albopictus* before the announcement of the monthly AOI and the Monthly Ovitrap Index for *Aedes albopictus*. 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.

The spokesman added that as *Aedes albopictus* breeds in small water bodies, members of the public should carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures, including inspecting their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, changing all the water in vases and scrubbing the inner surface as well as removing the water in saucers under potted plants at least once a week, properly disposing of containers such as soft drink cans and lunch boxes, and drilling large holes in unused tyres. He also advised the public and estate management bodies to keep drains free of blockage and level all defective ground surfaces to prevent accumulation of water. They should also scrub all drains and surface sewers with an alkaline detergent at least once a week to remove any mosquito eggs.

In addition, rural areas and the vicinity of shrubby areas are the natural habitats for mosquitoes, other insects and animals. Members of the public living in rural areas may install mosquito screens on windows and doors if necessary. Those staying in the natural environment should take appropriate personal protective measures against mosquitoes, such as avoiding staying in the vicinity of shrubby areas for a long time, wearing light-coloured long-sleeved clothes and trousers, and applying DEET-containing insect repellent. Members of the public are reminded to make reports to the

government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.

The spokesman reiterated that effective mosquito prevention and control requires the sustained effort of all parties concerned. The community must work together with the Government to carry out effective anti-mosquito measures.

The ovitrap indices for *Aedes albopictus* in different areas and information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the department website at www.fehd.gov.hk.