

November's monthly gravidtrap index for Aedes albopictus continues to fall

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (December 20) announced that the monthly gravidtrap index for *Aedes albopictus* in November continued to drop to 2.2 per cent, lower than that of 2.8 per cent in October. The index in November remained at Level 1 at its lowest, indicating that distribution of *Aedes albopictus* in the areas surveyed was not extensive.

Among the 64 survey areas, no area was recorded with a gravidtrap index exceeding the alert level of 20 per cent. Moreover, the monthly density index for *Aedes albopictus* in November was 1.2, which represented that an average of 1.2 *Aedes albopictus* adults were found in the *Aedes*-positive gravidtraps, indicating that the number of adult *Aedes albopictus* was not high in the areas surveyed. The gravidtrap and density indices for *Aedes albopictus* in different areas and information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the department's website at www.fehd.gov.hk.

Despite the index remaining at a low level, the breeding and activity of mosquitoes will continue in winter. The FEHD and relevant government departments will continue the mosquito prevention and control work in areas under their purview as well as the publicity and education work.

To tie in with the upcoming territory-wide year-end clean-up campaign, the FEHD has launched an enhanced clean-up operation, starting from today and lasting for about three weeks, during which mosquito preventive and control work will be enhanced, including carrying out inspections, removing stagnant water, applying insecticide and disposing of abandoned water containers weekly to prevent mosquito breeding, and trimming of grass to discourage the resting of adult mosquitoes on the site.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "Effective mosquito control requires the sustained effort of all parties concerned. The community must work together with the Government to carry out effective mosquito control measures."

The FEHD appeals to members of the public to carry out mosquito prevention and control measures including inspecting their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, changing the water in vases and scrubbing the inner surfaces, 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. The FEHD also advises members of the public and estate management bodies to keep drains free of blockage and level all defective ground surfaces to prevent the 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.

Aedes albopictus is a kind of mosquito that can transmit dengue fever

(DF) as well as Zika virus infection. DF is commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions of the world, and has become endemic in many countries in Southeast Asia. The dengue activity in neighbouring areas has remained high and Hong Kong has recorded two imported DF cases so far this year.