

# **Trial Programme of Using Contraceptive Drug on Feral Pigeons launched (with photos)**

With a view to reducing the nuisance caused by feral pigeons, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) today (September 17) launched a two-year Trial Programme of Using Contraceptive Drug on Feral Pigeons at three spots in Central and Western District, Kowloon City District and Sai Kung District respectively where they congregate, in an attempt to control the fertility of feral pigeons by feeding them contraceptive drug-coated feed.

"The Trial Programme of Using Contraceptive Drug on Feral Pigeons aims to evaluate the effectiveness of feeding feral pigeons with the contraceptive drug in reducing the nuisance caused by them. The programme is implemented at congregating spots of feral pigeons near Exit A of MTR Kennedy Town Station, Ma Tau Wai Road/ Ma Hang Chung Road Rest Garden, and Exit A of MTR Hang Hau Station," an AFCD spokesman said.

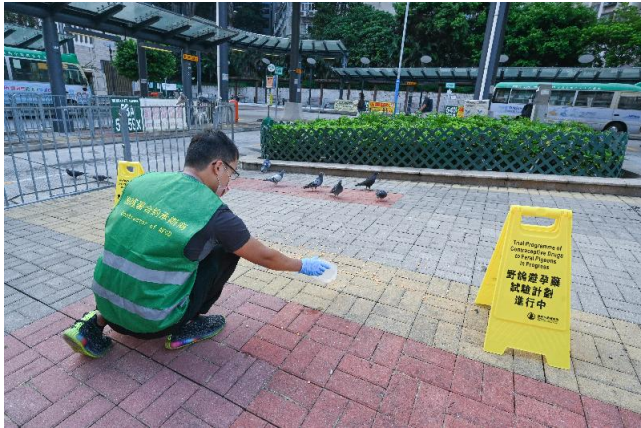
The AFCD commissioned a service contractor to feed feral pigeons daily at a specific time with contraceptive drug-coated feed. Staff of the contractor wearing reflective vests labelled "Contractor of AFCD" will post signs at the feeding spots to remind the public that the programme is under way. They will monitor the whole drug administration process to prevent non-target animals from ingesting the contraceptive drug-coated feed, while any left-over feed will be cleared.

Natural maize kernels coated with the contraceptive drug are used as pigeon feed in the programme. The active ingredient in the contraceptive drug is Nicarbazin. Overseas studies have shown that no obvious side effects are observed in birds (including feral pigeons) after consumption of the contraceptive product. The fertility of birds will recover after the oral contraceptive drug is withdrawn. According to World Health Organization studies, only substantial consumption of the contraceptive product may pose potential hazards to human health. Therefore, proper use of the drug is safe. In addition, Nicarbazin will decompose in the natural environment and the impact on the environment is insignificant.

The AFCD spokesman appeals to the public for their co-operation to avoid approaching the feeding spots while feeding is under way. For enquiries, please call 1823.

The AFCD has appointed the City University of Hong Kong as the consultant who is responsible for related data collection, study and evaluation. The AFCD will decide the way forward, including whether or not to continue the programme and to conduct the programme at other congregating spots of feral pigeons, according to its effectiveness and actual circumstances. The progress of this trial programme will be announced in due

course.



## CHP closely monitors human case of avian influenza A(H5N6) in Mainland

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (September 17) closely monitoring a human case of avian influenza A(H5N6) in the Mainland, and again urged the public to maintain strict personal, food and environmental hygiene both locally and during travel.

The case involves a 40-year-old woman living in Yongzhou in Hunan Province, who had prior exposure to a live poultry market before the onset of symptoms. She developed symptoms on September 8 and was admitted for treatment on the following day. The patient is in serious condition.

From 2014 to date, 43 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 or 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.

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](#).

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## **Statistics of payment cards issued in Hong Kong for second quarter 2021**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (September 17) statistics of payment cards issued in Hong Kong for the second quarter of 2021.

The payment card statistics (see Annex) include quarterly data on credit and debit cards issued in Hong Kong under the credit and/or debit card schemes of the eight payment card scheme operators (Note 1). The HKMA began to publish the payment card statistics on a quarterly basis in June 2010 to

enhance transparency of the payment card industry in Hong Kong, in line with international practice.

According to the quarterly statistics, the total number of credit cards in circulation (Note 2) was 19.22 million by the end of Q2/2021. The figure represents a 0.5 per cent decrease from the previous quarter and a 1.5 per cent decrease from the previous year. The number and value of credit card transactions (including retail sales and cash advances) (Note 3) are susceptible to seasonal factors and the general economic environment, making the trends more prone to fluctuation. The total number of credit card transactions was 235.68 million for Q2/2021, representing a 7.0 per cent increase from the previous quarter and a 15.3 per cent increase from the same period in 2020. The total value of credit card transactions was HK\$172.1 billion for Q2/2021, representing a 1.1 per cent decrease from the previous quarter and a 19.4 per cent increase from the same period in 2020. Of the total transaction value, HK\$142.2 billion (82.6 per cent) was related to retail spending in Hong Kong, HK\$20.3 billion (11.8 per cent) in retail spending overseas and HK\$9.6 billion (5.6 per cent) in cash advances.

