

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1312/20-21  
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by the Administration)

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**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Tuesday, 8 June 2021, at 2:30 pm**  
**in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** : Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS (Chairman)  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP  
Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP  
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP  
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH  
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

**Members absent** : Dr Hon Pierre CHAN  
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai

**Public Officers** : Item III

Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP  
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Ms Teresa CHEUNG Shuk-kau  
Senior Principal Executive Officer (Food)  
Food and Health Bureau

Dr Edwin TSUI Lok-kin  
Controller, Centre for Food Safety  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Ms Mildred CHEUNG Mei-yee  
Assistant Director (Corporate and System Management),  
Centre for Food Safety  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Dr Jackie LEUNG Ching-kan  
Assistant Director (Risk Management), Centre for Food Safety  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item IV

Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP  
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Ms Chelsea WONG Wing-chee  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 1

Dr Edwin TSUI Lok-kin  
Controller, Centre for Food Safety  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Dr Jackie LEUNG Ching-kan  
Assistant Director (Risk Management), Centre for Food Safety  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

**Clerk in attendance** : Ms Wendy LO  
Senior Council Secretary (2) 2

**Staff in attendance** : Mr Clement HAU  
Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Cally LAI  
Legislative Assistant (2) 2

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**I. Information paper issued since the last meeting**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)1136/20-21(01))

Members noted that since the last meeting, the Secretariat had issued a letter dated 31 May 2021 from Hon Vincent CHENG regarding the hygiene conditions of public toilets under the management of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD").

**II. Date of next meeting and items for discussion**  
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1137/20-21(01) and (02))

2. Members agreed to discuss the following two items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 13 July 2021 at 2:30 pm:

- (a) Findings of the Second Hong Kong Population-based Food Consumption Survey; and
- (b) Impact of the discharge of wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the ocean on food safety and import control on Japanese food.

3. Mr Tommy CHEUNG suggested that representatives from the Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong or experts in the field of treatment of wastewater be invited to join the discussion of the item as referred to in paragraph 2(b) above. The Chairman said that he would defer to the Administration on action to follow up with the Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong, to ascertain whether any expert report/relevant information could be provided to the Panel to facilitate members' discussion.

*(Post-meeting note: Members were informed via LC Paper No. CB(2)1175/20-21 issued on 11 June 2021 that the Administration had been requested to approach the Consulate-General of Japan in Hong Kong to understand whether there was any expert report or relevant/useful information which might facilitate members' better understanding of the discharge plan and ensuing discussion on the agenda item and, if available, to obtain a copy of the expert report/relevant information for the Panel's reference.)*

Schedule of regular meetings between July and October 2021

4. Members noted the President's direction in respect of the Council meetings to be held from 21 July to 20 October 2021 as set out in LC Paper No. CB(3)618/20-21. A summer break would fall between the two Council meetings scheduled for 21 July and 18 August 2021. The Chairman

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suggested and members agreed that the Panel would hold regular meetings on 13 July, 14 September and 12 October 2021.

5. Members agreed that issues raised in Mr Vincent CHENG's letter (LC Paper No. CB(2)1136/20-21(01) as referred to in paragraph 1 above) be included in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion; and that the subject matter be discussed by the Panel within the 2020-2021 session.

**III. Progress update on the enhancement of the information technology systems of the Centre for Food Safety**

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1137/20-21(03) and (04))

6. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Food and Health ("USFH") briefed members on the latest progress in enhancing the information technology ("IT") systems of the Centre for Food Safety ("CFS") of FEHD, as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1137/20-21(03)). Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(2)1137/20-21(04)).

Enhancement of IT systems

7. The Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Mr Wilson OR, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan and Mr Tony TSE welcomed the enhancement of CFS' five major IT systems. Ms YUNG noted that in tandem with the launch of the Food Trader Portal ("FTP") which allowed food traders to apply online for import licences and import permissions, the Import Licensing Office of CFS had increased its working days from five days to seven days a week since the end of March 2020, with operation hours extended to 9:00 p.m. from Monday to Friday. She queried the need for increasing the working hours of CFS' staff after the launch of FTP which should have streamlined the workflows and application procedures for import licences and import permissions.

