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23 January 2019

Mr Anthony CHU  
Clerk to Public Accounts Committee  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(ahychu@legco.gov.hk)

Dear Mr CHU,

**Public Accounts Committee**  
**Consideration of Chapter 2 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 71**  
**Centre for Food Safety: Import control of foods**

I refer to your letter dated 15 January 2019 requesting the Department to provide information to facilitate the Public Accounts Committee's consideration of Chapter 2 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 71.

The requested information is set out in the Annex.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'S Y Tam', written over a horizontal line.

(S Y Tam)

for Commissioner of Customs and Excise

c.c.:

Secretary for Food and Health

(fax no. 2526 3753)

Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

(fax no. 2524 1977)

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury

(fax no. 2147 5239)

Director of Audit

(fax no. 2583 9063)

## Annex

- (a) The cargo carriers participating in the EMAN Statement One Submission Scheme (EMAN I) will submit pre-arrival e-manifests via the EMAN system, while non-EMAN I cargo carriers can submit paper manifests.

In order to facilitate radiation tests to be conducted by the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) on food products imported from Japan, the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) will provide CFS with information in advance on all seaborne food products imported from Japan. Under the notification mechanism, C&ED will screen the e-manifests submitted under EMAN I for food products imported from Japan. Although EMAN I is a voluntary scheme, the submission rate has already attained 85%, that is, it covers 85% of the cargo information for goods imported from Japan. In addition, C&ED will also request non-EMAN I cargo carriers to submit pre-arrival paper manifests (i.e. the remaining 15% of the cargo information for goods imported from Japan.) for screening information of goods reported to be food products. The information will be passed to CFS together with the information from EMAN I. Through the notification mechanism, C&ED provides CFS with information of all seaborne food products imported from Japan.

- (b) The prevailing legislation does not require sea cargo carriers to submit pre-arrival cargo information. To facilitate risk profiling and expedite customs clearance, C&ED introduced EMAN I in 2003 to encourage cargo carriers to submit pre-arrival e-manifests. Given its popularity in the industry, the submission rate of EMAN I has already attained 85%. Meanwhile, C&ED has been conducting outreach publicity in order to encourage more sea cargo carriers to participate in the scheme.
- (c) C&ED is not in the position to comment on the relevant measures as they fall under the purview of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

(d)(i) To tie in with the strengthened inspection of imported vegetables by CFS, C&ED and CFS have mounted a joint operation at Man Kam To Control Point since 2014.

(ii) As regards para 2.37(a), to combat smuggling activities of using vegetable consignments as camouflage, C&ED will select goods vehicles carrying vegetable consignments for inspection at Man Kam To Control Point. Under the joint operation mechanism, C&ED will, upon completion of Customs inspection, divert the goods vehicles with vegetable consignments on board to CFS officers for further action.

As regards para 2.37(b), under the joint operation mechanism, CFS will provide C&ED in advance with the vehicle registration numbers of target goods vehicles carrying vegetable consignments. C&ED will then assist in intercepting the target vehicles and divert them to CFS officers for further action.

(iii) After discussion, C&ED and CFS have extended the scope of the operation to inspection of goods vehicles carrying eggs and meat consignments.

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