The total number of debit cards in circulation is not available due to overlapping of debit card brands in a single card. Like the number and value of credit card transactions, the number and value of debit card transactions in relation to retail sales and bills payments (Note 4) are also affected by seasonal factors. On a quarterly basis, the total number of debit card transactions in relation to retail sales and bills payments increased 6.2 per cent to 42.10 million while the total value decreased by 8.1 per cent to HK\$72.2 billion in Q2/2021. When compared to the same period in 2020, the total number increased by 18.8 per cent and the total value rose by 4.6 per cent in Q2/2021.

#### Notes:

(Note 1) The payment card statistics are compiled from data on credit and debit cards issued in Hong Kong by both authorised institutions (AIs) and non-authorised institutions (non-AIs) under the credit and/or debit card schemes of the eight payment card scheme operators (the card operators). The card operators, in alphabetical order, are American Express International, Inc., Discover Financial Services (Hong Kong) Limited, EPS Company (Hong Kong) Limited (EPSCO), JCB International (Asia) Ltd, Joint Electronic Teller Services Ltd. (JETCO), MasterCard Asia/Pacific Pte. Ltd., UnionPay International Co. Ltd and Visa Worldwide Pte. Limited.

(Note 2) A credit card issued in Hong Kong only carries one credit card brand. The total number of credit cards in circulation refers to the total number of credit cards (i.e. cards with a credit function) issued in Hong Kong under the credit card schemes of card operators (but excluding EPSCO and JETCO, which do not operate a credit card scheme). Some of these credit cards carry debit card functions, i.e. the credit card can be used for making purchases/payments or cash withdrawal at ATMs through directly debiting cardholders' bank accounts.

(Note 3) The total number/value of credit card transactions refer to the

total number/value of transactions made via credit card accounts of credit cards issued in Hong Kong under the credit card schemes of card operators (excluding EPSCO and JETCO). Starting from March 2015, a Hong Kong/overseas spending breakdown of credit card retail sales transactions is provided.

(Note 4) The total number/value of debit card transactions in relation to retail sales/bill payments refers to the total number/value of those transactions made via debiting cardholders' bank accounts. Some of the eight card operators do not operate a debit card scheme. Care should be exercised in combining the credit card retail sales figures and the debit card retail sales/bills payment figures because of the possibility of double counting.

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## **HKMA designates market makers for Southbound Trading under Bond Connect**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (September 17) that it has designated the following 13 financial institutions as market makers for Southbound Trading under Bond Connect (Southbound Trading) (in alphabetical order).

Agricultural Bank of China Limited, Hong Kong Branch  
Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited  
Bank of Communications Co., Ltd., Hong Kong Branch  
BNP Paribas, Hong Kong Branch  
China CITIC Bank International Limited  
China Construction Bank (Asia) Corporation Limited  
Citigroup Global Markets Asia Limited  
Credit Agricole Corporate and Investment Bank  
The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited  
Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (Asia) Limited  
J.P. Morgan Securities (Asia Pacific) Limited  
Mizuho Securities Asia Limited  
Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited

Having regard to the arrangement for Northbound Trading under Bond Connect, the designation of active financial institutions in the Hong Kong bond market as market makers will be conducive to the smooth operation and orderly trading of Southbound Trading.

The aforementioned 13 designated market makers were selected following an HKMA internal evaluation process. The financial institutions invited to apply included recognised arrangers under the HKMA's Pilot Bond Grant Scheme and the eligible market makers for the Exchange Fund Bills and Notes

Programme. The selection of Southbound Trading designated market makers was based on several criteria, including certain basic conditions such as licenses for carrying on relevant activities, adequate internal control systems, and regulatory compliance; and other factors including the financial institutions' activities in the Hong Kong bond market, their business presence in Hong Kong, counterparty network with Mainland financial institutions, etc.

The HKMA will review the list of Southbound Trading designated market makers and evaluate the need for enhancement and expansion as and when appropriate.

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## **Statistics of Stored Value Facilities Schemes issued by SVF licensees**

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) published today (September 17) statistics on Stored Value Facilities (SVF) schemes issued by SVF licensees for the second quarter of 2021 (Q2/2021).

The SVF scheme statistics (see Annex) include quarterly data on SVF schemes issued by the SVF licensees of the relevant periods.

According to the quarterly statistics, the total number of SVF accounts in use (Note 1) was 64.34 million by the end of Q2/2021, representing a 0.8 per cent increase from the previous quarter. The total number of SVF transactions (Note 2) was around 1.5 billion for Q2/2021, or 13.1 per cent higher than the previous quarter. The total value of SVF transactions was HK\$62.7 billion for Q2/2021, representing a 6.1 per cent increase from the previous quarter. Of the total transaction value, HK\$25.8 billion was related to point-of-sale spending payment, HK\$25.9 billion in online spending payment and HK\$11.0 billion in P2P funds transfer. The total float and SVF deposit (Note 3) was HK\$14.0 billion for Q2/2021, 0.6 per cent higher than the previous quarter.

As compared with the end of Q2/2020, the total number of SVF accounts in use at the end of Q2/2021 was up by 0.6 per cent, and the total float and SVF deposit was up by 9.7 per cent. The total number and value of SVF transactions during Q2/2021 were up by 20.3 per cent and 13.0 per cent respectively year-on-year.

Notes:

Note 1: "Total number of SVF accounts in use" refers to the total number of

SVF accounts that can be used as at the end of the reporting period.

Note 2: SVF transactions include point-of-sale spending payment, online spending payment and P2P funds transfer.

Note 3: The terms "float" and "SVF deposit" follow their definitions in the Payment Systems and Stored Value Facilities Ordinance.