



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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By Fax: 2509 9055

29 March 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,

Issues Relating to the Regulation of Organic Food Production

At the meeting on 14 March 2017, Members of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene sought supplementary information on the certification standards of the Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre (HKORC) and its publicity efforts on organic certification. Our response is as follows.

Since its establishment in December 2002, HKORC has been actively promoting the sustainable development of organic farming and has set up a credible third-party organic certification system in Hong Kong. HKORC is also committed to increasing the awareness and knowledge of the local farmers, retailers, consumers and the general public on organic products and their certification system.

HKORC has established a set of stringent guidelines with reference to the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) to ensure that the production processes adopted by organic farms comply with the certification standards of organic farming and production. Certified farms may attach a label recognized by the certification body to their products for easy identification. HKORC has also obtained the international accreditation



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status of ISO17065. The standards and guidelines of HKORC can be downloaded from its website: <http://www.hkorc-cert.org/en/download.php>.

Under the certification system, HKORC conducts unannounced sudden inspections on the certified units to monitor whether their operations and sale arrangements meet the certification requirements and standards.

Apart from certification service, HKORC monitors the market situation based on the information provided by members of the public or farmers through its complaint hotline and market inspections conducted by its staff. Where any irregularity is found, including sale of fake “organic products”, use of “organic” certification label without permission by the certification agent or display of invalid certificates, HKORC will provide information of these cases to the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), for conducting in-depth investigation and gathering evidence under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap. 362), and taking appropriate enforcement actions having regard to the particular facts and evidence of the cases. HKORC will also publicize these monitoring efforts for public education and encourage members of the public to read the organic certificates of vegetable outlets carefully and buy vegetables with organic certification at reputable shops.

In addition, HKORC organises various promotional and public relations activities every year at schools and in the local communities to actively promote the organic certification and labelling system as well as the benefits of organic farming. Through activities such as Organic Day, Quality Retailer, Organic Ambassador Training Scheme and Top Organic Retailer, it devotes efforts in promoting a better understanding of the organic label and certification service and enhancing the popularity of certified units among different sectors of the community, so as to boost the confidence of the consumers. It also publishes a quarterly called Organic Forum to convey the messages relating to organic living and provide news about relevant activities to the public, so as to raise their awareness and knowledge of organic food.



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Yours sincerely,

[Signed]
(Kenneth CHAN)
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c.: Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation
(Attn. : Assistant Director (Agriculture))(Fax : 2311 3731)