

## October's monthly ovitrap index for Aedes albopictus drops further

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (November 25) announced that the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for October dropped to 2.9 per cent from 6.5 per cent in September. Despite the continuous drop in the index, in view of the fact that Hong Kong has recorded a local dengue fever (DF) case this month, and that DF has remained highly prevalent in neighbouring areas, the FEHD reminded the community to continue to carry out effective mosquito control measures in the coming winter season.

After months of enhanced collaborative efforts of various departments in mosquito prevention and control work, no area has recorded an Area Ovitrap Index (AOI) exceeding the alert level of 20 per cent since August this year.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "*Aedes albopictus* is a kind of mosquito that can transmit DF as well as the 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 World Health Organization also issued warnings that the number of DF cases recorded in Asia this year was exceptionally high when compared with last year. Since Hong Kong has recorded this year's first local DF case this month and the dengue activity in neighbouring areas has remained high, coupled with the relatively high temperature of autumn and winter in Hong Kong which is favourable for mosquito breeding, the public must remain vigilant and work with the Government to continue to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures. The FEHD and relevant government departments will continue their mosquito preventive and control work covering areas under their purview. Moreover, the year-end clean-up operation will commence on December 31, during which mosquito preventive and control work will also be enhanced."

Among the 57 areas surveyed last month, positive ovitrap indices, ranging from 0.8 per cent to 15.5 per cent, were recorded in 47 areas. As for the port areas, the monthly ovitrap index for *Aedes albopictus* for October fell to 0.4 per cent from 1.2 per cent in September.

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 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 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 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 relevant government departments via 1823 if mosquito problems are detected.

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](http://www.fehd.gov.hk).