8. In response, Controller/CFS and Assistant Director (Corporate and System Management)/CFS ("AD(CSM)/CFS") advised that through FTP, food importers could, among other import-related functions, apply online for import licences for meat and poultry and import permissions for meat, poultry, game, milk, frozen confections and eggs, and report the information regarding arrival of food consignments in Hong Kong. Compared with an application made in paper form, the time required for processing an online application for import licence for the import of meat and poultry by air as well as the import of chilled meat and poultry by land had generally been shortened from a few days to a few hours. With the online service, FTP

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made it possible for food traders to submit applications on weekends and public holidays. For expeditious handling of online applications received, CFS had adjusted the operation hours of its Import Licensing Office through flexible deployment of internal manpower resources.

9. Mr Tony TSE expressed concern that among the five major IT systems, only FTP had been fully launched in late May 2021. The enhancement of the remaining four IT systems (i.e. the Food Import and Export Control System, the Food Incident Management System, the Food Surveillance System ("FSS") and the Food Classification and Coding System ("FCCS")) had yet to be completed. He was concerned whether the enhancement work was lagging behind the original schedule and if yes, the reasons for the delay. Mr Wilson OR enquired about the expected benefits to be brought about by the enhancement of the IT systems; and whether any performance indicators would be devised to measure the effectiveness of the five new/updated IT systems.

10. Controller/CFS responded that through the launch of FTP, CFS aimed to achieve the following: (a) strengthened food import control; (b) facilitating food traders' online registration as food importers and/or distributors, renewal of registration or updating of trader information by electronic means; and (c) shortening the time for processing import licence/import permission applications.

11. The Chairman enquired, in light of the increasing popularity of food purchase through online platforms, whether operators of online food sale business and logistics service providers providing food delivery service for online portals were required to register as food importers and/or distributors via FTP and submit health certificates/export declarations to apply for import licences for regulated food via FTP before engaging in online sale of certain food products or delivery of the products sold online. The Administration was requested to provide a written response.

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12. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan noted that CFS was developing a standardized FCCS, under which different food products were assigned a code to make food classification more exact, detailed and clear. She asked whether FCCS would be open for public use in the future for consumers to obtain related information about food products (e.g. composition and nutrition contents of the products).

13. Controller/CFS responded that the five IT systems under discussion would mainly help CFS to strengthen its effectiveness in (a) food import control, (b) recoding and tracing the actions taken by relevant units in food incidents and (c) selecting food samples for surveillance. At present, consumers could obtain information about the composition and the nutritional

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value of prepackaged food products through the food labels on the packages of the products. CFS would keep in view the latest technological development (e.g. QR codes/smart labels) and explore with the food trade on the need and/or feasibility of providing consumers with additional food product information with the use of new technologies.

14. The Deputy Chairman sought details on how the revamped FSS would assist CFS in stepping up food surveillance. Controller/CFS responded that a database of retail stores would be set up under FSS to refine the present approach of selecting and collecting food samples for surveillance by CFS. The use of IT computation to pre-arrange the locations and proportions of food sampling could increase versatility and data representativeness in food surveillance, as compared to the current manual operational mode.

15. Mr Wilson OR noted that CFS had already made use of various social media platforms (e.g. Government websites, Facebook and Instagram) to issue food alerts and disseminate food safety news in food incidents. However, the number of "likes" on CFS Facebook was only about 20 000 and the number of "fans" in its Instagram was 1 577 which, in his view, were far from satisfactory when compared with other Government electronic platforms. He called on CFS to strengthen its interactive communication with the public through social media channels.

16. Controller/CFS responded that CFS had made more frequent use of social media platforms in recent years to update the public on food safety information and food incidents. At least two to three pieces of food safety news were disseminated through various CFS' electronic platforms every week. It was hoped that through enhanced promotional efforts and delivery of speedy and easy-to-understand risk information and advice, the number of subscribers of/visitors to CFS Facebook and Instagram would increase.

Issues relating to application of import licence

17. In respect of application of import licence, Mr Tony TSE noted that there were cases in which CFS had, as a trade facilitation measure, exercised discretion to issue import licences to importers even though the importers concerned had yet submitted all the required supporting documents (e.g. health certificates/export declarations) in paper form. He was concerned whether CFS would continue to exercise discretion in handling traders' online applications for import licences. Mr TSE recalled that the Director of Audit's Report No. 71 issued in October 2018 had pointed out that there was a high percentage of import licences issued but not used by importers during 2013 to 2017. He asked whether CFS would set a date for unused import licences to be considered as invalid, so as to prevent improper use of import licences by importers.

