

FEHD releases Rodent Infestation Rate for first half of 2021

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (September 21) that the overall Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) for the first half of 2021 was 2.8 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 lower than the 3.6 per cent recorded for the second half of 2020. The condition was generally under control.

An FEHD spokesman said, "Over 30,000 dead rodents and live rodents were collected and caught respectively by the FEHD for the first half of 2021.

"For survey locations with more serious rodent infestation, the FEHD has strengthened rodent prevention and control work since the second half of last year, including setting up more baiting points and rodent cage traps, strengthening cleansing services, enhancing enforcement actions against illegal activities such as the accumulation of articles and improper handling of litter and food remnants. The FEHD conducted the Rodent Infestation Survey one month later and found the index in all survey locations significantly decreased, indicating that the relevant measures were found to be effective," the spokesman added.

In addition, the FEHD also conducts two rounds of eight-week anti-rodent operations in designated target areas in various districts every year, during which multi-pronged strategies, including improving environmental hygiene and stepping up rodent disinfection and enforcement actions, are adopted to conduct specific rodent control operations. In order to further enhance the effectiveness of rodent prevention and control work at the district level, the FEHD will strengthen the application of thermal cameras to detect rodent activities in all designated target areas across the territory and survey locations where rodent infestation is more severe, with a view to making anti-rodent operations more targeted and effective. During the second-round operation to commence in November this year, the FEHD will extend the coverage of designated target areas in several districts, so as to cover more rodent blackspots, including those in public markets and municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, and rear lanes adjacent to food premises. In the meantime, the FEHD will allocate resources to strengthen the cleansing and rodent control work in those districts, and to take stringent enforcement actions.

In order to further enhance the communication among relevant government departments regarding the rodent prevention and control work, starting from June this year, apart from the current arrangements for releasing the survey results of individual survey locations to relevant departments via email, the FEHD has also started to disseminate detailed data on rodent infestation at survey locations to various departments through the Government's Geospatial Information Hub platform, so that the relevant departments can deploy

targeted rodent prevention and control operations at sites they are responsible for in a timely manner. Members of the public can access the GeoInfo Map through the link on the FEHD website for areas covered by individual survey locations and the latest RIRs.

The FEHD's overall RIR is calculated from the RIRs of 50 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 survey 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 cleansing 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 said, "Apart from making reference to the district RIRs, the FEHD makes appropriate adjustments to the work in individual districts from time to time, taking into account reports from front-line staff and the views of the local community and residents when conducting rodent prevention and control operations."

The FEHD is continuing to roll out the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign in two phases this year. The first phase ended in March, while the second phase was launched on July 5 and just ended on September 10. During the campaign period, the FEHD steps up rodent control work and inspections in target areas, including markets, municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars, typhoon shelters, lanes adjacent to food premises and other problematic spots and their peripheries to enhance the effectiveness of the overall rodent prevention and control work in the districts and to achieve sustainable results. Anti-rodent operations in designated target areas will be conducted after each phase of the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign, so as to fortify the rodent prevention and control work in various districts.

The FEHD has also strengthened collaboration with relevant government departments and district organisations, such as the Housing Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, the Home Affairs Department, the Lands Department, the Highways Department, District Councils, Area Committees and building owners' committees, and launched various public education and publicity of pest prevention campaigns in different districts in order to promote pest control work more effectively at community level.

The spokesman stressed that removal of rubbish and keeping clean are the crux of anti-rodent work, and 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, including co-organising promotional activities with District Councils, to encourage the public to actively 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.