

**For information on
2 September 2005**

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Regulation of Aquatic Food Products

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the Administration's immediate and long term measures to regulate aquatic food products.

Background

2. Ever since the Administration became aware that malachite green was found in some freshwater fishes in the market, a series of measures have been taken to enhance protection of the safety of imported freshwater fish. For instance, the administration has reached a consensus with the Mainland to monitor the safety of aquatic products at source. Such measures include sending staff of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to inspect registered and approved freshwater fish farms, requiring all health certificates to declare the absence of malachite green, other harmful pesticides and chemicals, etc. in the products. The Administration has also amended the Harmful Substances In Food Regulations under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance to make malachite green a prohibited agricultural chemicals to further ensure that imported freshwater fish are safe for consumption by the public.

Immediate Regulatory Measures

3. The regulation of aquatic food products is a long term task that involves many aspects. Yesterday, malachite green was also found in a marine fish sample. This example indicates that we need to implement multi-pronged measures and establish a comprehensive regulatory framework. In this regard, we will implement the following measures:

- Continue to conduct inspection at import level, including inspection at Man Kam To Control Point and wholesale fish markets;
- Discuss with the trade to promote self-discipline among operators

so that they would acquire aquatic products only from registered farms and retain the purchase/sale records to enable the administration to trace the product source and take enforcement actions;

- Request cooperation from the trade by requiring all imports to be accompanied with health certificates. Imports without health certificates might be subject to hold and test;
- Government Laboratory may provide private laboratories with appropriate technical assistance to enable them to conduct fish safety tests.

4. As it may take time for the Mainland to provide a list of registered fish farms supplying aquatic products to Hong Kong, we will help the trade pass the relevant information to Mainland Authorities if they would like to apply to incorporate their current supplying fish farms into the list of registered fish farms supplying freshwater fish to Hong Kong.

Long Term Policy

5. As a long-term policy of food safety, the Administration is preparing to set up a food safety, inspection and quarantine centre to ensure the safety of aquatic food products, as well as the overall food safety in general. Furthermore, we are actively considering the need for amending our legislation to require all operators in the trade to register and that all aquatics products destined for Hong Kong should be accompanied by import and health certificate, to land at designated landing points and port of discharge, and to require suppliers to keep detailed sales record to facilitate source tracing.

Conclusion

6. Ever since the identification of malachite green in freshwater fish, the community in general has acquired a better understanding of the safety of aquatic food products. The Administration believes that with enhanced regulatory measures implemented by the Mainland and Hong Kong, the safety of imported aquatic products would be more assured in future.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
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