

FEHD releases overall Rodent Infestation Rate for 2021

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (January 6) that the overall Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) for 2021 was 3.1 per cent, which was at Level 1, indicating that rodent infestation in public areas in the territory was not extensive during the survey period, and improved as compared with the 3.6 per cent figure in 2020. The FEHD will strengthen its anti-rodent work of last year, and will continue to follow up proactively on its work on rodent prevention and control, publicity and public education, and enforcement actions, etc, this year.

An FEHD spokesman said, "A total of 67 182 dead rodents and live rodents were collected and caught by the FEHD last year, which was higher than the number of 60 860 in 2020. On the enforcement front, the FEHD issued around 46 000 fixed penalty notices and initiated over 4 000 prosecutions last year against irregularities such as poor environmental hygiene conditions, food preparation and scullery at rear lanes, and improper storage of articles and illegal dumping of refuse.

The FEHD continued to carry out its territory-wide anti-rodent campaign and anti-rodent operations in designated target areas last year to strengthen rodent prevention and control work in various districts. Under the anti-rodent operations at designated target areas, interim data have been provided in respect of selected rear lanes in various districts so as to enhance the outcome of the follow-up actions. In parallel, the enhanced version of anti-rodent operations at designated target areas has been piloted in Sham Shui Po, Wan Chai and Yuen Long.

Apart from implementing deep cleaning and intensive anti-rodent operations at its markets, the FEHD also stepped up inspections and took enforcement actions at its markets. In addition, the FEHD has been collaborating with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department to prepare the launch of a pilot scheme at Yeung Uk Road Market, Tsuen Wan, to deploy wireless motion sensors, rodent traps, bait boxes, etc, through the application of Internet of Things solutions, with a view to stepping up the monitoring of rodent prevention and control work in markets for the implementation of targeted improvement measures and subsequent follow-up work. As regards the handling of meat or poultry delivered to licensed premises of fresh provision shops, the FEHD will include a new licensing condition in their licences starting from this month progressively, requiring that these be delivered directly into the premises. Even if an alternative arrangement is approved, the meat or poultry must be properly stored and suitably protected in order to avoid invasion or contamination by rodents.

In addition, as a special measure to prevent and fight the epidemic, since the first quarter of last year, the FEHD has been providing temporary large covered rubbish bins in the evening at around 80 locations in public areas near private properties without refuse collection facilities for the

convenience of residents nearby. The FEHD will review the effectiveness of this measure from time to time. The Home Affairs Department, its district offices and the FEHD also worked in concert last year, with the former providing one-off cleaning services to the common parts of about 1 600 "three-nil" buildings over 4 300 times, with the latter stepping up street cleaning and pest control services at public places in their vicinity.

The FEHD will continue to strengthen collaboration with various government departments and district organisations to enhance publicity and public education to promote pest control work at community levels in a more effective manner. The Working Group on Rodent Prevention and Control in Public Rental Housing Estates under the Housing Authority held three meetings last year. Apart from implementing more intensive rodent control measures at 80 targeted housing estates, the Housing Department, together with the FEHD and district stakeholders, also carried out about 130 joint clean-up operations.

The FEHD's overall RIR is calculated from the RIRs of all survey locations, while the district RIR is calculated from the RIRs of all survey locations in that district. The relevant RIRs assess the extensiveness of the rodent infestation in public places within the survey locations concerned during the surveillance period. The RIR is divided into three levels. Level 1 (less than 10 per cent) indicates that rodent infestation is not extensive. Targeted anti-rodent operations will be arranged mainly at locations where rodent activities are detected. Level 2 (10 per cent to less than 20 per cent) indicates that rodent infestation is slightly extensive, and block/area control covering the activity areas of an entire rodent population will be conducted. Level 3 (20 per cent or above) indicates that rodent infestation is extensive. An inter-departmental working group is needed to co-ordinate anti-rodent operations at the district level, including strengthening cleaning services, assisting relevant departments in carrying out anti-rodent work in areas under their purview and promoting rodent prevention and control in the community.

The spokesman stressed that effective rodent prevention and control hinges on sustained co-operation between the community and the Government. Apart from enhancing the rodent prevention and control work in all districts, the FEHD will also step up public education and publicity targeting different sectors of the community to encourage the public to participate in the anti-rodent campaigns and prevent rodent infestation by eliminating the three survival conditions of rodents, namely food, harbourage and passages, meaning the elimination of the food sources and hiding places of rodents, as well as blockage of their dispersal routes.

For more information on rodent prevention and control measures and the RIR, please visit the FEHD website at www.fehd.gov.hk.