

# **Agriculture, Fisheries And Conservation Department**

## **Environmental Report for 2005**

### **Our Vision**

To see our community enjoy a reliable and plentiful supply of safe and high quality fresh food and a well managed natural environment, which we can pass on to our future generations.

### **Our Mission**

To serve the community with professionalism, dedication, courtesy and efficiency in providing services to –

- Secure orderly and efficient production and marketing of agricultural and fishery produce;
- Enforce regulations on plants, pesticides and animal controls; and
- Conserve our natural environment and safeguard the ecological integrity.

### **Our Environmental Policy**

Our environmental policy is to promote the production of fresh food in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way and to conserve and enhance our natural environment.

### **Objectives**

In implementing this policy, there is a commitment to improve the environment by:

- Developing and promoting technology in agriculture and fisheries

production which is environmentally responsible;

- Conserving and managing the natural environment through the identification, designation and management of country and marine parks, special areas and marine reserves;
- Conserving local flora, fauna and their natural habitats through law enforcement and providing conservation advice on development proposals and planning studies; and
- Conserving endangered species through controlling their international trade.

In delivering these services or conducting business, the department fully complies with environmental legislation and adopts environmentally responsible practices. The efficient use of resources and energy is reviewed regularly and continued improvement is sought.

## **Environmental Performance**

### **Agriculture and Fisheries**

Programmes have been launched to bring about environmentally responsible practices and sustainable use of natural resources:

- A Voluntary Surrender Scheme for local poultry farms has been introduced to encourage poultry farmers to cease poultry keeping by surrendering their livestock keeping licenses in return for an ex-gratia payment to reduce pollution load to the environment, amongst other reasons such as public health concerns. As at December 2005, 61 poultry farmers have applied. A similar scheme for pig farms is also planned for implementation in 2006.

- The ‘Accredited Vegetable Farm Scheme’ promotes good horticultural practices and proper use of pesticides. In 2005, the total number of accredited farms is 229.
- To promote local organic agriculture, the Organic Farming Support Service provided technical support to 51 local organic farms covering 24 hectares of farming area in 2005.
- The department develops and manages fresh food wholesale markets and vigilantly enforces against illegal landing and wholesaling of fresh marine fish to eliminate environmental nuisances caused by disorderly, on-street wholesale trading activities.
- Effort in wise use of energy in the two wholesale food market complexes managed by the department has brought about 8.75% saving in electricity consumption in 2005-06.
- A new regulatory framework for fishing activities is being actively pursued in a bid to promote sustainable development of the fishing industry and to conserve fisheries resources in Hong Kong waters.
- The department vigilantly enforces against destructive fishing practices.
- The department continues to promote the enhancement of fisheries habitats and resources through deployment of artificial reefs. A total of 195 m<sup>3</sup> of artificial reefs were deployed in 2005.
- The Fisheries Education Centre has been set up in the Aberdeen Fisheries Office to promote public awareness of the need and importance for fisheries conservation. During the year, the Centre received over 4 708 visitors.

- Environmental friendly practices are promoted among fish farmers, such as the use of pellet feed to replace trash fish. Of the 1 104 mariculture farms, some 360 have adopted the practice by 2005.



- The trial conducted at Kau Sai Fish Culture Zone to assess the ability of purpose-built and designed biofilter structures to improve the environmental conditions of marine fish culture zones was completed in 2004. The study findings showed that the biofilters have led to the establishment of a rich fish community and helped remove organic wastes and improve seabed environment within the fish culture zones. The department continues to identify suitable marine fish culture zones to deploy more biofilters to improve their environmental conditions for mariculture activities.

### Nature Conservation

To conserve and enhance our natural environment, measures have been introduced to conserve biodiversity, to protect natural habitats, and to designate and manage country parks, special areas, marine parks and marine reserves. The following projects were carried out in 2005:

- 164 environmental impact assessment applications and studies on development projects were handled.
- Conservation and management projects were undertaken in the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay



Ramsar Site.

- Removal of invasive exotic mangrove species was continued in the Inner Deep Bay area.
- A territory-wide ecological survey is in progress with a view to developing a comprehensive ecological database for Hong Kong. An internet-based database, The Hong Kong Biodiversity Online ([www.hkbiodiversity.net](http://www.hkbiodiversity.net)) which documents basic biological and ecological information of more than 1000 animal species, is now available for public browsing.
- Field guides and newsletters on biodiversity of Hong Kong were also published.
- A Butterfly Garden has been established at Shing Mun Country Park to attract both target species for conservation purpose and other common species for the public to enjoy butterfly watching.
- Fish Ponds were created at Tai Tam, Tai Lam and Shing Mun Country Parks as trials of wetland restoration and creation for freshwater fish conservation.

