

For information

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Progress on the Importation of Chilled Pork from the Mainland

PURPOSE

This paper updates Members on the progress of importation of chilled pork from the Mainland.

BACKGROUND

2. At the Panel meeting on 11 January 2005, we briefed Members on the monitoring system for imported chilled pork in Hong Kong and the discussion between the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the State General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) about the mechanism of importation of chilled pork to Hong Kong. After deliberation, the Panel urged the Government to implement the legislative amendment requiring “one licence for one shop” on those shops selling chilled pork so as to safeguard consumers’ interests.

PROPOSED SEPARATION OF THE SALE OF FRESH AND CHILLED MEAT

3. We have sought legal advice on the proposal from some Members that the sale of fresh and chilled pork should be prohibited in the same premises and that separate licences should be issued for the sale of the two in order to protect consumers against unscrupulous operators who substitute chilled pork for sale as fresh pork which generally commands a higher price. In the light that there are no food safety grounds to require the sale of fresh and chilled pork in separate premises, the legal advice is that if the consideration is for consumer protection, then such consideration falls outside the scope of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132). It is therefore considered inappropriate to further pursue the proposal under the Ordinance. We shall continue to take law enforcement actions against any persons selling chilled

meat as fresh meat at retail level and explore other measures to safeguard the interests of the consumers.

IMPORT CONTROL OF CHILLED PORK

4. There is already in place in Hong Kong a well-established controlling mechanism on the import of game, meat and poultry to ensure that the imported chilled pork is safe and fit for human consumption. The current system is adequate in safeguarding consumers' health. On the progress of the importation of chilled pork from the Mainland, the FEHD will shortly scrutinize the facilities, operation, manufacturing process and the implementation of hygienic monitoring mechanism of those factories providing chilled pork to Hong Kong and their corresponding farms based on the list provided by the AQSIQ. FEHD will be ready to process the application for import of the first batch of chilled pork from the Mainland before end March 2005. Members will be invited then to observe the unloading and inspect and quarantine procedures.

5. In respect to the enquiry on the import arrangements adopted in other countries, we note from the AQSIQ that there is at present no chilled pork being exported from the Mainland to other places.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
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