



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

18 January 2017

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

Dear Miss SO,

Alleged "Fake Rice" Incident

Thank you for referring to us the letter of the Dr. Hon CHIANG Lai-wan dated 12 January 2017 on the captioned subject. Our reply is as follows.

In response to the recent allegations about "fake rice", the Customs and Excise Department and the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department took immediate follow-up actions, including testing the food samples in question and collecting additional rice samples from the restaurants concerned for testing. The test results indicated that all samples were rice and passed chemical analyses. For details, please refer to the joint press release issued by the above departments on 17 January 2017.

Yours sincerely,

(Kenneth CHAN)
for Secretary for Food and Health

cc:

Commissioner of Customs and Excise
(Attn: Head of Trade Controls)(Fax: : 2398 0596)
Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene
(Attn: Assistant Director (Food Surveillance & Control))(Fax: 2530 1368)

Press Releases

Government announces test results of suspected 'fake' rice

A spokesman for the Government today (January 17) said that in response to recent complaints about suspected 'fake' rice used by restaurants in Mong Kok and the North District, the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department immediately took follow up action, including testing of the incriminated food samples and collecting rice samples from the restaurants concerned for testing. The test results showed that all samples were rice and passed chemical analyses.

The spokesman said, "Apart from following up on the two food remnant samples forwarded by the CFS, five samples (including raw rice and cooked rice) were collected by Customs officers from the two restaurants. All samples were confirmed to be rice, after being tested and analysed by the Government Laboratory. In addition, the CFS collected a total of five rice samples (including raw and cooked rice) from the two restaurants concerned for testing of food safety parameters (such as plasticiser, aflatoxin and metallic contaminants). All the samples have passed the tests.

"The CFS has all along adopted a risk-based approach in its routine food surveillance programme under which food samples are taken at import, wholesale and retail levels for testing to ensure that they are fit for human consumption and in compliance with the legal requirements in Hong Kong. In 2016, the CFS took over 650 rice samples for testing (testing parameters include pesticides, colouring matters and metallic contaminants). Except for one black rice sample from Thailand detected with excessive cadmium, the test results of other samples were satisfactory," the spokesman said.

The spokesman noted that physical properties of rice change after cooking. Different rice varieties are expected to absorb water and expand differently upon cooking, resulting in cooked rice of different hardness, whiteness and dullness. Also, long-grain rice is generally more fluffy and firm after cooking, while cooked medium and short-grain rice is more soft, moist and sticky in texture. Members of the public are advised to note the basic physical properties of rice and not to believe in hearsay about 'fake' rice too readily. The spokesman urged the public not to assume that all information being circulated on the internet is true.

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