- The development of Hong Kong Wetland Park at Tin Shui Wai is in progress. The Phase 1 visitor centre, opened in Dec 2000, was closed for renovation in May 2005.



During the period of its operation, the Phase 1 visitor centre attracted around 100 000 visitors every year. The construction of the Phase 2 project was almost completed, and the installation of exhibits is in progress. The Park is scheduled for opening in mid 2006.

- A variety of school and public education programmes on wetland

conservation has been carried out. In the past year, more than 8 400 students from 251 schools joined various educational guided walks on wetland conservation.

- The “Wetland Park Volunteer Scheme” continued to promote direct involvement of the public in wetland conservation works. More than 1 000 volunteers registered and participated in various conservation works in wetlands.
- The Endangered Species Resource Centre continued to serve as the site to promote public awareness of the need for the protection of endangered species. During the year, over 7 800 visitors visited the Resource Centre.
- A variety of education and publicity programmes on endangered species protection were organized, including seminars/talks, exhibitions, as well as a radio play competition.
- The enforcement momentum to curb illegal trade in endangered species was maintained. 217 prosecutions in respect of illegal import, export or possession of endangered species were made.
- More than 870 000 tree seedlings were planted in country parks.
- 130 applications for development inside country parks were handled.
- More than 90 000 sq. metres of Mikania were cleared to eliminate the hazards threatening Country Park vegetation.
- Restored various natural habitats, such as bird nests, wetland habitats, butterfly gardens, native plant species forests etc. to encourage the growth of wildlife.

- 489 hectares of vegetation outside country parks were managed.



- A variety of education and publicity programmes on the conservation of country and marine parks, natural habitats and local flora and fauna were launched.

### Waste Recycling in Country Parks

- Park visitors were encouraged to separate their rubbish such as plastic bottles and aluminum cans and put them into different bins.



- Fallen trees during typhoon season or other tree felling operations were made use of to create animated features and placed in recreation areas for children's enjoyment.
- Park visitors were encouraged to re-use their barbecue forks.
- The metal parts of used barbecue forks were made use of to serve as reinforcement materials for the concrete used in country parks.

### Green Management

A departmental committee is set up to steer the development, implementation and monitoring of green office practices. The Assistant Director (Agriculture and Administration) is appointed the department's Green Manager to consolidate the department's green management efforts. Various measures have been implemented to economise the use of resources and reduce pollution.

### Economise the Use of Paper

- Use both sides of paper.
- Cut down on photocopying.
- Default double-sided printing for all network printers at HQ office.
- Reduce the number of copies of circulars for distribution.
- Discard use of fax leader pages.
- Encourage the use of electronic mail and soft copies within and outside the department for exchange of documents.
- Reduce the use of envelopes and re-use envelopes.

### Energy Conservation

- Check vehicles regularly to ensure that they are in good conditions to enhance fuel efficiency.
- Control fuel consumption by encouraging staff to share pool car for duty visits and site visits.
- Use public transport whenever possible.
- Switch off electrical appliances when staff leave the office.
- Shade sun-exposed windows and keep exterior doors/windows closed as much as possible.
- Individual light zones are controlled by different light switches.
- Extend the measure of advance turning off of central lighting to more light zones at HQ office.
- Use manual sectional switches to turn off parts of the lighting and mechanical ventilation systems in those areas of the wholesale food



markets exposed to sunlight and natural flow of air as appropriate.

- Maintain room temperature of all air-conditioned office premises at 25.5 during summer months.

#### Waste Minimisation and Recycling:

- Use refillable ball pens.
- Separate collection of used and waste paper.
- Encourage staff to use their own cups instead of paper cups.
- Minimize use of products which are not environmentally friendly such as correction fluid.
- Re-use loose minute jackets.
- Proactively inform other departments/bureaus the minimum number of hard copies of reports, newsletters, circulars, publications, etc. required and request soft copies whenever feasible.
- Enforce non-smoking policy throughout the offices.
- Introduce recycle bins in offices to encourage separation of wastes (paper, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, CDs and stationary) for recycling.



#### Environmental Audit

We set up environmental audit teams to monitor the implementation of existing and new green office practices. The objectives of conducting environmental audit are:

- to understand the environmental effects, impacts and consequences arising from the activities, products and services of the organization;
- to evaluate compliance with Government directive and accepted good

practices;

- to increase staff awareness and participation in environmental protection;
- to identify areas where environmental performance can be improved and set priorities where appropriate; and
- to provide a documented basis for future audits.

### **Comments and Enquiries**

We welcome any comments and enquiries on this report. You can contact us by one of the following methods:

Telephone: 1823 or 27088885 (IVRS)

Fax: 2311 3731

e-mail: [mailbox@afcd.gov.hk](mailto:mailbox@afcd.gov.hk)

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