

**For Information on
2 April 2004**

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

**Resumption of Importation of Chilled and Frozen Poultry
From the Mainland**

Purpose

At the meeting held on 10 March 2004, Members were briefed on the proposal of Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) on resuming the import of chilled and frozen poultry from the Mainland and the enhanced control measures and the timetable. This paper outlines the criteria, monitoring measures and updates members on the latest development.

Criteria on Resumption

2. The Government's first priority is to protect public health and ensure food safety. When we consider whether the restrictions on the importation of poultry meat should be lifted, we have to assess the risk posed by poultry meat against these two objectives. Having regard to the recommendations of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) that these products pose relatively lower risk to human health than live poultry, and the avian influenza outbreak situation in the region has started to ease off, we have decided to resume accepting applications for the importation of chilled and frozen poultry from the Mainland.

Existing Control Measures

3. FEHD is responsible for monitoring the import of chilled or frozen poultry meat. The import requirements for chilled or frozen poultry meat from Mainland are detailed at below.

Poultry Farms

4. All live chickens supplied to processing plants for the production of chilled or frozen chickens to be exported to Hong Kong should come from poultry farms registered with or monitored by the State General Administration for Quality Supervision and Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) or the respective entry-exit inspection and quarantine (CIQ) authorities. The live chickens sent to processing plants should come from poultry farms with no incidents of highly pathogenic avian influenza in the past 180 days and should have been segregated for 5 days before delivery. There should be a trained veterinary surgeon who has passed the required examination and whose name has been kept on record by CIQ in each poultry farm for the prevention and management of disease among chickens. Live chickens that meet the inspection and quarantine requirements will be issued with relevant certificates or documents by an official veterinarian of the entry-exit inspection and quarantine authorities. The chickens should arrive at the slaughterhouses within 3 days after certification.

Slaughtering and Processing Plant

5. The slaughtering and processing of chickens should be carried out in slaughtering and processing plants registered with the China National Regulatory Commission for Certification and Accreditation and approved to export chickens to Hong Kong. The processing plant should be producing only single type of poultry meat to prevent cross contamination. Live chickens awaiting slaughtering should be completely segregated from the processing and storage area of chilled or frozen chickens inside the processing plants.

Processing Procedures

6. On the arrival of the live chickens at the plant, the resident veterinarian of the processing plant should check the relevant certificates or documents issued by the entry-exit inspection and quarantine authorities and conduct ante-mortem inspection on the live chickens. During the processing procedures, sufficient space should be given to the chickens to prevent contacts and cross-contamination. Piercing of the offal during the dressing of chickens should be avoided. Tools for dressing the chickens should be cleaned each time after use. The carcasses and offal of the chickens should never be in contact again after the chickens have been dressed. After the chickens have been slaughtered, the resident veterinarian will conduct post-mortem inspections to ensure that the chickens are suitable for human consumption.

Transportation

7. A goods vehicle which transports chilled or frozen chickens should have an enclosed-type conveying compartment and refrigerating devices. The conveying compartment of the vehicle should only be used for transporting chilled or frozen chickens and should not be used for transporting any other goods simultaneously.

Health Certificate

8. Each consignment of products should be accompanied by a health certificate issued by the official veterinary surgeon of the entry-exit inspection and quarantine authorities.

Additional Measures

9. To ensure the hygiene standard of the poultry products and to enhance consumers' confidence, we have come to agreement with the relevant Mainland authorities on the following additional measures:

- (a) The inspection and quarantine authorities at the place of origin should seal the compartment of the vehicle carrying the chilled or frozen poultry products en site, and put down the seal number on the health certificate;
- (b) The offal of the chilled or frozen poultry would not be imported to Hong Kong initially in order to ease the minds of those consumers who are concerned that there is the possibility that the offal may carry virus; and
- (c) At the first stage of the resumption, FEHD will detain for examination the first three consignments of poultry meats from each slaughtering and processing plant in Guangdong province for H5 testing. Such consignments can only be released after the testing results are confirmed to be satisfactory. FEHD will also detain for examination the first three consignments from other provinces/municipalities. Such consignments will only be released after the H5 testing results are confirmed to be satisfactory.

Timetable

10. FEHD has resumed receiving applications for import of Mainland poultry meat on 11 March 2004. The first consignment of Mainland poultry meat arrived in Hong Kong on 22 March 2004. As at 31 March 2004, 84 applications have been received.

**Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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