



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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19 February 2009

Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road,
Central,
Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Mary SO)
(Fax: 2509 0775)

Dear Ms SO,

**Special Meeting of the LegCo Panel on Food Safety
and Environmental Hygiene on 9 January 2009**

At the above meeting, the Administration is requested to provide information on (a) the quantity of vegetables imported from the Mainland and the number of vegetable samples taken for testing in 2007 and 2008; and (b) the number of food samples taken for testing in Hong Kong and other overseas jurisdictions. Our reply is as follows:

Overall speaking, the safety of food available in Hong Kong is maintained at a high standard. With over 66 000 food samples tested in 2008 at import, wholesale and retail levels by the Centre for Food Safety, the satisfactory rate stood at around 99%. For testing on vegetables, the satisfactory rate is 99.9%.

In 2008, the Centre for Food Safety conducted tests on 19 200 samples of vegetables. According to Hong Kong Merchandise Trade Statistics, Hong Kong imported 589 000 tonnes of Mainland vegetables in

2007. During January to October 2008, Hong Kong imported 493 000 tonnes of Mainland vegetables.

When compared with other overseas jurisdictions, Hong Kong in general has a higher number of food samples tested per 1 000 population. Please refer to the table at Annex summarizing the number of food samples taken for testing in Hong Kong and other overseas jurisdictions, showing that our efforts in food surveillance are broadly in line with our international counterparts. It is worth noting that Hong Kong's scale of food testing has been described as "extensive" and "massive" in a report issued by a Committee of the US House of Representatives¹. The report also noted that "on a per capita basis, the United States laboratory testing on food imports pales by comparison".

With a high per capita number of food samples and with vegetable samples making up close to 30% of the total samples, the number of vegetable samples tested by the Centre for Food Safety can hardly be considered insufficient. In comparison, according to information obtained from the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority of Singapore, about 11 100 vegetable samples are tested by Singapore annually as in 2007, which makes up about 12% of the total number of food samples tested. The corresponding figure in Hong Kong is 19 200 vegetable samples over 66 726 food samples (29%).

Yours sincerely,



(Mrs Angelina CHEUNG)
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c. Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Fax No.: 2524 1977)

¹ Report of the Committee on Energy and Commerce of the US House of Representatives (October 2007)
http://energycommerce.house.gov/Press_110/110-rpt.100407.ChinaTripReport.pdf

Comparison on the Number of Food Samples Tested Annually

	Hong Kong	Singapore	Denmark	Republic of Korea	Canada	New South Wales, Australia	Germany
No. of samples (Year)	66 726 (2008)	90 427 ² (07/08)	40 000 ³ (2003)	111 607 ⁴ (2004)	38 000 ⁵ (04/05)	5 000 ⁶ (07/08)	4 356 ⁷ (2006)
Population (Thousand)	6 985	4 588	5 364	47 817	32 300	6 731	82 314
No. of samples per capita (per 1000 population)	9.5	19.7	7.5	2.3	1.2	0.7	0.05

² Annual Report 07/08 of Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority, Singapore
(<http://www.ava.gov.sg/NR/rdonlyres/0676D1EB-C401-4038-9D8D-84A01B52DD27/22435/AVAEitorial.pdf>)

³ Food contamination monitoring and food borne disease surveillance at national level, Second FAO/WHO Global Forum for Food Safety Regulators, GF02/10 October 2004

⁴ Presentation at the 4th International Workshop on Total Diet Studies, 23-27 October 2006 by Food and Drug Administration, Republic of Korea

⁵ Canadian Food Inspection Agency

⁶ NSW Food Authority Annual Report 2007-08 (http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/_Documents/corporate_pdf/annual-report-2007-08.pdf)

⁷ National Food Monitoring Report 2006, Germany Federal Office of Consumer Protection and Food Safety
(http://www.bvl.bund.de/cln_007/nn_536900/EN/01_Food/05_LM_Monitoring_en/01_Reports_LM_Monitoring/abstract_report2006.html)