



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1974.

VEGETABLE DISEASE SUCCESSFULLY CONTROLLED

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THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAS PROVED AFTER A SERIES OF EXPERIMENTS IN THE PAST THREE YEARS THAT CERTAIN KINDS OF VEGETABLES CAN BE EFFECTIVELY PROTECTED FROM A VIRUS DISEASE BY THE USE OF REFLECTIVE MATERIAL.

FOR YEARS, THE MOSAIC TYPE VIRUS HAS BEEN MORE THAN A NUISANCE TO VEGETABLE FARMERS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES GROWING COMMON BRASSICA SPECIES SUCH AS CHINESE WHITE CABBAGE, FLOWERING CABBAGE AND CHINESE KALE.

THIS DISEASE IS MOST PREVALENT IN THE MONTHS OF OCTOBER AND FEBRUARY. VEGETABLES SUFFERING FROM THIS DISEASE BECOME STUNTED AND TURN YELLOW. IN THE PAST, FARMERS USED TO BLAME THE WEATHER FOR IT.

TOWARDS THE END OF 1971 THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT EMBARKED ON A RESEARCH PROJECT IN ITS SHEUNG SHUI EXPERIMENTAL FARM.

IT WAS LATER DISCOVERED THAT THE DISEASE IS, IN FACT, CAUSED BY A VIRUS WHICH IS ASSISTED BY A GERM-CARRIER CALLED APHID, AN INSECT THAT CAN BARELY BE SEEN BY THE NAKED EYE.

KNOWING THAT SOME INSECTS TEND TO KEEP AWAY FROM LIGHT-REFLECTING MATERIAL, THE RESEARCH WORKERS LAID TIN-COATED POLYTHENE SHEETS IN THE VEGETABLE FIELD.

THIS METHOD TURNED OUT TO BE VERY EFFECTIVE. A RECENTLY COMPLETED EXPERIMENT SHOWED THAT A CROP PROTECTED THIS WAY SUFFERED ONLY TWO PER CENT OF DISEASE INFECTION WHEREAS ANOTHER CROP WITHOUT SUCH PROTECTION SUFFERED 40 PER CENT INFECTION.

RESEARCH WORKERS OF THE A.F.D. ARE AT PRESENT TRYING TO IMPROVE THE METHOD FURTHER BEFORE INTRODUCING IT TO LOCAL FARMERS.

ABOUT 45 PER CENT OF THE VEGETABLES CONSUMED LOCALLY ARE SUPPLIED BY NEW TERRITORIES FARMERS WHO LAST YEAR PRODUCED OVER \$220 MILLION WORTH OF VEGETABLES.

THE SUCCESS OF THE EXPERIMENT WILL CERTAINLY GO A LONG WAY IN BENEFITTING VEGETABLE GROWING WHICH IS HONG KONG'S BIGGEST FARMING INDUSTRY.

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NEW YEAR HOLIDAY
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THE MARINE DEPARTMENT WILL BE CLOSED FOR NORMAL BUSINESS ON WEDNESDAY (JANUARY 1) WHICH IS A GENERAL HOLIDAY.

THE PORT COMMUNICATION CENTRE WILL CONTINUE TO BE MANNED FOR THE PURPOSE OF COMMUNICATING WITH SHIPPING IN THE PORT.

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