

**Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene**

**Minutes of the 64<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
held at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, 10 May 2017,  
in Room 1801, 18/F, Central Government Offices,  
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong.**

Prof LO Yuk-lam	(Chairman)
Dr Doris AU Wai-ting	
Dr Felix CHAN Hon-wai, JP	
Mr David CHAN Wai-ming, MH, JP	
Mrs Vivien CHEN CHOU Mei-mei	
Prof CHIU Siu-wai	
Dr CHUNG Shan-shan	
Mrs Jenny LAM WEN Mei-fong	
Mr Stephen LEUNG Kwok-keung	
Prof Kenneth LEUNG Mei-yee	
Prof Leo POON Lit-man	
Mr Richard TSANG Lap-ki	
Prof WONG Wing-tak	
Prof Samuel WONG Yeung-shan	
Mrs Cherry TSE LING Kit-ching, JP	Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food)
Dr LEUNG Siu-fai, JP	Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
Ms Vivian LAU Lee-kwan, JP	Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene
Dr Regina CHING Cheuk-tuen, JP	Head, Surveillance & Epidemiology Branch, Department of Health
Mr Bill WONG Kwok-piu	Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) <sup>3</sup> (Secretary to ACFEH)

### **Absent with Apologies**

Mr Abraham CHAN Yu-ling

Ms Josephine KEA Chi-shun

Mr Simon TAM Hop-sing

### **In Attendance**

#### **Food and Health Bureau (FHB)**

Mr Eugene FUNG Kin-yip, JP Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food)2

Ms Diane WONG Shuk-han Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food)1 (Acting) / Principal Assistant Secretary (Food)2

Miss Cherry WONG Pui-sum Assistant Secretary (Food)9

Miss Swing YAU Sze-wing Assistant Secretary (Food)5

Miss Fanny YEUNG Pou-ian Assistant Secretary (Food)4

#### **Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)**

Dr Thomas SIT Hon-chung Assistant Director (Inspection & Quarantine)

#### **Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)**

Dr HO Yuk-yin, JP Consultant (Community Medicine)(Risk Assessment & Communication), Centre for Food Safety

Mr LI Ka-kei Assistant Director (Operations)1

Dr Geraldine LUK So-mui Senior Veterinary Officer (Risk Assessment), Centre for Food Safety

## **Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed Members and Government representatives to the 64<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene (ACFEH), and the first meeting for the new term (1 April 2017 to 31 March 2019). He thanked returning Members for their continued support to the work of ACFEH, and welcomed the newly appointed Member Mr Richard TSANG to join ACFEH.

### **Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

2. The minutes were confirmed without amendments.

### **Agenda Item 2 : Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

3. At the last meeting, Members were invited to propose subjects pertinent to ACFEH's terms of reference for discussion. In response to Members' suggestions to this end, the item "Demerit Points System for Licensed Food Premises" would be discussed under agenda item 5.

### **Agenda Item 3 : Proposed Amendments to the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap. 132V) (Confidential Item) (ACFEH Paper 4/2017)**

4. The discussions are kept in strict confidence.

### **Agenda Item 4 : Recommendations of the Consultancy Study on the Way Forward of Live Poultry Trade in Hong Kong (ACFEH Paper 5/2017)**

5. Mr Bill WONG briefed Members on the findings and recommendations of the consultant on the way forward of the live poultry trade, and shared the views received from the public and the trade so far. In sum, there was general support from the trade on the continuation of sale of live poultry at retail level and import of live poultry from the Mainland, but views on the proposed relocation of the Cheung Sha Wan Temporary Wholesale Poultry Market (Wholesale Market) were divided. Mrs TSE added that deputations and individuals were invited to attend a meeting at the Legislative Council on 16 May to express their views on the outcome of the study.

6. Prof Leo POON agreed with the approach by the consultant to make the recommendations based on risk assessment. While it would be impossible to achieve zero avian influenza (AI) risk, he was of the view that there would be no need to stop the sale of live poultry if we could continue to ensure the safety of live poultry at the farm and import levels through the proven effective measures. He also supported the recommended enhancement biosecurity measures, and in particular urged the Government to introduce H7 vaccine in local farms, irrespective of its application on the Mainland. He also enquired about the assessment on the AI risk associated with minor poultry, and whether two separate holding sites could be identified for local and imported poultry.

