

**For Discussion  
On 13 February 2007**

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

**Follow-up Action on the Incident  
of Selling Oilfish as Cod Fish**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the Administration's follow-up actions on the sale of oilfish incident.

**Background**

2. At the special Panel meeting held on 2 February, we tabled a paper LC Paper No (CB(2)1006/06-07(01)) that outlined the follow-up actions taken to tackle the incident of selling oilfish as cod fish. The paper mentioned that the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) had met with representatives of fish importers, wholesalers, retailers and catering business and reached a consensus with the trade to suspend import and sale of oilfish and to stop using oilfish for catering purpose. The trade also undertook to verify that their inventory were cod fish before offering them for sale and to destroy their remaining oilfish stock so as to restore public confidence. On 7 February, the media reported that the tests conducted by the Chinese University of Hong Kong (Chinese University) showed that nearly 40% of fish labelled as cod fish or snowfish in the market were in fact oilfish. The Panel asked the authorities concerned to brief them on the measures taken to tackle the continuing sale of oilfish in the market.

**Follow-up Actions**

3. According to the reports, the test results of the Chinese University showed that 10 out of the 25 samples analyzed were oilfish. We noted that these 10 oilfish samples were mostly purchased before the trade agreed to stop

selling oilfish and only two were bought afterwards.

4. To follow up the issue, the CFS has taken the following actions:
  - (a) Continue to monitor closely the sale of cod fish and oilfish in the market. The CFS has inspected more than 130 retail outlets and food establishments and taken samples of products labelled as “cod fish” or similar products for various tests, including DNA tests, by the Government Laboratory. If and when the test results showed that the samples were not cod fish or other fishes as labelled, the CFS would forward these cases to the Department of Justice for legal advice.
  - (b) Set up a working group to prepare guidelines on the identification and naming of “cod fish” and “oilfish” to help the trade differentiate between cod fish and oilfish. The working group, comprising university experts, members of import, distribution and retail sectors as well as representatives from Consumer Council and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, will hold a meeting this week.
  - (c) The CFS will write to the trade to remind them of the earlier consensus on suspending sale of oilfish.

### **Advice Sought**

5. Members are invited to note the follow-up measures taken to tackle the sale of oilfish incident.

**Health, Welfare and Food Bureau  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department  
Centre for Food Safety  
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