

Monthly gravidtrap index for Aedes albopictus mosquitoes in December 2023 continues to drop

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (January 16) announced that the monthly gravidtrap index for Aedes albopictus mosquitoes in December 2023 continued to drop to 0.8 per cent from 1.8 per cent in November last year, which remained at the lowest Level 1, indicating that the distribution of Aedes albopictus mosquitoes in the areas surveyed was not extensive.

In December last year, all the 64 survey areas were recorded with a gravidtrap index lower than the alert level of 20 per cent. Moreover, the monthly density index for Aedes albopictus in December last year remained at 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 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 mosquito infestation. The FEHD has continued to intensify mosquito prevention and control work with relevant government departments in areas under their purview, including eliminating mosquito breeding places, applying larvicides, conducting fogging operations to eradicate adult mosquitoes, and placing mosquito trapping devices at suitable locations. The FEHD has also conducted site inspections with relevant departments, and provided them with professional advice and technical support to assist them in formulating and implementing effective anti-mosquito measures swiftly. At the same time, the FEHD has strengthened publicity and education. Under the concerted efforts and collaboration of various parties, the index in December last year continued to drop. As the weather had turned cooler and drier, the All-out Anti-mosquito Operations launched since March 20 last year ended on December 15 last year. Although the index remains at a low level, the breeding and activity of mosquitoes will not stop in winter. The FEHD will continue to monitor the mosquito infestation in all districts, and will conduct prompt and effective mosquito prevention and control work. At the same time, members of the public are advised to continue the routine mosquito prevention and control work, especially the repair and maintenance of structures. Cracks and dents which may accumulate water and become potential breeding grounds should be filled and leveled so as to reduce the chance of mosquito breeding when the rainy season approaches."

The FEHD has kick-started its territory-wide year-end clean-up campaign today, which will last for 21 days. During the campaign, mosquito prevention 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 resting of adult mosquitoes on the site.

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 water in vases and scrubbing their inner surfaces, removing 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). 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 63 imported DF cases so far since last year. Members of the public should stay vigilant and continue to carry out effective mosquito prevention and control measures.

[CHP closely monitors human case of avian influenza A\(H5N6\) on Mainland](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (January 16) closely monitoring a human case of avian influenza A(H5N6) on the Mainland, and again urged the public to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

The case involves a 59-year-old female living in Ziyang City in Sichuan Province, who had visited a live poultry market before the onset of symptoms. She developed symptoms on November 25 last year and was admitted for treatment on November 29 with serious condition.

From 2014 to date, 89 human cases of avian influenza A(H5N6) have been reported by Mainland health authorities.

"All novel influenza A infections, including H5N6, are notifiable infectious diseases in Hong Kong," a spokesman for the CHP said.

Travellers to the Mainland or other affected areas must avoid visiting wet markets, live poultry markets or farms. They should be alert to the presence of backyard poultry when visiting relatives and friends. They should also avoid purchasing live or freshly slaughtered poultry, and avoid touching

poultry/birds or their droppings. They should strictly observe personal and hand hygiene when visiting any place with live poultry.

Travellers returning from affected areas should consult a doctor promptly if symptoms develop, and inform the doctor of their travel history for prompt diagnosis and treatment of potential diseases. It is essential to tell the doctor if they have seen any live poultry during travel, which may imply possible exposure to contaminated environments. This will enable the doctor to assess the possibility of avian influenza and arrange necessary investigations and appropriate treatment in a timely manner.

While local surveillance, prevention and control measures are in place, the CHP will remain vigilant and work closely with the World Health Organization and relevant health authorities to monitor the latest developments.

The public should maintain strict personal, hand, food and environmental hygiene and take heed of the advice below when handling poultry:

- Avoid touching poultry, birds, animals or their droppings;
- When buying live chickens, do not touch them and their droppings. Do not blow at their bottoms. Wash eggs with detergent if soiled with faecal matter and cook and consume the eggs immediately. Always wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after handling chickens and eggs;
- Eggs should be cooked well until the white and yolk become firm. Do not eat raw eggs or dip cooked food into any sauce with raw eggs. Poultry should be cooked thoroughly. If there is pinkish juice running from the cooked poultry or the middle part of its bone is still red, the poultry should be cooked again until fully done;
- Wash hands frequently, especially before touching the mouth, nose or eyes, before handling food or eating, and after going to the toilet, touching public installations or equipment such as escalator handrails, elevator control panels or door knobs, or when hands are dirtied by respiratory secretions after coughing or sneezing; and
- Wear a mask if fever or respiratory symptoms develop, when going to a hospital or clinic, or while taking care of patients with fever or respiratory symptoms.

