

600 hawkers in new row over date for clearance

THE 600 hawkers in Tsunwan yesterday said the USD's decision to clear them from the area next Tuesday was unreasonable and would put half of them out of work.

A similar clearance was conducted in the streets around the Yeung Uk Road Market last December when the hawkers reached an agreement with the USD allowing them to remain in the area, provided they hawked on a mobile basis and kept to the edges of pavements and the sides of roads and did not impede the traffic.

A hawker representative, Mr Wu Yan, said they had kept their promise by doing their business along the roadside not to block the traffic flow.

But the problem arose after the USD team left the market at 4pm when more than 100 hawkers from the nearby streets rushed in to put the handcarts in the middle of the roads surrounding the market.

Mr Wu said they informed the USD about the situation on three occasions and asked the authorities to send additional squads after the normal working hours to maintain order.

He said they had also requested the police station to send policemen there to control the situation.

"But we were told that our suggestions could not be met because of the lack of manpower," he said.

"Instead, we received the clearance order," he added.

About 300 stalls, made available from some vacant stalls inside the Yeung Uk Road market or in the temporary re-site market, will be put up for auction a couple of days after the clearance.

Mr Wu said the arrangement would throw half of the 600 hawkers out of business.

An open site in Kwuhang, about 150 yards from the old market, has also been made available to

hawkers who wish to trade on an itinerant basis.

Mr Wu said the site was situated next to the industrial area and they could not do any business there.

He said the USD should delay the clearance until enough stalls are available to accommodate all the hawkers.