

(Translation)

(Letterhead of Food and Health Bureau)

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電話號碼 Tel nos. : (852) 3509 8925
傳真號碼 Fax nos. : (852) 2136 3281

8 November 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)
(Fax: 2509 9055)

Dear Miss So,

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Issues Relating to Arrangement for Import of Hairy Crabs

Thank you for your letter dated 30 October 2017 attaching a joint letter from Dr Hon KWOK-Ka-ki, Deputy Chairman of the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene of the Legislative Council, Hon Tanya CHAN and Hon Jeremy TAM, which enquired about issues relating to suspected smuggling of hairy crabs. Our reply is set out below.

The Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) stipulates that all food for sale must be fit for human consumption. In view of the large proportion of food from the Mainland in the local market, administrative arrangements between the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and the inspection and

quarantine authorities of the Mainland have been put in place to further safeguard the safety of food imported from the Mainland to Hong Kong. Under the arrangements, only registered aquaculture farms approved by the Mainland inspection and quarantine authorities are authorised to export hairy crabs to Hong Kong. For further safeguard, each consignment of hairy crabs imported to Hong Kong have to come with health certificates issued by the relevant Mainland inspection and quarantine authorities.

The Trade Descriptions Ordinance (Cap. 362) stipulates that a person must not import any goods to which a false trade description is applied. A trader must not apply a false trade description to goods or services supplied or offered to be supplied to a consumer; or supply or offer to supply to a consumer goods or services to which a false trade description is applied. The Import and Export Ordinance (Cap. 60) stipulates that a person must not import or export any unmanifested cargo.

CFS safeguards the food safety of hairy crabs sold in Hong Kong in the same way as other foods on a risk-based approach. As in previous years, CFS took samples of hairy crabs at the import and retail levels this year for testing of dioxins and dioxin-like polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), colouring matters and metallic contaminants etc. CFS earlier collected hairy crab samples imported from Taiwan, Japan, the Netherlands and the Mainland and announced the results. As of 8 November, except for a sample from Taoyuan, Taiwan which was detected with dioxins and dioxin-like PCBs exceeding the action level adopted by CFS, a total of 178 samples were tested and had passed the tests.

The Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) and FEHD officers have recently conducted joint operation to combat the suspected smuggling of hairy crabs. Apart from enhancing inspection of hairy crabs and combating illegal import of hairy crabs at the airport and other boundary control points, C&ED and FEHD officers have also enhanced inspection at the retail level to monitor the sale of hairy crabs in the market, including checking the places of origin of hairy crabs and taking samples from various hairy crab retailers for testing. During the joint operation, C&ED seized more than 400 suspected smuggled hairy crabs at Lok Ma Chau Control Point. The case is under investigation. C&ED and FEHD will continue their joint operation as necessary. In addition, C&ED seized more than 600 suspected smuggled

hairy crabs during an anti-sea smuggling operation mounted off Aberdeen recently. The case is under investigation.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)
(Kenneth CHAN)
for Secretary for Food and Health

c.c.:

Controller, Centre for Food Safety	(Fax: 2536 9731)
Commissioner of Customs and Excise	(Fax: 2854 1959)