

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2) 1663/05-06(09)

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
11 April 2006

Proposed duty visit to Singapore

Purpose

Members' comments are invited on a preliminary proposal for the Panel to undertake an overseas duty visit to Singapore.

The proposed visit

Proposed scope

2. The Panel Chairman, in consultation with some Panel members, has suggested that the Panel should conduct a visit to Singapore to obtain first-hand information about the operation of the country's central poultry slaughtering and the sale of chickens at retail outlets.

3. The Research and Library Services Division of the Secretariat has been requested to provide some background information on the central poultry slaughtering operation in Singapore. An information note on the subject is in the **Appendix** (Chinese version) for members' reference.

Proposed timing and duration of visit

4. It is proposed that the visit should be conducted in July 2006, for about two days.

Proposed programme

5. Arrangements will be made for members to meet with the regulatory authorities and organisations, and to pay visits to the central slaughtering plant and markets.

The way forward

6. Subject to members' agreement in principle for the Panel to undertake the visit, the Secretariat will proceed with the preparatory work. The Panel will be further consulted on the details of the proposed visit.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
6 April 2006

INFORMATION NOTE

Central Poultry Slaughtering System in Singapore

1. Introduction

1.1 This information note aims to introduce the central poultry slaughtering system in Singapore.

2. Legislation

2.1 Since 1992, the Singaporean Government has prohibited the slaughtering of poultry in wet markets. The Wholesome Meat and Fish Act provides that no person shall slaughter any animal which is intended for human consumption or permit any such animal to be slaughtered on any premises, unless those premises have been licensed by the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) under the Ministry for National Development as a slaughter-house and the person concerned has been granted by AVA a permit allowing him to slaughter the animal on those premises.

2.2 At present, there are a total of 14 central poultry slaughter-houses in Singapore. They are all privately run. Ten of them specifically slaughter live chickens, while the remaining four slaughter live ducks. All slaughter-houses are regulated by the Wholesome Meat and Fish Act and its rules (including the Conditions of Licensing of Poultry Slaughter-House). Any licensee who breaches any of the conditions of licensing is liable to a maximum fine of S\$10,000 (about HK\$50,000) and/or 12-month imprisonment, and his license may be revoked or suspended. AVA is responsible for monitoring and enforcing the legislation.

2.3 At present, about 50% of the poultry products imported to Singapore are from Malaysia. They are all live poultry, of which about 120 000 live chickens are imported daily to Singapore. Another 50% of the poultry products, which are all frozen poultry meat, come from countries such as Brazil, the United States and the Netherlands.

3. Regulation of poultry slaughter-houses

3.1 Under the Conditions of Licensing of Poultry Slaughter-House, all slaughterhouses must comply with a series of licensing conditions before operation. The major licensing conditions include:

Regulation of the overall operation

Design

3.2 Slaughter-houses must be designed in a manner so as to allow one-directional flow to prevent cross-contamination between live poultry and dressed carcasses. The partition materials of slaughter-houses must also meet specific conditions to prevent bacterial growth and transmission.

Hygiene requirements

3.3 All slaughter-houses must have adequate sanitary facilities and are required to implement the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) or similar food safety system. A proper programme must be in place to recall products that are not processed in accordance with the law.

Personnel

3.4 Regarding the design and proper application of the HACCP system, all slaughter-houses must ensure that individuals responsible for handling food have received adequate and appropriate training and are given protective clothing.

Restricted Use of Premises

3.5 Only the type of poultry as stated in the licence is allowed to be slaughtered in the slaughter-house. The number of poultry to be slaughtered is subject to the approval of AVA, which is based on the capacity and line speed of the slaughter-house. In addition, no portion of the slaughter-house is allowed to be used as living quarters, and all activities taking place in the slaughter-house must be approved by AVA. Only authorized personnel are allowed into areas where the poultry is slaughtered, processed or handled.

Regulation of the slaughtering process

Reception

3.6 All live poultry must be delivered directly to the holding bays of the slaughter-house. Live poultry are not allowed to be taken out of the slaughter-house or sold without the prior permission of AVA. Live poultry must be slaughtered within 24 hours of their arrival at the slaughter-house.

Slaughtering

3.7 The method of slaughter must be as humane as possible and approved by AVA. It must comply with the specific requirements for preventing bacterial growth and transmission.

Inspection

3.8 Inspection of the poultry carcasses must be carried out after the evisceration process. Adequate veterinary inspectors must also be engaged by the slaughter-house to carry out ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections of the carcasses.

Chilling

3.9 The chilling process of the dressed poultry must be completed within 90 minutes after evisceration. Ice used for processing and chilling of the dressed poultry must be manufactured from uncontaminated potable water.

Tagging

3.10 All freshly slaughtered poultry carcasses must be individually tagged to state the name of the slaughter-house and the date of slaughter. Slaughter-houses with permission from AVA to carry out thawing of frozen poultry or poultry parts must specify the following information on the poultry tags: (1) the poultry was thawed from frozen poultry; (2) do not refreeze; (3) use within three days from the date of thawing; (4) keep refrigerated; and (5) state the country of origin if the poultry is imported.

