



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

SUNDAY, JANUARY 2, 1977

PLASTIC NET HOUSE TO ENSURE UNINTERRUPTED VEGETABLE PRODUCTION * * * * *

THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT HAS ACHIEVED A MAJOR BREAK-THROUGH IN FINDING A WAY TO SAFEGUARD THE PRODUCTION OF VEGETABLES IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AGAINST TYPHOON AND HEAVY RAIN IN SUMMER.

EXTREME WET PERIODS AND STRONG WINDS HAVE BEEN THE +HEADACHE+ OF THE NEW TERRITORIES VEGETABLE FARMERS FOR YEARS. THEY HAVE SUFFERED LOSSES BOTH IN TERMS OF MONEY AND HUMAN EFFECT.

NOW THE AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES DEPARTMENT'S VEGETABLE RESEARCH FARM IN SHEUNG SHUI HAS FOUND AN +ASPIRIN+ TO DEAL WITH THIS +HEADACHE+ AFTER THREE YEARS OF EXTENSIVE RESEARCH.

THE REMEDY IS THE SIMPLE PLASTIC NET HOUSE WHICH HAS BEEN FOUND EFFECTIVE TO ENSURE CONTINUOUS VEGETABLE PRODUCTION IN ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS.

ACCORDING TO THE DEPARTMENT'S AGRICULTURAL OFFICER, MR. S.M. YIP, IN CHARGE OF THE PROJECT, THE NET WOULD GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS SOLVING THE PROBLEM OF SHORTAGES OF LOCAL SUPPLIES OF FRESH VEGETABLES DURING RAINY AND TYPHOON SEASONS= BOTH FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE VEGETABLE GROWERS AS WELL AS CONSUMERS.

+ENVIRONMENTAL HOUSING IS THE TECHNIQUE EMPLOYED IN MODERN HORTICULTURE TO ENSURE A CONTINUOUS AND UNINTERRUPTED PROGRAMME OF PRODUCTION FOR THE MARKET,+ HE SAID.

MR. YIP POINTED OUT THAT GLASSHOUSES WERE WIDELY USED IN ADVANCED COUNTRIES FOR THIS PURPOSE. BUT HE ADDED THAT THE GLASSHOUSE IDEA COULD NOT BE DIRECTLY APPLIED IN HONG KONG BECAUSE IT WAS TOO EXPENSIVE AND BECAUSE THE PROBLEM OF SUMMER COOLING HAD NOT BEEN SATISFACTORILY WORKED OUT IN THE DESIGN OF GLASSHOUSE FOR WARM CLIMATES.

+WE TURNED TO OTHER CHEAPER AND MORE PRACTICAL ALTERNATIVE AND ADOPTED THE PLASTIC NETTING IDEA,+ HE SAID. +INSTEAD OF GLASS, THE STRUCTURE IS CLAD IN PLASTIC NETTING, PROVIDING QUITE A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM,+

+WE HAVE BEEN WORKING ON THIS PROJECT FOR THREE YEARS NOW AND WE HAVE TRIED GROWING DIFFERENT TYPES OF VEGETABLES IN THE NET HOUSE,+ HE EXPLAINED.

+WE FOUND THAT SHORT-TERM LEAF VEGETABLES WERE MORE ADAPTABLE FOR GROWING UNDER NET. THESE INCLUDE POPULAR LOCAL VARIETIES SUCH AS FLOWERING CABBAGE, WHITE CABBAGE, CHINESE KALE, LEAF MUSTARDS AND SPINACH WHICH ARE READY FOR HARVEST IN ABOUT 50 DAYS.

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+IN ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS, THESE CROPS GAVE HIGHER YIELDS OF BETTER QUALITY VEGETABLES THAN THOSE IN THE OPEN FIELD.+

THE PLASTIC NET PROTECTS THE TENDER CROPS BELOW BY TAKING THE BULK OF THE PHYSICAL BATTERING BY RAINDROPS.

THIS ENSURES EVEN SEED GERMINATION AND UNIFORM GROWTH OF SEEDLINGS IN ADVERSE WEATHER. ANOTHER ADVANTAGE OF PREVENTING THE DIRECT SHOWERING OF VEGETABLES BY HEAVY RAINFALL IS REDUCTION OF SOIL SURFACE CAKING THAT WEAKENS CROP GROWTH. IT ALSO SCREENS THE CROPS AGAINST PHYSICAL DAMAGE BY STRONG WINDS.

MR. YIP SAID THAT THE NET HOUSE WAS ECONOMICAL. IT COSTS ABOUT ONE DOLLAR PER SQUARE FOOT OF COVERED LAND. IT IS ALSO RELATIVELY EASY TO ERECT BY THE FARMERS THEMSELVES.

+IT CAN BE USED IN ANY FARM IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, AND SO FAR, ONE FARMER IN YUEN LONG IS CULTIVATING VEGETABLES UNDER A NET HOUSE OF 8,000 SQUARE FEET,+ HE SAID. +THIS NET HOUSE WAS DONATED BY THE VEGETABLE MARKETING ORGANISATION FOR DEMONSTRATION PURPOSES AND HE IS VERY HAPPY TO USE IT FOR INTENSIVE CULTIVATION.+

HE SAID THAT THE DEPARTMENT WAS CURRENTLY PREPARING TECHNICAL INFORMATION LEAFLETS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO FARMERS TO ENABLE WIDER APPLICATION OF THIS TECHNIQUE.