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18. Controller/CFS responded that for food consignments imported by sea and selected for import documents checks and physical inspection by CFS, the importers were generally notified in advance that their consignments would be subjected to CFS' inspection. It was noted that there were cases in which importers had cancelled their import licences when their consignments covered by the licences had been selected by CFS for inspection and later replaced the import licences with unused ones to import the same food consignment in order to evade physical inspection. FTP helped put an end to acts of cancellation of import licenses to evade physical inspections. This new IT system had set rules such that if the import licence of a consignment of meat or poultry selected for physical inspection was cancelled and the importer subsequently re-applied for an import licence for the same consignment, the consignment would automatically be targeted by the system for physical inspection. While some food importers might continue to submit applications in paper form, more than 92% of import licences and import permissions were now applied for and issued through FTP. AD(CSM)/CFS supplemented that CFS had followed up on the recommendations of the Director of Audit regarding import control of foods. All applicants had to produce health certificates/export declarations to apply for import licences for meat or poultry through FTP.

19. The Chairman expressed concern that importers might replace problematic products with another consignment of meat or poultry which could meet the relevant food safety standards, if they knew that their goods would be automatically be targeted by FTP for physical inspection upon re-application for an import licence. Controller/CFS responded that importers had to produce health certificates/export declarations issued by overseas authorities every time they applied for import licences for meat or poultry. Each health certificate only covered a designated food consignment. If an importer used the same health certificate to apply for a new import licence, the consignment of meat or poultry involved would remain the same designated consignment.

20. The Chairman asked whether CFS would review the manpower resources required for handling applications made in paper form, since the majority of the applications for import licences and import permissions were no longer dealt with in paper mode. In his view, CFS should set a timeline for phasing out the submission of applications in paper form. Controller/CFS responded that some food importers took a relatively conservative attitude towards applying new technologies and chose to submit applications in paper form. If FTP was well received by applicants, CFS would consider whether to stop accepting applications in paper form.

#### **IV. Food import control**

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1137/20-21(05) and (06))

21. At the invitation of the Chairman, USFH briefed members on CFS' work in regulating food imports, as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1137/20-21(05)). Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the LegCo Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(2)1137/20-21(06)).

##### Control of food imports by land

##### *Food supply from the Mainland*

22. Mr Tommy CHEUNG expressed concern that the reduced supply of live pigs and suspension of import of live poultry from the Mainland in recent years had led to a substantial increase in the retail prices of fresh pork and live chickens. He considered that the Administration should continue to liaise with the Mainland authorities on an increased supply of live pigs and resumption of supply of live poultry, in order to help stabilize the retail prices of these food products. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman made similar views.

23. Mr Tommy CHEUNG noted with concern that Hong Kong had not imported any hairy crabs from the Mainland in recent years. He said that the Government had lost the lawsuits against retailers (including a company owned by him) for selling hairy crabs detected with excessive dioxins. In his view, the current limit on the level of dioxins and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls ("PCBs") in respect of hairy crabs was too stringent. Since moderate consumption of hairy crabs would not pose any health risk, CFS should review the current action level for dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs in respect of hairy crabs. Mr CHEUNG also considered that CFS should take forward as early as practicable the proposal of setting up permanent facilities for fresh food inspection at the Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, so as to facilitate the import of fresh foods from nearby places such as Zhongshan and Zhuhai.

##### *Surveillance of imported vegetables*

24. The Deputy Chairman considered that CFS should enhance the surveillance of imported and locally grown vegetables which were sold directly at retail outlets, instead of distributed through wholesale markets (including the wholesale markets operated by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department or the Cheung Sha Wan Vegetable Wholesale Market of the Vegetable Marketing Organisation). He enquired about the number of samples of vegetables collected for testing at the retail level



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(including supermarkets, market stalls and fresh provision shops) under the Food Surveillance Programme ("FSP") in recent years and the test results.

