

For discussion
on 8 June 2010

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Issues related to Food Safety and Fisheries under the Framework Agreement on Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation

Purpose

This paper aims to brief Members on issues related to food safety and fisheries under the Framework Agreement on Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation.

Background

2. In January 2009, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) promulgated the “Outline of the Plan for the Reform and Development of the Pearl River Delta (PRD)” (the Outline), elevating the development of the PRD region to the strategic level of national development and establishing Hong Kong/Guangdong co-operation as a national policy. To take forward the implementation of the Outline, the Chief Executive and the Governor of Guangdong Province, Mr Huang Huahua, signed the Framework Agreement on Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation (the Framework Agreement) on 7 April 2010 in Beijing. The Framework Agreement has a wide coverage and sets out clearly the positioning of Hong Kong/Guangdong co-operation in several policy programmes, including specific initiatives for co-operation in food safety and fisheries. Relevant extracts from the Framework Agreement are set out at **Annex**.

Food Safety

3. The key areas of co-operation in relation to food safety under the Framework Agreement include:

- (a) inspection and quarantine;
- (b) food safety information notification and co-ordination mechanisms;
- (c) strengthening source traceability of agricultural products through information technology for e-commerce.

Inspection and Quarantine

4. On inspection and quarantine, the Food and Health Bureau has all along maintained close co-operation and liaison with the State General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) and has also put in place a liaison officer system between both sides. As live and fresh food products supplied by the Mainland to Hong Kong are mostly from Guangdong, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has also established liaison officer systems respectively with the Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureaux of Guangdong, Shenzhen and Zhuhai to enhance communication and co-ordination within the region. The aim is to provide for timely notification of problems associated with food and agricultural products imported from the other side, and to join hands to take proactive action to tackle issues on inspection and quarantine of food and agricultural products which may affect food trading between Hong Kong and Guangdong.

5. Hong Kong and Guangdong are fully aware of the importance of management at source to ensuring food safety. At present, all food animals, poultry, freshwater fish and vegetables supplied to Hong Kong by the Mainland must come from registered farms. Besides, all live food animals, chilled and frozen meat and freshwater fish must be accompanied with health certificates issued by the inspection and quarantine authorities of the places of origin to certify that the animals or products concerned are in good condition and fit for human consumption. FEHD officers also inspect the Mainland registered farms from time to time, so as to ensure the safety of food and agricultural products supplied from the Mainland to Hong Kong. Under the Framework Agreement, both sides will build upon existing arrangements to enhance inspection,

quarantine and supervision at source and consider the setting up of registration and listing systems for cultured marine fish, shellfish and related aquatic products supplied to Hong Kong to further ensure food safety.

6. In addition to routine inspection and quarantine, Hong Kong and Guangdong will look further into the approaches of inspection and quarantine for food and agricultural products supplied to Hong Kong. Food sampling and inspection will be based on the principle of risk assessment to ensure the safety of food products supplied to Hong Kong. Both sides will also step up the co-ordination in combating illegal import and export of food and agricultural products and strengthen information and intelligence exchanges for this purpose.

7. Besides, Hong Kong and Guangdong will strengthen communication and exchanges in respect of laboratory test and analysis technology. For example, to prepare for the implementation of legislation on nutrition labelling, FEHD had technical exchanges on the testing methods for nutrients with the Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureaux of Guangdong, Shenzhen and Zhuhai. Also, the Government Laboratory (GL) is now organising a testing capability verification programme on food safety in collaboration with the Guangdong Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau (GDCIQ). GL is the main organiser, with GDCIQ as the co-organiser. The participants will include food testing laboratories in HK, the Mainland, Asia-Pacific region and worldwide. The programme aims to enhance the food testing capability of both Hong Kong and Guangdong.

Food Safety Information Notification and Co-ordination Mechanisms

8. Under the Framework Agreement, Hong Kong and Guangdong will continue to refine the mechanisms for information notification, investigative assistance and source tracing in respect of food safety issues concerning animals and plants, food and agricultural products. The aim is to enhance the joint capability against food safety hazards and contingencies and minimise the impact of incidents on public health. In addition, both sides will establish mechanisms for communication and co-ordination in respect of food safety standards with a view to

strengthening exchange and co-operation in this respect.

Strengthening Source Traceability of Agricultural Products through Information Technology for e-Commerce

9. Hong Kong and Guangdong have long been engaged in studies and co-operation in applications of food traceability technology. In late 2006, FEHD and the GDCIQ launched a trial programme on identification of live pigs supplied to Hong Kong from Guangdong by means of electronic ear tags with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) functions. So far, FEHD has conducted four rounds of trial tests and the GDCIQ has also taken some improvement measures for addressing technical problems.

10. FEHD is currently studying the installation of pass-by readers at the passageway of the Sheung Shui Slaughterhouse to retrieve data from the ear tags of live pigs going through the passageway. Upon completion of the installation, FEHD will conduct a new round of trial. Hong Kong and Guangdong will continue to strengthen the work in this aspect under the Framework Agreement. Upon the completion of the trial programme on identification of live pigs by RFID technology, both sides will sum up their experiences with a view to further exploring the application of RFID technology in source traceability of agricultural products.

