



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部食物及衛生局  
Food and Health Bureau, Government Secretariat  
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
The People's Republic of China

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11 May 2009

Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene  
Legislative Council Building  
8 Jackson Road  
Central  
Hong Kong  
(Attn: Ms Mary SO)  
(Fax: 2509 0775)

Dear Ms SO,

**LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene  
on 10 March 2009 and 3 April 2009**

At the LegCo Panel meeting on 3 April 2009, the Administration was requested to investigate the case of import of vegetables from improper source to Hong Kong under the disguise of a proper label from a registered vegetable collection and processing plant and consider various suggestions to improve the import control of Mainland vegetables to Hong Kong. Furthermore, at the LegCo Panel meeting on 10 March 2009, the Administration was requested to provide information on: (a) the frequency of inspections conducted by the Administration to registered vegetable farms in the Mainland and the date of the last visit; and (b) production capacity of the registered vegetable farms in the Mainland as compared with the volume of Mainland vegetables imported to Hong Kong.

At the Special Meeting on 3 April 2009, the assistant of the Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, Chairman of the Panel, told the meeting that he had been to Shenzhen and purchased vegetables from non-registered vegetable farms. However, after a label issued by a collection and processing plant for export to Hong Kong (i.e. Yitong By-products Development Company Limited (易通副產品發展有限公司) (Yitong) in Shenzhen) had been attached to the

consignment, the vegetables were allowed to be supplied to Hong Kong through the Nanshan Centre for Processing and Distribution of Agricultural Products to Hong Kong (南山供港農產品加工配送中心) (the Nanshan Centre) in Shenzhen following the inspection and quarantine procedures. The establishment concerned is a registered collection and processing plant for export to Hong Kong approved by the State General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ).

As the case involved the monitoring system on the supply of vegetables to Hong Kong in the Mainland, the Government has informed the AQSIQ and the Shenzhen Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau (SZCIQ) of the incident and requested the Mainland authorities to take follow-up action. The AQSIQ attached great importance to the incident and instructed the relevant inspection and quarantine authorities to conduct investigation. The AQSIQ considers that the arrangement on the supply of vegetables to Hong Kong as agreed between the Mainland and Hong Kong is satisfactory since implementation, and that the current case is only an isolated incident caused by human error. The incident does not suggest any significant problems with the existing arrangements. However, AQSIQ will endeavour to work out measures to ensure proper implementation of the existing mechanism.

Concerning the incident reported by the assistant of the Hon Fred LI, the SZCIQ has completed its investigation. According to the SZCIQ, the establishment involved was not the Nanshan Centre, but the Yitong By-products Development Company Limited in Shenzhen. Yitong, a collection and processing plant for export to Hong Kong, was allowed to supply vegetables to Hong Kong direct. It had only rented the shop premises of the former Shenzhen Nanshan Agricultural Produce Wholesale Market, which was opposite the Nanshan Centre. Yitong and the Nanshan Centre were two different companies, with different vegetable labels and registration numbers. To say that the Nanshan Centre had allowed the export of vegetables from a non-registered farm with a bona fide certificate was confusing one company with another.

In view of the offence committed by Yitong, the AQSIQ has already cancelled its registration status as a collection and processing plant for export to Hong Kong and the company could not supply vegetables to Hong Kong for the time being.

Currently there are about 260 vegetable vehicles entering Hong Kong from the Mainland daily. Among the 100 vegetable vehicles from Shenzhen, 70 enter Hong Kong via the Nanshan Centre and the remaining 30 come from 12 other collection and processing plants in Shenzhen. According to information provided by the Nanshan Centre, registered vegetable farms have to report to the Nanshan Centre on the type and quantity of vegetables to be supplied to Hong Kong in advance. When vegetable vehicles arrive at the Nanshan Centre with vegetables from registered vegetable farms, the Nanshan Centre will inspect the certificates of the place of origin of the farms concerned and verify the type and quantity of the vegetables, in order to ascertain that the vegetables in the vehicles come from the registered vegetable farms indicated on the label. The Nanshan Centre will then attach a label to each consignment of vegetables. Besides, samples will be taken at random from every single consignment of vegetables entering the Nanshan Centre for testing (about 900 samples collected daily for testing of pesticide residues) to ensure food safety.

On 23 April 2009, arrangements were made by the AQSIC and the SZCIQ for the Hon Fred LI, Chairman, and the Hon WONG Yung-kan, Deputy Chairman of the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene to visit the SZCIQ and the Nanshan Centre to help them understand the inspection and quarantine arrangements of vegetables supplied to Hong Kong as well as the operation of the Nanshan Centre. The SZCIQ also informed the Hon Members of the actions taken against Yitong.

We will continue to maintain close liaison with the AQSIC and the SZCIQ in safeguarding food safety.

As regards the questions raised at the Panel meeting on 10 March 2009, staff of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) conducts visits and inspections to about 20 Mainland registered vegetable farms each year, and the last visit was made on 16-17 April 2009.

We note that Members would like to compare the production capacity of the registered vegetable farms with the volume of Mainland vegetables imported to Hong Kong so as to ascertain if there is import of vegetables from non-registered farms in the Mainland. It should be noted that some of the registered farms in the Mainland are eligible to supply vegetables not only to Hong Kong, but also to Macau and overseas countries. Under such

circumstances, a comparison between the production capacity of the registered vegetable farms and the import volume of Mainland vegetables may not provide any meaningful conclusion on whether there are vegetables imported from non-registered farms. For Members' information, the Hong Kong Merchandise Trade Statistics published by the Census and Statistics Department indicate that in 2007 and 2008, the volumes of vegetables supplied by the Mainland to Hong Kong were steady, at about 589 000 tonnes and 591 000 tonnes respectively, accounting for more than 90% of Hong Kong's total vegetable import.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kay Kwok', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

(Miss Kay KWOK)  
for Secretary for Food and Health