



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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20 April 2017

Clerk to Panel on Establishment Subcommittee  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(Attn.: Miss Connie Szeto)

Dear Miss Szeto,

**Legislative Council Establishment Subcommittee**  
**Follow-up Item to the Meeting on 10 April 2017**

At the meeting on 10 April 2017, Members of the Establishment Subcommittee requested the Administration to illustrate how the IT systems in the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) operate in tracing the sale of problematic food, with particular reference to the 2016 incident of hairy crabs detected to contain dioxins and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls ("PCBs") and the 2017 incident on the quality of frozen and chilled meat and poultry meat from Brazil. Our response is as follows.

The Food Safety Ordinance (Cap. 612), which has come into effect in 2012, introduces a food tracing mechanism to enable the Government to identify the source of food effectively and take prompt action when dealing with food incidents. The

mechanism consists of a registration scheme for food importers and food distributors and a requirement for food traders to maintain proper transaction records.

The Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (the Ordinance) (Cap. 132) stipulates that all foods for sale should be fit for human consumption. Subsidiary legislation under the Ordinance regulates certain imported foods of higher-risk. For example, according to The Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK), the import of game, meat, poultry and eggs has to be accompanied with official health certificates issued by the issuing authorities of sources recognized by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD).

The IT system of CFS currently records the registration information of food importers and food distributors. This provides CFS with access to the contact information of the parties concerned for follow-up actions when there are food incidents. Also, the IT system processes and records the information of relevant restricted food (such as game, meat and poultry etc.) imported to Hong Kong.

Taking the 2016 incident when two hairy crab samples collected at the import level were found to have contained dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs at a total level exceeding the CFS' action level as an example, CFS took follow-up action on the test results promptly. CFS traced the information of the two aquaculture farms concerned on the basis of the health certificates<sup>1</sup> provided by the importers when they imported the relevant batches of hairy crabs, and suspended the import of hairy crabs from those two aquaculture farms. On the basis of past hairy crabs import record, CFS identified all of the importers which have imported hairy crabs from those aquaculture farms, informed them of the matter, and instructed them to remove the hairy crabs from shelves, stop sale and initiate a recall.

Taking the recent incident concerning imported meat from Brazil as an example, as a precautionary measure, CFS temporarily banned the import of frozen and chilled meat and poultry meat from Brazil (the scope of import ban was later restricted to the 21 plants under investigation by the Brazilian authority) and stepped up surveillance of meat imported from Brazil. Also, CFS initiated a recall targeted specifically at the meat and poultry meat from the 21 plants under investigation by the Brazilian authority. CFS traced the importers concerned based on the information (including the health certificates issued by Brazil)<sup>2</sup> provided by the importers when they applied for import licenses, and liaised with the importers to initiate the recall.

That said, there is indeed room for enhancement to the interfacing, data structure and IT automation of CFS' system. CFS needs to overhaul its IT systems,

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<sup>1</sup> Under the existing administrative arrangements between Hong Kong and the inspection and quarantine authorities of the Mainland, each consignment of hairy crabs imported to Hong Kong should come with the health certificates issued by the relevant Mainland inspection and quarantine authorities.

<sup>2</sup> Importers of meat and poultry meat need to apply for import licenses from CFS according to the stipulations in the Import and Export Ordinance (Cap. 60).

review IT-enabled business transformation, and re-engineer the workflow. The aforementioned task requires directorate leadership. A directorate officer with rich administrative exposure in different bureaux/departments equipped with the know-how and skills would be best placed to approach the business re-engineering processes holistically, and coordinating and balancing the views of different parties for optimal results.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)  
(Kenneth Chan)  
for Secretary for Food and Health

cc: DFEH (Attn: Dr CHOI Mei-yee) (Fax : 2521 9527)  
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