Fisheries – Ecology Building and Environmental Protection

11. Under the Framework Agreement, Guangdong and Hong Kong will continue to co-operate closely on the work of ecology building and environmental protection in order to enhance the protection of marine resources jointly possessed by the two places. The Hong Kong-Guangdong Marine Resources and Conservation Special Panel (the Panel), which is a standing mechanism between the Governments of Guangdong and Hong Kong, provides a forum for both sides to exchange information and experience on fisheries management, marine conservation and law enforcement. When necessary, the two sides will also reflect the views of fishermen on individual fisheries issues at meetings of the Panel. The Panel, with the representative of the Bureau

of Ocean and Fisheries of the Guangdong Province as head of the Guangdong side and the representative of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department of the HKSARG as head of the Hong Kong side, holds annual meetings every year.

12. The tenth meeting of the Panel was held in January this year to recapitulate the work on marine resources and conservation in 2009 and the fruitful results of cooperation. In 2009, the two sides have made good progress in exchanges on issues such as promoting the sustainable development of aquaculture industry, joint efforts against illegal fish capture activities, marine environment monitoring, release of sea turtles and techniques for tracking their migration route and conservation of Chinese White Dolphins.

13. In 2010, the major co-operation initiatives considered by the two sides include enhancement of the design, monitoring and management techniques for artificial reefs, study on their effectiveness and experience sharing, and further exchanges and co-operation on aquaculture techniques. On joint law enforcement in respect of fisheries in Guangdong and Hong Kong, apart from improving the notification mechanism between the two sides, joint actions will also be organised to combat illegal fishing activities. Besides, on the basis of the “List of Harmful Microalgae Species”, both sides will improve the alerting mechanism and information consistency for red tide incidents in Guangdong and Hong Kong. The Hong Kong side, in collaboration with the Guangdong side, will also organise training courses for fishermen during the fishing moratorium in order to raise their knowledge of sustainable fisheries development and management.

Conclusion

14. The Framework Agreement further strengthens the collaboration between Guangdong and Hong Kong. We will continue to keep close communication and liaison with the relevant authorities in the Mainland on issues related to food safety and fisheries as outlined above.

Food and Health Bureau
June 2010

「粵港合作框架協議」

(節錄)

第五章 營商環境

共同促進貿易投資便利化，實現人流、物流、資金流和信息流便捷互通，優化和提升區域營商環境。

第三條 檢驗檢疫

一、加強食品農產品質量安全信息的溝通和交流，及時通報對方入境食品農產品檢出問題等相關情況，協同積極應對影響兩地食品農產品貿易的檢驗檢疫問題，磋商統一雙方檢驗檢疫的程式、方法和標準，包括實驗室測試和分析技術。

二、雙方在內地對供港食畜及其產品、水產品、水果、蔬菜、花卉等種植場、養殖場實施註冊和備案管理的基礎上，加強源頭的檢驗檢疫和監督。

三、雙方進一步探討建立既符合科學有效性原則，又能確保供港食品安全的檢驗檢疫新模式，協調打擊非法進出口行爲，共同做好供港食品農產品的質量安全工作。

第四條 電子商務

二、支持RFID粵港澳農產品質量安全信息服務平台等電子商務基礎技術支撐平台建設，完善安全認證、網上支付、關鍵標準等電子商務公用技術。

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第六章 優質生活圈

完善生態建設和環境保護合作機制，保護區域環境和自然生態，促進社會資源開放共享，共同建設大珠江三角洲地19區優質生活圈，打造更適宜人居的自然和社會生活環境。

第一條 生態建設和環境保護

四、建立海洋環境監測和災害預防合作機制，逐步實現海洋環境調查監測設備共享，完善信息通報制度，通過水生生物資源增殖放流和人工魚礁、海水養殖可持續發展等措施，深化海洋生態修復合作，保護海洋生物多樣性，合作開

展珠江口海域海洋生態環境整治與海洋珍稀水生野生動植物保護，養護水生生物資源和生態系統。加強水產健康養殖合作，開展海上漁業聯合執法行動，加強流動漁船管理。

第三條 衛生及食品安全

二、完善動植物、食品、農產品衛生信息通報、協查和安全溯源機制，提高共同應對食品安全風險和突發事件能力。建立食品安全技術標準溝通及協調機制。加強雙方食品安全標準的交流合作。

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實施《粵港合作框架協議》2010年重點工作

(節錄)

五、優質生活圈

(一) 生態建設和環境保護

5、開展聯合專項執法行動，打擊非法用海、違法越界採沙、破壞海洋環境等違法活動，打擊跨界非法捕撈行爲；進一步加強流動漁船管理，強化流動漁民安全生產和捕撈許可教育培訓，共同做好漁業資源養護工作，維護正常的漁業生產秩序，保障流動漁民的合法權益；舉辦粵港漁業執法部門交流會。