7. In response to Mrs Vivien CHEN's question on the timing of applying vaccine on live poultry, Mr WONG and Dr Thomas SIT explained the procedures and timing of the application. Regarding the H7 vaccine, Mrs TSE responded that the registration of the H7 vaccine for application in Hong Kong was being conducted. Dr SIT explained that the AI risk varied for different types of minor poultry, and that the AI risk in pigeons was relatively low. Concerning the identification of separate holding sites for local and imported poultry, Mr WONG responded that we would need to further discuss with the Development Bureau, though there might be difficulty to do so due to the limited land available.

8. The Chairman enquired whether the outcome of the study aligned with the Government's expectation on the way forward of live poultry trade. Mrs TSE responded that the Government was open-minded on this issue. We would need to strike a balance between the dietary habits of the public and food safety and public health concerns in considering the way forward. With the cooperation of the trade, she believed that the AI risk could be kept at bay to allow the continuation of live poultry trade in Hong Kong.

9. Dr Felix CHAN enquire whether Hong Kong would also draw the experience of Macau, Mrs TSE responded that due to the difference in population and the trade structure, the current approach adopted by Macau might not be suitable for Hong Kong.

**Agenda Item 5 : Demerit Points System for Licensed Food Premises  
(ACFEH Paper 6/2017)**

10. Mr LI Ka-kei briefed Members on the implementation of the demerit points system (DPS) for licensed food premises by FEHD.

11. The Chairman commented that although the trade might not welcome the DPS, the decrease in the numbers of cases involving licence suspension and

cancellation as well as the complaints against licensed food premises in recent years proved the DPS effective in deterring food business operators from breaching offences in relation to food safety and environmental hygiene. Ms LAU echoed that the DPS had been an effective deterrent measure, since the penalty involved suspension and even cancellation of their licences. Supporting the DPS, Mr Stephen LEUNG agreed that frequent inspection should be conducted to deter offences in relation to food safety and environmental hygiene by food premises.

12. Noting that licensed food premises which had fully implemented the food safety management system under ISO 22000 and obtained the ISO 22000 certification from a certification body would be exempted from the DPS and be subject to an alternative inspection regime, Dr CHAN enquired about the reason for the exemption from the DPS. Mrs TSE also enquired about whether FEHD would keep statistics of the complaints against or any violation of licence conditions by the licensed food premises even if they had obtained the ISO certification. Mr LI explained that licensed food premises would be subject to annual audit inspection by the accredited body for checking their compliance with the relevant requirements under the ISO certification. Where a breach of any legislation, licensing requirements or conditions is detected, FEHD would take appropriate enforcement actions and also consider disqualifying the food premises concerned from the ISO 22000 scheme if the violation has significant health hazard. Since ISO certification was granted by third party organisations and the respective purpose served by the ISO certification and the licensing/enforcement regime might not be the same, Prof CHIU considered that the DPS should still be implemented even if the food premises had obtained the ISO certification.

13. Dr CHUNG was of the view that the information of the convicted cases in respect of licensed food premises should be made available to the public. The Chairman added that some countries such as the United States and Canada had similar arrangement of publishing such information. Mrs TSE and Mr LI explained that while press releases would be issued at the time when the licences were suspended or cancelled, the Department of Justice advised that it was not legally in order for the Government to maintain a list of such cases on its website on an ongoing basis. Prof CHIU suggested FEHD to draw reference from the Indoor Air Quality Certification Scheme by the Environmental Protection Department to announce relevant information on the website to promote compliance under the DPS.

**Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business**

14. The Chairman reported that, the second meeting of the Working Group on Green Burial and Related Matters would be held on 23 May 2017. Separately, the Secretariat was inviting Members to join a visit to the Garden of Remembrance (GoR) at the Tseung Kwan O Cemetery of the Board of Management of the Chinese Permanent Cemeteries and the Diamond Hill GoR on 27 May 2017. The Secretariat would inform Members of the arrangements for another visit on the scattering of ashes at sea shortly.

15. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

**Secretariat**

**Advisory Council on Food and Environmental Hygiene**

**September 2017**