25. Controller/CFS responded that most vegetables available for sale in Hong Kong were imported from the Mainland. Apart from taking vegetable samples for testing at the Man Kam To Food Control Office ("MKTFCO"), CFS also collected vegetable samples at the wholesale and retail levels for inspection. Assistant Director (Risk Management)/CFS ("AD(RM)/CFS") advised that in 2020, CFS tested about 26 100 samples of vegetables, fruits and related products under FSP. Of these samples, about 60% were taken at the import level, 15% from wholesale markets and 25% from retail outlets. A total of 25 samples of vegetables, fruits and related products were tested with unsatisfactory results. Among them, 23 were imported food products; and most of them were detected with pesticide residues and metallic contaminants slightly exceeding the relevant permitted limits.

26. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, AD(RM)/CFS said that according to the information provided by the Customs and Excise Department ("C&ED"), on average, about 300 vehicles transporting vegetables entered Hong Kong from the Mainland via Man Kam To ("MKT") each day and CFS staff inspected about 20 to 30 of them. When a vehicle carrying vegetables arrived at MKTFCO, CFS staff would (a) check whether the seal on the vehicle remained intact; (b) examine the accompanying documents; and (c) take vegetable samples from different parts (including upper and inner parts) of the vehicle directly or use forklifts for conducting rapid tests for pesticide residues and comprehensive chemical analysis, based on a risk-based approach and a random sampling plan. The whole inspection and sampling process would take about 20 to 30 minutes.

27. The Chairman said that local vegetable farmers had expressed dissatisfaction that the surveillance work on local vegetables was more stringent than that on imported vegetables. To his understanding, a vehicle might carry various consignments of vegetables supplied by a number of Mainland registered vegetable farms. CFS might not be able to collect samples from each consignment of vegetables for testing, given the limited time allowed for customs clearance of vehicles. In his view, the Administration should consider setting up a new fresh food wholesale market and making it a mandatory requirement for all local and imported vegetables to be transported to that wholesale market for centralized wholesaling, as this would facilitate CFS' collection of samples for testing under a standardized sampling method. Controller/CFS responded that apart from carrying out daily inspection of vehicles carrying vegetables, CFS would work with C&ED to conduct surprise checks on targeted vehicles (including those carrying vegetables from farms where unsatisfactory vegetable samples had been identified in previous cases) at MKTFCO.

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*Surveillance on imported chilled or frozen food products*

28. Mr Wilson OR expressed concern that in recent months, chilled meat and aquatic products (e.g. raw oysters) were sold by vendors in some fresh markets without relevant written permissions issued by FEHD. He considered that CFS should step up enforcement actions against such illegal selling activities and collect more samples of chilled meat and aquatic products at fresh markets and retail stores for testing under FSP.

29. Controller/CFS responded that as chilled meat and poultry were high-risk foods, CFS had enhanced the monitoring mechanism for vehicles and containers approved for transporting chilled meat and poultry. The vehicles and containers approved for such use must be re-inspected at two-year intervals to ensure that their food storage temperatures and hygiene conditions were satisfactory and continued to be suitable for transporting chilled food. When an approved goods vehicle carried chilled meat and poultry to Hong Kong via the Man Kam To Boundary Control Point ("MKTBCP"), CFS staff would, among others, check the hygienic conditions of the enclosed conveying compartment and monitor the operation of the refrigerating device in the vehicle. CFS would also conduct regular inspections to cold stores of the importers. In the event of food incidents, CFS would take appropriate actions including tracing the sources of the food consignments concerned and requesting the importers/distributors to recall and dispose of the implicated foods as needed.

30. Controller/CFS further said that the relevant Mainland authorities had earlier adjusted the functions of various land boundary control points. Insofar as the goods inspection function of MKTBCP was concerned, only goods vehicles carrying fresh food were allowed to continue to use MKTBCP for cargo clearance. In this connection, CFS had implemented a new strategy in cooperation with relevant departments to step up the inspection of goods vehicles carrying food to Hong Kong at different time and locations of the cross-boundary carriageway at MKTBCP. Under the new strategy, CFS was able to select and direct targeted vehicles to undergo inspection at MKTFCO and conduct inspection of cross-boundary vehicles in a more flexible manner, rendering the overall food control at MKT more effective and systematic.

31. Ms Elizabeth QUAT enquired about the results of surprise checks conducted on targeted vehicles. Mr Tony TSE asked about CFS' follow-up actions when irregularities were identified, e.g. the consignment did not tally with the accompanying documents or the seal on the vehicle was damaged.

