

Public urged to keep up anti-mosquito efforts

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (August 4) announced that the monthly gravidtrap index for *Aedes albopictus* in June was 21.1 per cent at Level 3, indicating that the distribution of *Aedes albopictus* was extensive in the survey areas. Relevant government departments had stepped up mosquito prevention and control work immediately, and the area gravidtrap index (AGI) in most of the survey areas concerned recorded a significant decrease in the first phase of monitoring in July.

Among the 64 survey areas, the AGI in 30 areas exceeded the alert level of 20 per cent in June. The gravidtraps concerned were mostly located in the vicinity of public and private residential areas, schools, recreational and sports facilities and public places.

Moreover, the monthly density index for *Aedes albopictus* was 1.6 in June, which represented that an average of 1.6 *Aedes albopictus* adults were found in the *Aedes*-positive gravidtraps, indicating that the number of adult *Aedes albopictus* was slightly abundant in the survey areas. The gravidtrap and density indices for *Aedes albopictus* in different survey areas as well as information on mosquito prevention and control measures are available on the department's website at www.fehd.gov.hk.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "The Government is very concerned about the mosquito infestation in June. Upon learning of the situation, the Environment and Ecology Bureau contacted relevant Heads of Departments, appealing to them to take immediate and effective measures to strengthen the mosquito control work in venues under their respective management. The FEHD also intensified mosquito prevention and control work with relevant government departments, and provided them with advice and technical support to assist them in implementing effective anti-mosquito measures swiftly. At the same time, the FEHD, in collaboration with personnel from relevant government departments, conducted site inspections to eliminate potential mosquito breeding places, and strengthened publicity and education.

"Under the concerted efforts and collaboration of various government departments, most of the survey areas having the AGI exceeding the alert level of 20 per cent in June have recorded a significant decrease in the index in the first phase of monitoring in July. The FEHD will continue to monitor the mosquito infestation in all districts, and will take prompt and effective mosquito prevention and control work. The FEHD will also strengthen law enforcement; a total of 106 prosecutions against mosquito breeding have been initiated in the first six months of 2022. Meanwhile, the FEHD kick-started a three-week territory-wide thematic mosquito prevention and control special operation in June, focusing on enhanced mosquito control work at strategic areas, such as construction sites, etc," the spokesman continued.

The FEHD appeals to members of the public to work together to carry out

mosquito prevention and control measures early, including inspecting their homes and surroundings to remove potential breeding grounds, changing the water in vases and scrubbing their 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 one imported DF case so far this year. Furthermore, as Hong Kong's hot and rainy summer is conducive to the proliferation of mosquitoes, members of the public should stay vigilant and continue to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures.