

Eastern Express

June 8, 1974

\$35m checkpoint for contaminants control

Leah Krakinowski

A \$35m inspection and testing centre will be built at the Man Kam To checkpoint to prevent pesticide-laden fruit and vegetables entering the territory.

The Urban Council yesterday approved a plan to fund the food control office, with construction expected to begin in October.

Health inspectors say the on-site laboratory will help them spot-check and screen the more than 250 trucks of fruit, vegetables, seafood and dairy products crossing the border daily from China.

Samples are now sent to the government laboratory and

test results arrive 24 hours later.

It is estimated that 5 per cent of vegetable imports contain pesticide residues.

"Right now we have 11 inspectors spread among four shifts to check everything," a health inspector said.

Pesticides banned in Hong Kong are routinely used to speed up harvest times in China and when ingested can cause food poisoning, the inspector said.

The food control station will contain a vehicle holding area, vegetable inspection bays, laboratories to test for pesticides and radioactivity and a refrigerated food detention room.