

FEHD releases Rodent Infestation Rate for 2020

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (May 13) that the overall Rodent Infestation Rate (RIR) for 2020 was 3.6 per cent, lower than the figure recorded in 2019 (4.2 per cent).

An FEHD spokesman said, "Rodent infestation was not extensive during the survey period in most districts, as the RIRs of all districts were below 10 per cent for 2020."

Starting from this announcement, the RIRs of all survey locations in each district will be released together with the district RIRs so as to enhance transparency and to ensure that the public would be more informed of the rodent infestation situation in each survey location. Moreover, in order to strengthen rodent surveillance, the FEHD has increased the number of survey locations from 41 (around 2 300 baiting points) to 50 (around 2 700 baiting points) since the second half of last year to cover more locations that may be infested with rodents, such as new development areas, residential areas, back alleys and industrial areas.

In response to the results of the Rodent Infestation Survey, the FEHD will conduct specific rodent control operations in individual survey locations, such as strengthening cleansing service, enhancing enforcement actions against illegal activities such as the accumulation of articles and improper handling of litter and food remnants, conducting joint inspections with relevant government departments and property management companies and strengthening publicity and education. For survey locations with more serious rodent infestation, the FEHD has strengthened follow-up actions since the second half of 2020, implemented mitigation measures for a month to strengthen rodent prevention and control work at the relevant locations, and conducted a new round of the Rodent Infestation Survey at these locations afterwards to closely monitor the rodent infestation and evaluate the effectiveness of the mitigation measures. The relevant measures were found to be effective and the index significantly decreased. In addition, apart from the current arrangements for releasing the survey results of individual survey locations to relevant departments via email, the FEHD is finalising the details with the Lands Department regarding the dissemination of detailed data on rodent infestation at survey locations to various departments through the Government's Geospatial Information Hub platform by mid-year, so that the relevant departments can deploy targeted rodent prevention and control operations at sites they are responsible for.

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 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 was launched in early January and ended on March 12. The second phase, to last for 10 weeks, will be launched in July. 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.

In addition, the FEHD will also conduct an eight-week anti-rodent operation in designated target areas in various districts after each phase of the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign this year, during which multi-pronged strategies, including improving environmental hygiene and stepping up rodent disinfestation and enforcement actions, will continue to be adopted to strengthen rodent prevention and control 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.

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

The spokesman stressed that removal of rubbish and keeping clean is 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.

Public hospitals daily update on COVID-19 cases

The following is issued on behalf of the Hospital Authority:

As at 9am today (May 13), six COVID-19 confirmed patients were discharged from hospital in the last 24 hours. So far, a total of 11 511 patients with confirmed or probable infection have been discharged.

At present, there are 616 negative pressure rooms in public hospitals with 1 155 negative pressure beds activated. A total of 63 confirmed patients are currently hospitalised in 14 public hospitals and the North Lantau Hospital Hong Kong Infection Control Centre, among which two patients are in critical condition, one is in serious condition and the remaining 60 patients are in stable condition.

The Hospital Authority will maintain close contact with the Centre for Health Protection to monitor the latest developments and to inform the public and healthcare workers on the latest information in a timely manner.

The case numbers of the discharged, critical and serious patients are as follows:

Discharged	11677, 11718, 11749, 11757, 11760, 11803
Critical	6794, 9907
Serious	10358

Import of poultry meat and products

from areas in France, Germany and South Africa suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (May 13) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in Gironde Department, Haute-Savoie Department, Haut-Rhin Department and Bas-Rhin Department in France and in the District of Oder-Spree of the State of Brandenburg in Germany, and an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5 avian influenza in Mafube Local Municipality of Free State Province in South Africa, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that Hong Kong currently has an established protocol with South Africa for the import of poultry meat but not for poultry eggs. According to the Census and Statistics Department, no poultry meat was imported from South Africa in the first three months of this year, while about 2,000 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 35,000 poultry eggs were imported from France; and about 180 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 0.53 million poultry eggs were imported from Germany to Hong Kong.

"The CFS has contacted the French, German and South African authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade in March 2021

Further to the external merchandise trade statistics in value terms for March 2021 released earlier on, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (May 13) the volume and price statistics of external merchandise trade for that month.

In March 2021, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 23.4% and 19.8% respectively over March 2020.

For the first quarter of 2021 as a whole, the volume of Hong Kong's total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 32.0% and 24.4% respectively over the same period in 2020.

Comparing the first quarter of 2021 with the fourth quarter of 2020 on a seasonally adjusted basis, the volume of total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 17.9% and 12.9% respectively.

Changes in volume of external merchandise trade are derived from changes in external merchandise trade value with the effect of price changes discounted.

Comparing March 2021 with March 2020, the prices of total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 2.4% and 1.8% respectively.

As regards price changes in the first quarter of 2021 over the same period in 2020, the prices of total exports of goods and imports of goods increased by 1.0% and 1.1% respectively.

Price changes in external merchandise trade are reflected by changes in unit value indices of external merchandise trade, which are compiled based on average unit values or, for certain commodities, specific price data.

The terms of trade index is derived from the ratio of price index of total exports of goods to that of imports of goods. Compared with the same periods in 2020, the index increased by 0.6% in March 2021, whereas it decreased by 0.1% in the first quarter of 2021.

Changes in the unit value and volume of total exports of goods by main destination are shown in Table 1.

Comparing March 2021 with March 2020, double-digit increases were recorded for the total export volume to Taiwan (41.0%), India (36.8%) and the mainland of China (the Mainland) (26.7%). Concurrently, the total export volume to the USA (9.9%) also increased. On the other hand, the total export volume to Japan decreased by 17.2%.

Over the same period of comparison, the total export prices to Taiwan (6.5%), India (3.8%), the Mainland (3.7%) and Japan (2.4%) increased. On the other hand, the total export prices to the USA decreased by 0.1%.

Changes in the unit value and volume of imports of goods by main supplier are shown in Table 2.

Comparing March 2021 with March 2020, double-digit increases were recorded for the import volume from Singapore (40.7%), Taiwan (25.1%), the Mainland (21.4%), Japan (12.7%) and Korea (10.8%).

Over the same period of comparison, the import prices from Korea (9.9%), Taiwan (7.2%), Singapore (3.0%) and Japan (0.1%) increased. On the other

hand, the import prices from the Mainland decreased by 0.7%.

Further information

Details of the above statistics are published in the March 2021 issue of "Hong Kong Merchandise Trade Index Numbers". Users can download the publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1020006&scode=230).

Enquiries on merchandise trade indices may be directed to the Trade Analysis Section (1) of the C&SD (Tel: 2582 4918).

SJ to sign record of meeting concerning mutual recognition of and assistance to insolvency proceedings in Shenzhen

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, will depart for Shenzhen this afternoon (May 13). She will sign a record of meeting with the Supreme People's Court concerning mutual recognition of and assistance to insolvency proceedings between the courts of the Mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region tomorrow morning (May 14). She will also attend a forum on legal and practical issues concerning cross-boundary insolvency cooperation between the Mainland and Hong Kong in the afternoon.

Ms Cheng will return to Hong Kong on May 15.