â€‹The public may visit the CHP's pages for more information: the [avian influenza](#) page, the weekly [Avian Influenza Report, global statistics and affected areas](#) of avian influenza, the [Facebook Page](#) and the [YouTube Channel](#).

Supplier convicted and fined \$360,000 for supplying surgical masks with false trade descriptions

A supplier was fined \$360,000 today (January 16) at the District Court following an earlier conviction of supplying surgical masks with false trade descriptions, in violation of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Hong Kong Customs received a complaint from the Government Logistics Department (GLD) on August 31, 2020, alleging that the mask supplier was suspected of supplying masks with a false claim of origin to the GLD. After investigation, Customs officers found that approximately 12.5 million surgical masks claiming to be manufactured in Japan supplied by the supplier to the GLD from July 9, 2020, to August 18, 2020, were different from the facts.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO. Under the TDO, any person who supplies goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business, or is in possession of any goods for sale with a false trade description, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the TDO to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).

Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade in November 2023

Further to the external merchandise trade statistics in value terms for November 2023 released earlier on, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (January 16) the volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for that month.

In November 2023, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 1.5% and 2.6% respectively over November 2022.

Comparing the first eleven months of 2023 with the same period in 2022, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods and imports of goods

decreased by 13.1% and 10.6% respectively.

Comparing the three-month period ending November 2023 with the preceding three months on a seasonally adjusted basis, the volume of total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 4.3% and 4.0% respectively.

Changes in volume of external merchandise trade are derived from changes in external merchandise trade value with the effect of price changes discounted.

Comparing November 2023 with November 2022, the prices of total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 5.5% and 4.1% respectively.

As regards price changes in the first eleven months of 2023 over the same period in 2022, the prices of total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 4.4% and 3.8% respectively.

Price changes in external merchandise trade are reflected by changes in unit value indices of external merchandise trade, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, specific price data.

The terms of trade index is derived from the ratio of price index of total exports of goods to that of imports of goods. Compared with the same periods in 2022, the index increased by 1.3% in November 2023 and 0.6% in the first eleven months of 2023.

Changes in the unit value and volume of total exports of goods by main destination are shown in Table 1.

Comparing November 2023 with November 2022, increases were recorded for the total export volume to India (12.2%), the mainland of China (the Mainland) (7.2%), Vietnam (6.6%) and the USA (2.1%). On the other hand, the total export volume to Taiwan decreased by 4.6%.

Over the same period of comparison, the total export prices to all main destinations increased: India (8.1%), the Mainland (7.6%), Vietnam (6.1%), Taiwan (2.5%) and the USA (2.1%).

Changes in the unit value and volume of imports of goods by main supplier are shown in Table 2.

Comparing November 2023 with November 2022, increases were recorded for the import volume from Singapore (19.6%), the Mainland (3.5%) and Japan (3.4%). On the other hand, the import volume from Korea (-11.3%) and Taiwan (-15.0%) decreased.

Over the same period of comparison, the import prices from all main suppliers increased: Taiwan (7.5%), Korea (6.2%), Singapore (6.1%), the Mainland (4.3%) and Japan (2.9%).

Further information

Details of the above statistics are published in the November 2023 issue of "Hong Kong Merchandise Trade Index Numbers". Users can browse and download the report at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1020006&scode=230).

Enquiries on merchandise trade indices may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 4918).

Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Canada and Korea suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 16) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Papineau Regional County Municipality of Quebec Province in Canada and Uiseong-gun of Gyeongsangbuk-do Province in Korea, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 20 tonnes of frozen poultry meat from Canada, and about 50 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 23.85 million poultry eggs from Korea in the first nine months of last year.

"The CFS has contacted the Canadian and Korean authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the WOAH and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreak. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.