



香港金鐘道 66 號金鐘道政府合署 45 樓
45/F Queensway Government Offices,
66 Queensway, Hong Kong
電話 Telephone: 2867-5693 傳真 Fax: 2530-1368

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來函檔號 Your ref. : CB4/PAC/R71

15 January 2020

Mr Anthony CHU
Clerk to Public Accounts Committee
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr Chu,

Follow-up on Public Accounts Committee Report No. 71A
Centre for Food Safety: Import Control of Foods

I refer to your letter dated 6 January 2020 requesting this Department to provide follow-up information on the above.

Enclosed please find the relevant information for your reference.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tse Oi-yee", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

(TSE Oi-yee)

for Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

c.c.:

Secretary for Food and Health
Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Commissioner of Customs and Excise
Director of Audit

**Follow-up on Public Accounts Committee Report No. 71A
Centre for Food Safety: Import Control of Foods**

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department's Reply

In reviewing the position of these issues, Public Accounts Committee (PAC) noted from the Government Minute in response to PAC Report Nos. 71A and 72 (as at December 2019) that the Centre for Food Safety had issued a new guideline which required that every import consignment of foods regulated under the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK) must be accompanied by the original copy of health certificate (or Export Declaration agreed under the import protocol between the Centre for Food Safety and European Union for meat imports). In this connection, please advise:

- (a) whether the Administration has received any complaints from the trade about the above new arrangement,
- (b) since the implementation of the new arrangement, how many cases for which the original copy of health certificate or Export Declaration did not accompany the import consignments; and
- (c) whether any discretion was given to the cases in (b) above. If yes, the details; if no, how were the cases resolved. How does the Administration strike a balance between ensuring food safety and facilitating business operation in improving its operational workflow?

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD)'s Reply

New Guideline on Control of Foods Imported by Air Implemented by the Centre for Food Safety (CFS)

In light of the Audit Commission's observation, and upon full consideration of the actual operation of the trade, the CFS of FEHD has implemented a new guideline on control of foods imported by air cargo shipments at the airport since January 2019. Specifically, every consignment of imported foods regulated under the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK) must be accompanied by the original copy of health certificate

(or export declaration agreed under the import protocol between the CFS and the European Union for meat imports) and undergo risk-based inspection at the Airport Food Inspection Office (AFIO) prior to release.

The new guideline has been operating smoothly for a year. So far, all relevant imported air cargo consignments have been accompanied by their original health certificates or export declarations and processed by the frontline officers at the AFIO in accordance with the established procedures. The CFS has not received any complaint from the trade on the above arrangement.

The CFS will continue to monitor the implementation of the guideline and heed the trade's views to ensure that the arrangement can strike a balance between ensuring food safety and trade facilitation.