



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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7 April 2017

Clerk to Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Miss Josephine SO)

Dear Miss SO,

**LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene
Supplementary Information on Food Surveillance Programme**

At the meeting on 14 February 2017, Members of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene requested for supplementary information in writing on the work of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) in food surveillance (including on food imported from Japan, food sold online and follow-up actions on unsatisfactory food samples). Our response is as follows.

Food imported from Japan

Import control on Japanese food by different countries or economies

In the wake of Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in Japan in 2011, the Japanese Government has compiled a list of food products that are prohibited from export based on its food surveillance results and updates the list, which is available on

the website of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan¹, from time to time. Individual countries or economies have also implemented import control measures against food imports from Japan that are deemed fit to their risk assessment results and local circumstances. The places of origin, the number of prefectures and categories of food products covered under the relevant import control measures adopted by different countries or economies vary. For instance, countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada have already lifted their import restrictions previously imposed on Japanese food. In the U.S., import restrictions on Japanese food mirrored the export prohibition measures taken by Japan. Singapore imposed import ban on certain types of food from the Fukushima Prefecture. The Mainland suspended the import of all types of food from Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma and Chiba prefectures etc. in Japan.

Import control and surveillance on Japanese food by Hong Kong

As far as Hong Kong is concerned, apart from the list of food under export prohibition of the Japanese authorities, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) issued an order under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) to prohibit the import of all fruits and vegetables, milk, milk beverages and milk powder from the five most affected prefectures of Japan, namely Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma, with effect from 24 March 2011. As to all chilled or frozen game, meat and poultry, poultry eggs and live, chilled or frozen aquatic products from these five prefectures, they may be imported into Hong Kong only if accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent authority of Japan certifying that the radiation levels do not exceed the guideline levels laid down by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) which are internationally accepted standards for protection of public health and facilitation of global trade. The Expert Committee on Food Safety set up under the CFS considered the adoption of the Codex guideline levels appropriate in addressing public concerns over the safety of food imported from Japan. The said order remains in force today.

Besides, the Public Health and Municipal Service Ordinance (Cap. 132) stipulates that all food for sale in Hong Kong must be fit for human consumption. This provision applies to all imported food products (including Japanese food), regardless of whether the food products are subject to the Japanese authorities' control measures or the order issued by the DFEH.

CFS has stepped up testing on the radiation levels of food products from Japan at import, wholesale and retail levels according to the risk-based approach since the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in Japan in 2011. Only food products with satisfactory test results are released for sale in the market. Up to the present, CFS has tested more than 390 000 samples of food from Japan and the test results of all samples were satisfactory. The test results are uploaded onto the CFS' website each working day.

Regarding CFS's checking of each consignment of food from Japan, importers are required to provide information about the imported food including the place of

¹ <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/2011eq/>

origin and the prefecture concerned, so that CFS could identify whether it comes from the five restricted prefectures to safeguard food safety. If unsatisfactory samples are found, CFS will follow up by tracing their sources.

Samples of Japanese food for radiation level testing are specifically taken by two teams of staff in CFS, namely the Food Surveillance and Complaint Section (FSCS) and the Food Import and Export Section (FIES). FSCS and FIES are also responsible for taking samples of all other types of food at the import, wholesale and retail levels for various tests. The manpower establishment of the two teams in 2016-17 was 115 and 271 respectively. CFS does not have separate breakdown on the manpower of the two teams for taking Japanese food samples for examination of radiation levels.

CFS will continue to adopt the risk-based strategy to monitor food imported from Japan so as to safeguard food safety and public health. We will also review the control on food imported from Japan according to the latest development, taking into consideration various factors such as the assessment by international bodies (e.g. International Atomic Energy Agency), control measures of other jurisdictions, local food surveillance results, handling of the Fukushima nuclear plant incident by the Japanese authorities, as well as other relevant factors. In general, while food safety is our primary concern, we should also consider the latest development of the above factors and be mindful of the requirements of the World Trade Organisation.

Statistics on Japanese food

According to the information of the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of the Fukushima Prefecture, the main export countries/places for Fukushima's agricultural products from 2012 to 2015 were Malaysia, Australia and Singapore.

According to the statistics of the Census and Statistics Department, food products imported to Hong Kong from Japan from 2012 to 2016 were mainly meat, aquatic products, milk and milk products, vegetables and fruits (please refer to [Annex](#) for details). CFS does not have readily available information about the value of the food products imported from Japan and the statistics on such import from individual prefectures.

Food sold on the Internet

The Food Surveillance Programme covers food sold by online retailers. The CFS adopts a risk-based approach in determining the types of samples to be collected, the frequency and number of samples taken for testing, and the types of laboratory analysis to be conducted. It regularly reviews the sampling programme and the types of laboratory analysis to be conducted, taking into account factors such as past food surveillance results, both local and overseas food incidents, and relevant risk analyses. In 2016, more than 4 000 food samples purchased online were tested.

Follow-up on unsatisfactory food samples

Apart from those cases which were not prosecuted due to insufficient evidence, prosecutions were instigated in 38 cases of unsatisfactory samples as revealed in the test results of the Food Surveillance Programme in 2016. The prosecutions are summarised as follows:

Ordinance / Regulation	Prosecution (No. of cases)			
	Convicted	Acquitted	Pending	Total
Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, Cap. 132	4	0	2	6
Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations, Cap. 132W	2	0	0	2
Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations, Cap. 132V	4	0	4	8
Frozen Confections Regulation, Cap. 132AC	4	0	2	6
Harmful Substances in Food Regulations, Cap. 132AF	5	0	1	6
Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation, Cap. 132CM	1	0	1	2
Preservatives in Food Regulation, Cap. 132BD	8	0	0	8
Total	28	0	10	38

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

(Kenneth Chan)
for Secretary for Food and Health

cc: DFEH (Attn: Dr CHOI Mei-yee) (Fax : 2521 9527)

Statistics on Food Imported from Japan

Types of food imported from Japan	2012 (import (tonnes) / percentage in total import of the same food type)	2013 (import (tonnes) / percentage in total import of the same food type)	2014 (import (tonnes) / percentage in total import of the same food type)	2015 (import (tonnes) / percentage in total import of the same food type)	2016 (import (tonnes) / percentage in total import of the same food type)
Meat	4 500 (0.3%)	8 500 (0.6%)	6 500 (0.5%)	7 000 (0.6%)	8 500 (0.6%)
Aquatic products	5 500 (2.3%)	9 600 (3.7%)	10 400 (3.8%)	10 500 (4.0%)	14 000 (3.8%)
Milk and milk products	2 600 (1.2%)	3 200 (1.3%)	4 200 (1.7%)	4 800 (2.0%)	9 900 (2.0%)
Vegetables	2 200 (0.3%)	2 900 (0.4%)	2 800 (0.3%)	2 900 (0.3%)	3 300 (0.4%)
Fruits	2 700 (0.2%)	4 500 (0.3%)	6 900 (0.4%)	12 300 (0.8%)	11 700 (0.7%)

* Approximate figures are provided in the above table.