

Public urged to take anti-mosquito action early

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (February 16) announced that the monthly gravidtrap index for *Aedes albopictus* (MGI) for January was 0.2 per cent and remained at Level 1 at its lowest, indicating that mosquito infestation in the areas surveyed was not extensive.

Among the 64 survey areas, no area recorded a gravidtrap index exceeding the alert level of 20 per cent. Moreover, the monthly density index for *Aedes albopictus* in January was 1, which represented that an average of one *Aedes albopictus* adult was 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 department reminded members of the public to carry out effective preventive measures against mosquito breeding early as the warm and humid weather of spring is favourable for mosquito breeding.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "Effective mosquito control requires the sustained effort of all parties concerned. The FEHD and relevant government departments will continue to intensify their mosquito prevention and control work covering areas under their purview and strengthen publicity and education. The FEHD will conduct a three-phase Anti-mosquito Campaign this year. The first phase of the territory-wide campaign, lasting four weeks, will run from February 21 until March 18. During the period, the district offices of the FEHD will target areas that have drawn particular concern, such as locations in close proximity to human residences, schools, construction sites, public housing estates, hospitals, illegal cultivation sites, waterfront public and private cargo working areas, cross-boundary checkpoints, typhoon shelters and cross-boundary ferry terminals, to remove accumulation of water and to carry out mosquito prevention and control work. The FEHD will, after the first phase of the campaign, conduct territory-wide thematic mosquito prevention and control special operations so as to enhance the effectiveness of the campaign."

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 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.