32. Controller/CFS and AD(RM)/CFS responded that CFS and C&ED maintained close contact and exchanged intelligence on the inspection of

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vehicles carrying food to Hong Kong, and conducted joint blitz operations from time to time to combat illegal food imports as well as import and sale of food of unknown origins. In 2020, CFS had inspected about 6 100 vehicles. No irregularities were found. In the joint blitz operations mounted by CFS and C&ED in 2020, several cases of suspected smuggling of hairy crabs were detected at MKTBCP and Shenzhen Bay Port Boundary Control Point between October and December. Between April and May 2021, CFS had intercepted at MKTBCP under the new strategy about 380 goods vehicles carrying food. No irregularities were identified.

33. Ms Elizabeth QUAT said that it had been reported that the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute ("ASTRI") had created the "Next Generation Cold Food Import Safety Management Platform" to digitize and enhance the monitoring and control of the import of chilled or frozen meat from the Mainland. She enquired whether CFS would consider subscribing ASTRI's service to make use of the said platform to enhance the monitoring and traceability of imported chilled or frozen foods. She also asked whether CFS would explore the adoption of blockchain technology in monitoring the transportation process of chilled or frozen foods and the risk of importation of the coronavirus disease 2019 ("COVID-19") virus through imported frozen foods.

34. Controller/CFS responded that CFS and C&ED would meet with ASTRI to understand how the new food safety management platform could assist government departments in food traceability and law enforcement. Since mid-2020, CFS had been collecting samples of various types of frozen foods and their packaging at the import level, including the cold stores of importers, for COVID-19 testing. As at the end of May 2021, more than 10 000 relevant samples (mainly meat and aquatic products) imported from over 50 places were tested and the results were all negative. CFS noted that some large chain stores had started using the blockchain technology in monitoring the transportation process of goods. CFS would explore with local tertiary institutions to see whether and how blockchain technology could enhance food traceability at the regulatory level.

*Wrapping leaves for rice dumplings*

35. The Chairman and Ms Elizabeth QUAT noted from media reports that there were cases where leaves for wrapping rice dumplings were tested with metallic contaminants and bleaching agents, which might be absorbed into the dumplings during the reheating process. They asked about the sampling checks on rice dumplings under FSP and whether CFS would collect samples of wrapping leaves for testing of metallic contaminants, preservatives, harmful substances etc.

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36. Controller/CFS responded that rice dumpling samples were collected for chemical microbiological and nutrition content analyses before Tuen Ng Festival under the seasonal food surveillance. The testing results of which in 2021 were all satisfactory. In purchasing or preparing rice dumplings, members of the public were advised to (a) buy rice dumplings or wrapping leaves from reliable outlets/suppliers; and (b) to rinse the wrapping leaves thoroughly under clean running water before making the rice dumplings. CFS would review whether the sampling checks on rice dumplings should be enhanced.

Control of food imports by air or sea

*Japanese food*

37. Mr Kenneth LAU learned from press reports that some wineries had moved their plants/plantation to areas close to the Fukushima nuclear power plant, arousing public concerns as to whether liquor products (e.g. Sake) from those wineries would be contaminated by polluted water deep underground. Noting that a radiation certificate was not required for the import of liquor products from Fukushima and the other four affected Japanese prefectures (i.e. Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma), Mr LAU enquired how CFS could ensure the safety of liquor products imported from the above Japanese prefectures.

38. Controller/CFS responded that apart from regulating the import of certain high-risk food products from affected Japanese prefectures into Hong Kong, CFS had been conducting radiation tests on food items imported from Japan (by both air and sea) on a risk-based approach. AD(RM)/CFS added that food products tested by the Japanese authorities with results exceeding the relevant safety limits would be prohibited for sale in Japan and export to overseas markets. In 2020, CFS had tested more than 38 000 consignments of food products imported from Japan. Among them, about 11 000 consignments of goods were drinks (including liquor products) and snacks. All samples were tested with satisfactory results. Mr Kenneth LAU requested the Administration to provide supplementary information on the the existing surveillance work on liquor products (e.g. Sake) imported from Fukushima and its four neighbouring prefectures and the results of all the tested samples of such liquor products under FSP in recent years.