Storage, processing and packaging

3.11 The dressed poultry must be stored in chillers or freezers at specified temperature. The slaughter-house licensee must make the temperature records of the chillers or freezers up to a period of three months available for inspection by AVA. Prior permission must be obtained from AVA for thawing and processing of the poultry. Any further cutting up of the dressed poultry must also be approved by AVA and have to be carried out in a room of specified temperature.

Transportation

3.12 All dressed poultry must be transported by vehicles with refrigerating facilities. Chilled poultry products must be kept at 4°C or below, while frozen poultry products must be kept at -18°C or below.

Inspection

3.13 The licensee of a poultry slaughter-house must furnish a daily report to AVA, stating the number and type of poultry for slaughter. The licensee must also provide all Customs Clearance Permits and relevant documents to the inspectors.

4. Live chicken slaughter-house in Singapore

4.1 The live chicken slaughter-house run by Soonly Food Processing Industries Pte Ltd is one of the largest poultry slaughter-houses in Singapore. It mainly provides one-stop slaughtering and distribution services for supermarkets, wet markets, chicken rice stalls, hotels, restaurants and other food service providers. According to the Company, the poultry products processed by the Company account for about 25% of Singapore's daily demand for such products. The Company was established in July 1991 and was taken over by a listed company, Elite KSB Holdings Limited, in 1998. The company's live chicken slaughter-house is the first of its type to comply with the HACCP standard in Singapore, and has been awarded the highest grading under the Food Factory Grading Scheme of AVA.

4.2 According to the Company, all live chickens must come from the AVA-accredited farms in Malaysia, and most of them are from the Johor Province. The slaughter-house can normally handle 5 000 to 6 000 live chickens (up to a maximum of 7 200) per hour. It can operate 16 hours a day, processing 80 000 to 96 000 live chickens. The slaughtering processes are handled by 50 workers on shifts, while the processes other than slaughtering, including chilling, storage, processing, packaging and distribution, are carried out by another company called KSB Distribution Pte Ltd. About 150 workers are required for all processes. A qualified veterinary officer is engaged by the slaughter-house.

4.3 Currently, the Company offers to retailers the wholesale price of S\$3 (HK\$15) for a slaughtered and processed chicken of 1 to 1.1 kilograms. The wholesale price for chickens for chicken rice is S\$3.5 (HK\$17.5) per kilogram. On the other hand, the wholesale price for imported frozen chickens is S\$2.3 (HK\$11.5) per kilogram.

4.4 According to the Company, the site of the slaughter-house was selected by the Singaporean government. The slaughter-house, located at Senoko Industrial Estate in the north of Singapore, is about two to three kilometres away from the nearest residential areas. The slaughter-house is also near to the Johor Province of Malaysia. The distance between the border and the slaughter-house is about 35 kilometres. At present, Singapore has two routes to Malaysia, but AVA only allows vehicles transporting live poultry to use the route which passes through fewer residential areas.

4.5 According to the Company, the Singaporean government leased the selected site of 4 320 sq m to KSB at a monthly rent of S\$6,000 (about HK\$30,000 at the current exchange rate) for a period of 30 years. The initial capital investment for the slaughter-house was S\$3.6 million (about HK\$17.3 million at the current exchange rate). The whole project took about two years from planning to operation.

Reference

1. Agri-food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore. *Conditions of Licensing of Poultry Slaughterhouse*. Available from: <http://www.ava.gov.sg> [Accessed April 2006].
2. Agri-food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore. (2006) *Cold Chain*. Available from: <http://www.ava.gov.sg/JAVASCRIPT/ChilledMeat.htm> [Accessed April 2006].
3. Agri-food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore. (2006) *Singapore's Poultry Supply Unaffected by Outbreak of HPAI in Penang*, 20 March 2006. Available from: <http://www.ava.gov.sg> [Accessed April 2006].
4. Elite KSB Holdings Limited. (2006) *Corporate Profile*. Available from: <http://www.eliteksb.com/aboutus.html> [Accessed April 2006].
5. Elite KSB Holdings Limited. (2006) *Quality Focus*. Available from: <http://www.eliteksb.com/aboutus.html> [Accessed April 2006].
6. Elite KSB Holdings Limited. (2006) *Services*. Available from: <http://www.eliteksb.com/aboutus.html> [Accessed April 2006].
7. *Wholesome Meat and Fish Act*. Available from: <http://www.ava.gov.sg/Legislation/ListofLegislation> [Accessed April 2006].
8. 中國報新聞網:《新加坡 4 宰鴨廠停工逾百員工受影響》, 2006 年 3 月 17 日。網址：
http://www.chinapress.com.my/content_new.asp?dt=2006-03-18&sec=mas&art=0318m08a26txt [2006 年 4 月登入]。

Prepared by Thomas WONG
6 April 2006
Tel: 2869 9621

Information notes are compiled for Members and Committees of the Legislative Council. They are not legal or other professional advice and shall not be relied on as such. Information notes are subject to copyright owned by the Legislative Council Commission (the Commission). The Commission permits accurate reproduction of the information notes for non-commercial use in a manner not adversely affecting the Legislative Council, provided that acknowledgement is made stating the Research and Library Services Division of the Legislative Council Secretariat as the source and one copy of the reproduction is sent to the Legislative Council Library.
