

**For discussion  
on 3 September 2014**

**Legislative Council  
Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Follow-up Measures on the Problematic Food Products Manufactured  
by the Husi Food Factory in Shanghai**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs Members on the follow-up actions taken by the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) relating to the food safety issues involving food products manufactured by the Husi food factory in Shanghai.

**Background**

2. According to local media reports in the latter half of July this year, expired and greened meat products were supplied to a number of food chains in the Mainland by Shanghai Husi Food Company Limited (上海福喜食品有限公司) (Husi). It was also reported by the media that McDonald's Restaurants (Hong Kong) Limited ("McDonald's Hong Kong") might also have imported meat products manufactured by Husi plants in the Mainland.

**Follow-up Measures**

3. CFS was very concerned about the incident and took a series of follow-up actions immediately.

*Inspection*

4. On 22 July 2014 and the days following, officers from CFS conducted inspections to the cold stores of McDonald's Hong Kong as well as the outlets of McDonald's Hong Kong and other eight food chains<sup>1</sup> mentioned

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<sup>1</sup> The eight food chains are: Pizza Hut, IKEA, Yoshinoya Hong Kong, Burger King, Starbucks, KFC, 7-Eleven and Subway.

in media reports. About 1 600 samples were examined during the inspections but no food products were found expired, mouldy or odorous. During the inspections, no abnormalities in relation to the hygiene conditions of the outlets concerned and their cold stores, or concerning the storage temperatures of food products were detected.

5. CFS also took food samples from the said cold stores and outlets for testing to identify any hygiene problems or improper use of additives in food products. The test results of all of the 16 samples were satisfactory.

#### *Import of the Concerned Food*

6. CFS contacted the management of McDonald's Hong Kong and the above-mentioned eight fast food chains to find out whether they had imported any food products manufactured by Husi plants in the Mainland.

7. A search by CFS on the food import records revealed that the importer for McDonald's Hong Kong imported 10 consignments of frozen pork patties from the Husi food factory in Shanghai between July and December 2013. CFS managed to contact the management of McDonald's Hong Kong in the evening of 23 July 2014. Based on the information provided by the fast food chain, a consignment of cooked chicken leg meat was also imported from the Husi food factory in Shanghai in May 2014. According to McDonald's Hong Kong, all of the above imported food supplies had been sold.

8. As for the remaining eight fast food chains, all of them replied that they had not imported any food products supplied by Husi plants in the Mainland. CFS staff also followed up by checking the transaction records of the eight fast food chains. No records of food imports from Husi plants in the Mainland were found.

#### *Suspension of food imports and ban on the sale of food already imported*

9. Noting that McDonald's Hong Kong had imported food from the Husi food factory in Shanghai (see paragraph 7 above), the Secretary for Food and Health called an emergency meeting with CFS in the morning of 24 July 2014. In view of the development of the incident and the fact that the investigations by the Mainland authorities were still underway the Administration decided for prudence sake to suspend with immediate effect the

import into Hong Kong of all food products from all Hushi plants in the Mainland. Any food products from Hushi already imported into Hong Kong would be marked and sealed, and banned from selling pending the results of Mainland's investigations. These arrangements were announced at the media briefing in the afternoon of 24 July 2014.

10. CFS also alerted the trade about the incident immediately. Moreover, CFS reminded local food importers or vendors to stop selling food products manufactured by Hushi plants in the Mainland, and to contact CFS if they had already imported or were in possession of such food products.

11. Subsequently, McDonald's Hong Kong and its importer had voluntarily sent about 113 tonnes of food from Hushi to the landfill for disposal under the supervision of CFS, including 62 tonnes of chicken meat, about 14 tonnes of beef and about 37 tonnes of vegetables. The concerned food products came from Hushi plants in Hebei and Guangzhou. All actions to dispose of the food products concerned were completed on 1 August. During the food disposal period, CFS had conducted multiple inspections to the outlets of McDonald's Hong Kong. No food products from Hushi plants in the Mainland were found.