ON THE SUPPLY OF FRESH VEGETABLES, MR. YIP SAID THAT 45 PER CENT OF THE VEGETABLES CONSUMED BY THE LOCAL POPULATION WAS SUPPLIED BY THE NEW TERRITORIES FARMERS WHILE THE REST WAS IMPORTED MAINLY FROM CHINA.

HE POINTED OUT THAT VERY OFTEN VEGETABLE SUPPLY WAS INTERRUPTED DURING THE WET OR TYPHOON PERIODS, CAUSING THE PRICE TO SOAR.

HOWEVER, MR. YIP ADDED THAT THIS COULD BE AVOIDED IF A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF FARMERS ADOPTED THE NET HOUSE METHOD.

THE RESULTANT INCREASE IN PRODUCTION WOULD NOT ONLY PREVENT THE PRICE FROM ROCKETTING BUT WOULD ALSO MAKE FARMERS AS WELL AS CONSUMERS HAPPIER, HE SAID.

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GOVERNMENT OFFICERS TO VISIT SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA

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A GROUP OF 12 GOVERNMENT OFFICERS -- 10 FROM THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT AND TWO FROM THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION -- WILL LEAVE FOR SINGAPORE AND MALAYSIA TOMORROW (MONDAY) ON A 13-DAY STUDY TOUR.

THE PARTY IS LED BY MR. MICHAEL LEUNG, CITY DISTRICT COMMISSIONER (HONG KONG). MR. CANICE MAK, CITY DISTRICT OFFICER (MONG KOK), IS THE DEPUTY TOUR LEADER.

TWO FEMALE OFFICERS WILL BE IN THE GROUP WHICH INCLUDES ASSISTANT DISTRICT OFFICERS AND LIAISON OFFICERS, FROM VARIOUS CITY DISTRICT OFFICES AND A SENIOR LAND EXECUTIVE.

DURING THEIR TOUR, WHICH IS SPONSORED BY THE COMMONWEALTH FUND FOR TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION, THE PARTY WILL VISIT VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AND EXCHANGE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS.

THE PARTY WILL RETURN TO HONG KONG ON JANUARY 15 (SATURDAY).

OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TOUR ARE:

MR. CHOI CHI-WA, SENIOR EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF CITY DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S (KOWLOON) OFFICE= MR. WILLIAM YUEN, ASSISTANT CITY DISTRICT OFFICER (MONG KOK)= MR. HO YUN-CHEONG, ASSISTANT CITY DISTRICT OFFICER (KWUN TONG)= MR. LEE WAI-YIP, ASSISTANT CITY DISTRICT OFFICER (WAN CHAI)= MR. LEE YIU-WAH, LIAISON OFFICER OF CITY DISTRICT OFFICE (CENTRAL AND WESTERN)= MR. CHEUNG CHEI-CHEI, OFFICER IN CHARGE OF THE PUBLICITY UNIT OF THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT= MISS ROLANA LEE, STAFF OFFICER OF CITY DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S (KOWLOON) OFFICE AND MISS MEANA YUNG, LIAISON OFFICER OF CITY DISTRICT OFFICE (WAN CHAI) OF THE HOME AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT. REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION ARE MR. R.A.L. DA ROSA, SENIOR LAND EXECUTIVE, AND MR. WONG TIN-SHUNG, LIAISON OFFICER.

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BUILDING CONTRACT FOR NEW HEADQUARTERS
OF BRITISH FORCES

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

THE MAIN BUILDING CONTRACT FOR THE \$60 MILLION-PLUS NEW BRITISH FORCES HEADQUARTERS WILL BE SIGNED AT 3 P.M. TOMORROW (MONDAY) IN THE P.W.D.'S CONFERENCE ROOM, 21ST FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG.

ATTENDING THE CEREMONY WILL BE MR. JACK STEAN, THE P.W.D.'S DIRECTOR OF BUILDING DEVELOPMENT= MR. W.T. MOK, GOVERNMENT ARCHITECT= COMMANDER J.L.B. LARKINS, ROYAL NAVY= LT. COL.D.W. E KING, ASSISTANT QUARTER MASTER GENERAL= AND MR. D.R. RUSSEL-CROUCHER, DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY SERVICES AGENCY.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO SEND YOUR REPRESENTATIVES TO COVER THE CEREMONY.

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NEW GOVERNMENT TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

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A NEW EDITION OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT TELEPHONE DIRECTORY IS NOW ON SALE.

IT COSTS \$7 AND IS AVAILABLE FROM THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, STAR FERRY CONCOURSE, HONG KONG ISLAND.

EXTRA COPIES HAVE BEEN PRINTED FOR SALE TO MEET GROWING PUBLIC DEMAND FOR THE DIRECTORY WHICH LISTS THE NAMES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF KEY PERSONNEL WORKING IN THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

NAMES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS OF MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS AND THE URBAN COUNCIL ARE GIVEN. THE DIRECTORY ALSO INCLUDES THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION AND A NUMBER OF PUBLIC BODIES.

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WATER CUT

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WATER SUPPLY TO A NUMBER OF PREMISES IN CENTRAL WILL BE TURNED OFF FOR FIVE HOURS FROM 1 A.M. ON TUESDAY (JANUARY 4) TO ENABLE THE WATERWORKS OFFICE TO CARRY OUT A NIGHT LEAKAGE TEST.

THE AFFECTED PREMISES ARE BOUNDED BY WING WO STREET, BONHAM STRAND EAST, MORRISON STREET AND THE SEAFRONT.

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