

# Territory-wide cleaning operation to be extended to mid-November (with photos)

The interdepartmental Pest Control Steering Committee met this afternoon (August 8) to review the anti-rodent work carried out by various government departments since the territory-wide cleaning operation commenced on May 20. The Committee decided to extend the operation for three months to mid-November to continuously carry out anti-rodent work, in particular, works such as repaving back alleys, installation of rodent-proofing structures in public rental housing (PRH) estates and intensive anti-rodent work in public markets, which require a longer time to complete.

Various departments briefed the meeting on the progress of territory-wide cleaning work in all 18 districts. They include:

- \* The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has collected 5 215 dead rodents, caught 3 906 live rodents as well as filled 2 144 rat holes in the first two months of the territory-wide cleaning operation.
- \* The Highways Department will complete the repair works of 99 back alleys with damaged road surfaces or surface channels by this month. The department is now planning to partially repave 27 back alleys with relatively serious environmental hygiene problems. The works are expected to be completed within this year.
- \* The Housing Authority (HA) has already examined the operation of rodent-proofing structures installed in more than 180 PRH estates and found some of the existing structures required maintenance or reinforcement. The relevant works will be commenced progressively and additional structures will be installed in PRH estates when necessary. The works will be tentatively completed by the third quarter of this year.
- \* The FEHD has carried out a three-month intensive anti-rodent operation in three public markets, namely Lai Wan Market, Ap Lei Chau Market and Kam Tin Market since mid-July. Speedy refuse removal and cleaning of all drainages in the markets have been carried out every night after the stalls are closed to eliminate food sources for rodents. Traps have been extensively placed to strengthen rodent disinfestation.
- \* The FEHD has organised eight seminars on rodent prevention and control to outsourced cleaning service contractors of departments and property management companies in July.
- \* The FEHD has conducted a special operation targeted at irregularities of food premises such as food preparation, scullery, improper storage of articles and illegal disposal of refuse in back alleys. During the first 10

weeks of the special operation from May 20 to July 28, a total of 219 summons, 335 Fixed Penalty Notices, 463 Notices to Remove Litter/Waste and to Clean Areas, 2 609 advisory letters, 739 verbal warnings, six warning letters and two Nuisance Notices were issued.

To tie in with the territory-wide cleaning operation, the HA has launched the Summer Cleaning Campaign in PRH estates since June to strengthen cleaning and pest control work. The measures include stepping up the cleaning work at hygiene blackspots, inspecting estates and filling rat holes, removing stagnant water, and strengthening publicity and education. The HA has also carried out additional measures including strictly implementing the Marking Scheme for Estate Management Enforcement in more than 20 priority PRH estates. In addition, the HA and the FEHD have also arranged seminars for residents and shop operators. The FEHD would also increase junk collection frequencies for 40 PRH estates.

Hong Kong is entering the peak season of mosquito infestation in August. A local case of Japanese encephalitis was recorded in June. The Under Secretary for Food and Health, Dr Chui Tak-yi, who chaired the meeting today, reminded various departments to pay attention to anti-mosquito work and stay vigilant before the end of the rainy season.

In respect of anti-mosquito work, there were three areas surveyed with ovitrap indices for *Aedes albopictus* exceeding 40 per cent in June and July last year, whereas there is only one area surveyed with an index higher than 40 per cent so far this year. In June this year, the ovitrap indices of 16 areas surveyed exceeded the alert level of 20 per cent and the preliminary data of July revealed that the number of areas surveyed exceeding the alert level has dropped to two.

Regarding mosquito control techniques, the FEHD has conducted field trials of a new mosquito trap design at So Kwun Wat Tsuen in Tuen Mun and the Hong Kong Observatory in Tsim Sha Tsui since May. The preliminary results show that breeding of adult mosquitoes is effectively contained. The traps use female mosquitoes as the media. When female mosquitoes lay eggs in the traps, the insect growth regulator (IGR) will be adhered to them. Once they land in other water bodies to lay eggs, the IGR will be disseminated to prevent mosquito larvae from maturing, thus achieving the effect of mosquito control. The FEHD introduced the new mosquito traps to representatives of other departments at the meeting. The new traps will be provided to the relevant departments for trial in Ma On Shan and Sheung Shui. Other departments are also recommended to install the traps in suitable locations as needed.

Representatives from three bureaux and 20 departments/organisations attended today's meeting.

