

Pest Control Steering Committee reviews progress of anti-mosquito and anti-rodent work implemented by departments (with photo)

The interdepartmental Pest Control Steering Committee (PCSC) held its 19th meeting today (March 14) to review the latest situation of mosquito proliferation and the anti-mosquito work of departments. The PCSC also examined the work progress of departments under the Cross-sectoral Territory-wide Anti-rodent Action (the Action) and planned their anti-rodent work for the future.

Mosquito control

The representative of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) reported to the PCSC the situation of mosquito proliferation last year and this year thus far. Last year's mosquito infestation was generally under control, and the overall trend of the gravidtrap index for *Aedes albopictus* is similar to that of 2023. The indices for January and February 2025 remained low, consistent with the same period in past years. It is anticipated that as the rainy season approaches, the index will rise starting in April as in previous years. The FEHD and the relevant departments have stepped up their mosquito prevention and control work since March 2025. Other than continue eliminating mosquito breeding places, the FEHD will apply larvicides and conduct fogging operations to eradicate adult mosquitoes, and place mosquito trapping devices at suitable locations. The FEHD will continue to conduct on-site inspections with relevant departments, and provide them with professional advice and technical support.

The rainfall in April last year was higher than usual causing the gravidtrap indices in some monitored areas to reach the alert levels. As the hot and rainy weather approaches, combined with the increase in inbound and outbound passenger traffic during the upcoming long holiday, the overall risk of dengue fever may rise. The departments will closely monitor the situation of mosquito infestation as reflected by the surveillance indices, and constantly update the list of mosquito infestation hotspots to adjust and plan their work based on the actual situation to ensure prompt and effective mosquito prevention and control work. The Under Secretary for Environment and Ecology, and the Chairperson of the PCSC, Miss Diane Wong, particularly reminded the departments to be well prepared and take proactive mosquito control actions, including eliminating potential mosquito breeding places before the rainy season, as well as conducting fogging operations in a timely and concerted manner until the end of the rainy season to mitigate the risk.

Rodent control

Under the Action, the FEHD has implemented a series of targeted rodent prevention and control measures, including continuing overnight anti-rodent operations and the application of new anti-rodent technologies and tools, which have gradually shown positive results. The FEHD collected a total of approximately 122 900 live and dead rodents in 2024, marking an increase of around 26 per cent compared to the approximately 97 800 rodents collected in 2023. In 2024, the number of major rodent black spots was reduced by 63, achieving the performance indicator of a 60 per cent reduction as set out in the 2023 Policy Address.

The effectiveness of rodent control also relies on the concerted efforts and active participation of stakeholders from various sectors, including pest control operators in both public and private sectors, venue management (e.g. the management personnel of residential and commercial buildings, recreational facilities, markets and food premises), and the general public, who maintain good hygiene practices and implement timely effective rodent prevention measures. District Environmental Hygiene Offices of the FEHD will continue to extend the scheme of allowing food premises to place large-sized refuse bins from rear lanes to more appropriate locations, and encourage relevant food premises to participate.

In December 2024, the FEHD launched the first phase of the Anti-rodent Charter, targeting residential premises to raise residents' awareness of environmental hygiene and foster good habits to create a rodent-free environment. Residential premises that sign the Charter will be provided with free anti-rodent technical support from the FEHD, including invitations to attend pest control seminars organised by the department. As of now, 578 residential premises have signed the Charter. Based on the practical experiences from the first phase of the Charter, the next phase will focus on locations prone to rodent infestations and their vicinities, including markets, hawker bazaars, typhoon shelters, and rear lanes, to enhance the communities' anti-rodent awareness and encourage proactive actions. The FEHD and district councilors will jointly contact property management companies and vendors to convey rodent control messages more effectively.

Moreover, starting in 2024, the FEHD has fully adopted thermal imaging cameras with AI technology to conduct the Rodent Activity Survey (RAS) and establish a Rodent Absence Rate in each district. The FEHD uses AI to analyse thermal images captured by cameras to detect and understand rodent pathways and activity ranges. This helps assess rodent infestation objectively and effectively to allocate resources precisely for targeted rodent control measures. From 2025, the FEHD's RAS has been extended to public housing estates and parks managed by the Housing Authority and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. Relevant departments will have more data to enhance precision in rodent control work and make the survey more representative.

All departments agreed to continue to strengthen rodent prevention and control measures in premises under their respective management, to strengthen internal monitoring and assessment of the outcome of rodent control work, and to actively encourage relevant sectors and stakeholders to co-operate with

the Government's work, eliminating rodents' fundamental survival conditions of food, harbourage and passages from their respective areas.

The meeting was chaired by Miss Wong. Participants of the meeting came from three policy bureaux and 20 government departments and organisations.

