

September's monthly gravidtrap index for Aedes albopictus remains relatively low

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (October 20) announced that the monthly gravidtrap index for *Aedes albopictus* (MGI) in September is 6.7 per cent, which is at Level 2, indicating that mosquito infestation was slightly more extensive in the areas surveyed but maintained at a relatively low level. Among the 62 survey areas, the area gravidtrap index (AGI) in four areas (including Lok Fu West, Ngau Chi Wan, Tseung Kwan O North and Tsing Yi North) exceeded the alert level of 20 per cent. Moreover, the monthly density index for *Aedes albopictus* (MDI) in September remained at 1.2 as in August, 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. Given that the rainfall last month was more than double the normal rainfall, and the temperature of autumn in Hong Kong is relatively high with occasional rain, which is favourable for mosquito breeding, the FEHD reminded the public to continue to work with the Government to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures.

As for the port areas, the port monthly gravidtrap index in September also rose slightly to 1.1 per cent from 0.9 per cent in August, while the port monthly density index in September rose slightly to 1.2 from 1.1 in August.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "Among the areas where the MGI in September exceeded the alert level, the *Aedes*-positive gravidtraps were found in the vicinity of public and private residential areas, recreational facilities, schools and public places. The FEHD is very concerned about the mosquito infestation in the abovementioned areas and has enhanced co-operation with relevant government departments, including promptly notifying relevant government departments to strengthen mosquito prevention and control measures in areas under their purview, conducting fogging to kill adult mosquitoes, cleaning up mosquito breeding places and setting up new mosquito traps."

The FEHD also commenced the All-out Anti-mosquito Operations earlier. Major anti-mosquito measures include carrying out fogging in scrubby areas within a 100-metre radius around residences to kill adult mosquitoes, 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 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 and will strengthen publicity and education campaigns. In addition, the FEHD collaborates with relevant government departments every year to conduct the three-phase Anti-

mosquito Campaign. The third phase of the Campaign started in August and will last until October 30. During the period, the district offices of the FEHD target areas which draw 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 handling areas, cross-boundary checkpoints, typhoon shelters and cross-boundary ferry terminals, to remove stagnant water and carry out mosquito prevention and control work.

The AGI and the area density index (ADI) indicate the extensiveness of distribution and the density of Aedine mosquitoes respectively in that particular survey area, while the MGI and the MDI are enumerated by pooling together all AGIs and ADIs of the same month, which reflects the general situation of *Aedes albopictus* in all survey areas. 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.

The spokesman said, "*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 World Health Organization also issued warnings that the number of DF cases recorded in Asia last year was higher than before. As Hong Kong has recorded this year's first local DF case in April and the dengue activity in neighbouring areas has remained high, and the temperature of autumn in Hong Kong is relatively high with occasional rain, this is favourable for mosquito breeding. The public must continue to work with the Government to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures."

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 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. 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.

The spokesman reiterated that 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.