

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Concerns raised by deputations and Panel members
at the special meeting on 1 February 2002**

Import health control and monitoring of hygiene standard

1. Some deputations suggested that a stringent health certification, import surveillance and inspection system, similar to the one adopted for live chickens, should be applied to chilled chickens imported from the Mainland.
2. The measures the Administration would take to ensure adequate tests and inspections on chilled meat imported from different provinces and cities of the Mainland.
3. A deputation requested the Administration to publish the list of recognised suppliers or farms in the Mainland to prevent unlawful import of chilled meat.
4. Some deputations urged the Administration to tighten the control and inspection of chilled meat imported from Thailand to prevent the spread of foot-and-mouth disease.
5. A deputation considered that the Administration should take prompt action to suspend the import of chilled meat if problems were found.
6. Several deputations suggested that there should be separate licences and designated places for the sale of chilled meat.
7. Several deputations suggested that all imported chilled meat should be delivered to a designated wholesale market for centralised inspection and testing before delivery to the retail outlets, in order to ensure the hygiene standard of chilled meat and to prevent illegal importation.
8. The Administration was requested to clarify the meaning of "new source" and whether the Mainland would be treated as one source for the purpose of the food surveillance system.
9. Whether the Administration would visit the different provinces and cities in the Mainland to ensure the health certification standards and food inspection systems before granting approval to the import of food from these places.

Differentiation of chilled meat from fresh meat

10. Some deputations suggested that all chilled chickens should have their heads and claws removed, to facilitate customers to differentiate chilled chickens from fresh chickens.

11. A deputation suggested that chilled meat should be required to be chopped into small pieces, packed in plastic bags and stored in refrigerators for sale at retail outlets. A "use by" date should also be shown on the labels of the packages.

Enforcement

12. Some deputations urged the Administration to step up the enforcement, e.g. increasing the inspection of retail meat stalls to check whether they complied with the storage and display requirements for selling chilled meat.

13. A deputation suggested that the Administration should consider requiring the importers to keep records of the import of chilled meat to facilitate tracing the origin of problematic chilled meat.

14. Some deputations urged the Administration to tighten control of the transportation of chilled meat, to ensure that the storage requirements were complied with and to prevent smuggling activities.

Lifting the export control of live poultry

15. The Administration was requested to discuss with the Mainland authorities to lift also the export control of live poultry for supply to Hong Kong, in order to enhance consumers' choice in the species or types of live poultry for cuisine. This would also upkeep Hong Kong's reputation as a food paradise.

Assessment of the impact on the trade

16. The Administration was urged to evaluate the pros and cons of the lifting of export quota for chilled meat supplied to Hong Kong, the costs for implementing the new import control requirements, and the feasibility of the suggestions put forward by the trade.

17. The Administration was urged to conduct an assessment of the impact on the relevant industries (including the breeders, wholesalers, retailers and transport industries), particularly the employment opportunities in these industries.

18. The Administration was urged to review the future development of Hong Kong's agriculture and fisheries, and to consider ways to assist the farmers and relevant industries to adapt to the change.

Council Business Division 2
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