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39. Ms Elizabeth QUAT said that the plan of the Government of Japan to start discharging radioactive wastewater from the Fukushima nuclear power plant into the ocean in about two years' time had aroused grave public concerns. She considered that CFS should enhance publicity on the existing import control on Japanese food and additional measures to be taken by CFS in view of Japan's wastewater discharge plan. Ms QUAT asked whether the

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Administration would consider following the practice of the United States Food and Drug Administration to impose import restrictions on Japanese food based on the Japanese Government's list of food products restricted from being exported to other places.

40. In response, Controller/CFS advised that over the past 10 years, CFS had tested more than 750 000 food samples from Japan, which was a relatively high testing rate when compared with other overseas economies. Regarding Japan's wastewater discharge plan, the Hong Kong Government had already requested the Japanese authorities to provide data from various aspects and information on control and surveillance. The Food and Health Bureau and CFS would closely monitor the latest developments and review whether monitoring work on Japanese food should be adjusted accordingly.

*Australian food*

41. Mr Tony TSE said that according to media reports, the quantities of some food products (e.g. wine, lobster and barley) imported into Hong Kong from Australia by air or sea had increased noticeably after the Mainland authorities had imposed restrictions on the import of such products into China. He was concerned whether CFS would trace the movement of those products and conduct joint operations with C&ED against smuggling of Australian foods into the Mainland.

*(Post-meeting note: Mr Tony TSE subsequently wrote to the Chairman, setting out, in writing, the questions and issues of concern he raised at the meeting (see paragraphs 9, 17, 31 and 41). His letter dated 8 June 2021 was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1171/20-21 on 10 June 2021 and copied to the Administration for provision of a written response.)*

42. Controller/CFS responded that CFS would work in collaboration with C&ED to combat illegal importation and smuggling of foods. In the joint blitz operations carried out by CFS and C&ED in recent years, several cases of suspected smuggling of chilled/frozen meat were detected. AD(RM)/CFS added that in 2020, CFS took out a total of 194 prosecutions against illegal import and smuggling of poultry, game, meat, eggs and other products via land, air and sea.

*Meat products from Taiwan*

43. The Chairman said that since 1 January 2021, the Taiwan authorities had allowed the import of pork containing ractopamine (a kind of beta-agonists) from the United States ("US"). Earlier on, a local media organization reported the results of the sampling tests that it conducted on

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eight pork products available for sale in Hong Kong and produced in Taiwan or the US. The results were that the ractopamine levels in seven products all exceeded Hong Kong's prescribed limits (by a maximum of 27.6 times), while three products manufactured in Taiwan and one in the US were found to contain clenbuterol, a beta-agonist prohibited in Hong Kong. The Chairman noted CFS' responses to that media report in that it had conducted surveillance of beta-agonists in about 70 samples of pork, beef and related products from various countries/regions (including Taiwan) from January to May 2021; and all the test results were satisfactory). He, however, considered the sampling size too small; and asked whether CFS would consider conducting more tests on pork, beef and related products imported from Taiwan.

44. Controller/CFS responded that CFS had been taking samples of pork, beef and related products from the market for testing under FSP. CFS would continue to conduct surveillance on relevant products sold in the market based on a risk-based approach.

Monitoring and regulating online sale of food

45. The Deputy Chairman said that since the outbreak of COVID-19, members of the public preferred to buy fresh produce and do home cooking over dining out. This had led to an increase in the quantity and variety of foods imported to Hong Kong. He requested the Administration to provide information on whether there was an increase in the numbers of (a) food samples collected for testing at the import level under FSP, (b) unsatisfactory samples detected and (c) complaints received from members of the public on imported food products in the recent two years, as compared with the respective figures recorded in preceding years before the outbreak of COVID-19.

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46. In response to Ms Elizabeth QUAT's enquiry about the existing regulatory control over online food selling activities, Controller/CFS advised that CFS had all along been adopting a risk-based principle in determining the types and numbers of food samples to be collected at the import level under FSP. In view of the growing popularity of online sale of food (via the Internet, mobile applications or social media platforms), CFS had increased the number of online food samples collected for testing under FSP in recent years, with a larger proportion assigned for microbiological testing. CFS would continue to monitor whether online food selling activities complied with the relevant food safety and import requirements.

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**V. Any other business**

47. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3:56 pm.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
19 July 2021