

## **LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

### **Follow-up actions arising from the meeting on 24 June 2003**

At the meeting held on 24 June 2003, the Panel asked the Administration to provide information on —

- (a) the volume of frozen game meat imported from other countries;
- (b) the volume of raw and cooked snakes imported into Hong Kong and their countries of origin;
- (c) the kinds of live animals the import of which was subject to the quarantine requirements imposed under Cap. 421;
- (d) the different import requirements imposed on live animals imported from those countries or areas which had risks of rabies; and
- (e) information as to whether frozen game meat of civet cats was unfit for human consumption, and the volume of chilled/frozen game meat of civet cats imported into Hong Kong in the past 3 to 4 years and their country of origin.

2. The relevant information is set out below :

- (a) The volume of game meat imported from the Mainland and other countries amounted to 4,440 tonnes in 2000, 3,970 tonnes in 2001 and 6,125 tonnes in 2002.
- (b) The volume of snake meat imported into Hong Kong amounted to 48 tonnes in 2000, 52.4 tonnes in 2001 and 34.6 tonnes in 2002. Imported snake meat originates mainly from the Mainland and Indonesia.
- (c) For the prevention and control of rabies, the importation of all mammals (e.g. dogs, cats, pigs, sheep/goats, cattle and small pet mammals, etc.) is subject to permit control under the Rabies Ordinance (Cap. 421). Not all mammals are subject to quarantine on arrival in Hong Kong, depending on the rabies status of their country of origin.

- (d) In general, all mammals must be accompanied by a veterinary health certificate issued by the competent veterinary authority of the country of origin in a prescribed format as recommended by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE). Depending on the species and disease situation of the country/area, specific conditions are imposed to prevent the introduction of rabies into Hong Kong. For instance:
- Dogs and cats imported from countries/areas which are considered of high rabies risks (classified as Group III countries/areas for this purpose e.g. the Mainland and India) are subject to a 4-month post-arrival quarantine in the government kennel;
  - Dogs and cats imported from Group II countries/areas (countries/areas where rabies is present but under control and few cases occur, such as U.S.A. and France) may be subjected to 4 months quarantine or if proven to have a record of sound vaccination history and have resided in an area free from rabies for six months prior to export then quarantine may be waived.
  - Animals from Group I countries/areas that are free from rabies (such as Australia and New Zealand) are not required to undergo quarantine.
  - On arrival in Hong Kong, large food animals (pigs, sheep/goats and cattle) must be taken directly from the point of entry to the slaughterhouse for quarantine until being slaughtered;
  - Livestock for breeding purposes are subject to quarantine in the approved farm. For example, for breeding pigs, the animals on arrival must be inspected by officers of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and then sent directly to the approved farm where they must be strictly kept in quarantine for at least 28 consecutive days. The animals are subject to inspections by AFCD officers. Under no circumstances should the pigs be released from quarantine until authorized to do so by AFCD at the end of the quarantine period.

- Horses imported for racing purpose need to be accompanied by health certificate in a protocol established between Hong Kong and the country of origin. All horses are also subject to post-arrival quarantine at the Hong Kong Jockey Club.
  - Importation of live exotic mammals that are potential carries of rabies (e.g. civet cats, raccoons, porcupine, etc.) as pets or for commercial purposes are prohibited.
  - Other small mammals that are permitted to be imported as pets must have been kept indoor in an area free from rabies for the six months prior to import.
- (e) The food safety of imported game meat derived from Masked Palm Civets is governed by the Imported Game, Meat and Poultry Regulations under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). Any person who intends to import such game meat must obtain a permit from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, which can impose necessary conditions and directions to ensure that the imported game is sound, wholesome and fit for human consumption. In 2001, 100 kg of game meat from Masked Palm Civets were imported from the Mainland for local consumption. Hong Kong had not imported any game meat from Masked Palm Civets in 2000 and 2002.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau  
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department  
November 2003