#### *Dissemination of Information*

12. In accordance with its established practice, CFS provided the public with information in relation to the incident in a transparent and timely manner, including responding to media enquiries, as well as holding a media briefing and issuing a press release on the decision to suspend the import of Hushi food products (see paragraph 9 above). Regarding its agreement with CFS on simultaneous release of information as alleged by McDonald's Hong Kong, a solemn declaration made by CFS on 24 July revealed that the fast food chain's statement did not accord with the facts. While McDonald's Hong Kong requested simultaneous release of information at its teleconference with CFS on 23 July, CFS did not agree to such proposal. Apart from a media briefing to announce its decision in the afternoon of 24 July, CFS also contacted McDonald's Hong Kong at the same time for another teleconference for further enquiries on the information received to ensure that the aforementioned food products from the Hushi food factory in Shanghai were all sold and were no longer in the inventory. During the said teleconference, no agreement was reached on the release of information.

13. Furthermore, the Food and Health Bureau and CFS met with a number of LegCo Members on 28 July who were concerned about the incident, and briefed the media on the latest developments of the incident right after the meeting.

*Import control and surveillance of meat products*

14. CFS adopts the World Health Organization's "from farm to table" strategy when working to ensure that foods in Hong Kong, including meat and meat products, are safe to eat. Control at source includes allowing only food animals and food products from registered farms / processing plants with audit inspections to enter Hong Kong, and requiring health certificates for certain food animals and food products, etc. At the downstream of the food supply chain, the food surveillance programme is a key component of our measures to ensure food safety.

15. Under the food surveillance programme, CFS takes food samples (including meat and meat products) at the import, wholesale and retail levels for chemical and microbiological testing. Chemical testing covers preservatives, metal contaminants, toxins and veterinary drug residues, etc. Microbiological testing covers Salmonella, Staphylococcus aureus, Bacillus cereus, etc. A risk-based approach is adopted in determining the types of samples to be collected, the frequency and number of samples for testing, and the types of laboratory analyses to be conducted. The sampling programme is under regular review, taking into account factors such as past food surveillance results, local and overseas food incidents as well as relevant risk analyses.

16. Between 2011 and 2013, CFS collected around 13 500 samples of meat and meat products for chemical and microbiological testing. Among the samples collected, more than 2 500 (about 19%) are meat products (such as dried meat, meat sausage, Chinese sausage, red sausage, meatball, shredded meat, ham, bacon, BBQ pork, luncheon meat, etc.). Among the 52 unsatisfactory samples, 5 were the aforementioned meat products.

17. The Administration has a mechanism in place for controlling the import of game, meat and poultry. This risk-based control system follows international practices and standards. Under the Imported Game, Meat and Poultry Regulations (Cap. 132AK) of the Public Health and Municipal Services

Ordinance (Cap. 132), every consignment of imported fresh, frozen and chilled meat and poultry must be accompanied by an official health certificate issued by a competent authority recognized by the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH). The official health certificate should certify that the concerned meat or poultry is fit for human consumption. Moreover, the Import and Export Ordinance (Cap. 60) stipulates that import licences must be obtained from DFEH for the import of frozen or chilled meat or poultry. However, cooked meat is exempted from the above control.

18. Nevertheless, similar to all other food, cooked meat is regulated by section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, which provides that all food intended for human consumption for sale in Hong Kong, whether imported or locally produced, must be fit for human consumption. As mentioned in the preceding paragraph, CFS takes food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels to ensure that all meat products on the market are safe to eat. In response to the incident and to address public concern, CFS will step up the inspection on cooked meat. As for whether cooked meat should be subject to stricter regulation, the Administration adopts an open mind. In this respect, we will review the relevant legislation and seek the views of Members and the trade.

### *Conclusion*

19. CFS will continue to closely monitor the situation, liaise with the relevant Mainland authorities to obtain further information and take appropriate actions accordingly so as to ensure food safety in Hong Kong.

### **Advice sought**

20. Members are invited to note the follow-up measures taken by CFS on the problematic food products manufactured by the Husi food factory in Shanghai.

**Food and Health Bureau  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department  
Centre for Food Safety  
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