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Acid rain nothing new to Guangdong

Chinese scientists have recorded acid rain in Guangdong for several years, it was revealed yesterday.

The news comes a day after Hongkong pollution experts said the territory had experienced acid rain as strong as vinegar. Now they are trying to find its source.

The deputy director of the Guangdong Bureau of Meteorology Research Branch, Mr Liang Chengji, told the *SCM Post* it had studied the effects of acid rain in the province. An in-depth report is now being prepared. He did not say if the acid rain

detected in Hongkong had come from his region.

Hongkong's Environmental Protection Agency has been in close touch with Guangdong experts on the problem. The Guangdong Environmental Protection Bureau has kept local experts informed.

Although EPA officials here have stopped short of saying China is the source of Hongkong's acid rain, it was pointed out yesterday most Guangdong residents burn coke for heating and cooking, releasing large quantities of sulphur dioxide.

According to Mr Liang, the

report from his branch is expected to reach the "relevant" departments, such as the Guangdong Environmental Protection Bureau and other academic institutions in China, in about two months. He told the *SCM Post* the acid rain study might have important implications for industrial and economic policies in the province.

Guangdong rain measured on average between five and 5.6 on the pH scale of acidity, he said.

There are seven or eight meteorological points for measuring acid rain in the province. But sometimes only two or three

are in use.

Mr Liang said his branch regularly submitted reports to other Chinese departments but the in-depth report would be the first of its kind and would contain proposals to remedy the problem.

Meanwhile, a local university lecturer pointed out yesterday it was possible China was a source of Hongkong's acid rain.

Dr Bill Kyle, from the department of geography and geology at the University of Hongkong, said Hongkong received predominantly north and north-east monsoon winds in the win-

ter months, which means from China.

The EPA identified acid rain in Hongkong last winter and the findings were released on Monday in its annual report on air quality.

Dr Kyle said that to trace the source of acid rain, it was necessary to know the direction of winds as well as their speed.

If slow-moving, the air could pick up pollutant particles from the ground. In that case, it would be impossible to differentiate between pollutants from Hongkong and from outside the territory.