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Our ref.: FEHD CFS 1-55/10/15

7 May 2021

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

Dear Ms SO,

### **Food Surveillance Programme**

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene held on 9 March 2021, some Members requested further information on the surveillance of vegetables and fruits and the prosecution actions taken against selling of chilled pork as fresh pork. The relevant supplementary information is set out in the following paragraphs.

#### Surveillance of vegetables and fruits

In 2020, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) tested 26 100 samples of vegetables, fruits and related products along a risk-based approach under the Food Surveillance Programme. About 2% of the samples were locally produced while the remaining samples were imported food products, more than 70% of which were from the Mainland and the rest from about 50 other places. Of these samples, about 60% were taken at the import level, about 15% from wholesale markets and about 25% from retail outlets (about 10% from supermarkets, convenience stores, department stores and online shops, and about 15% from other retail outlets such as markets, grocery stores and licensed food premises).

The test results of all, except 25, of the abovementioned samples were satisfactory. The overall satisfaction rate was 99.9%. Of the unsatisfactory samples, 23 were imported food products (including products from the Mainland, Taiwan, Thailand, the Philippines and Peru), about one-third of which were collected at the import level and the other two-thirds from retail outlets (mainly markets and online shops). The remaining unsatisfactory samples were one cut fruit sample taken from a supermarket and one vegetable sample collected from an online shop.

The CFS has tested more than 280 000 samples of vegetables, fruits and their products over the past 10 years (i.e. 2011 to 2020). All but 450 samples were found satisfactory. The overall satisfaction rate was 99.8%. The breakdown by year is as follows:

| <b>Year</b>  | <b>Number of samples tested</b> | <b>Number of unsatisfactory samples (%)</b> |
|--------------|---------------------------------|---|
| 2011         | 27 000                          | 20<br>(0.07%)                               |
| 2012         | 26 300                          | 19<br>(0.07%)                               |
| 2013         | 27 000                          | 8<br>(0.03%)                                |
| 2014         | 26 600                          | 48<br>(0.18%)                               |
| 2015         | 29 700                          | 130 <sup>Note</sup><br>(0.44%)              |
| 2016         | 30 800                          | 73<br>(0.24%)                               |
| 2017         | 29 900                          | 33<br>(0.11%)                               |
| 2018         | 29 500                          | 54<br>(0.18%)                               |
| 2019         | 28 300                          | 40<br>(0.14%)                               |
| 2020         | 26 100                          | 25<br>(0.10%)                               |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>281 200</b>                  | <b>450<br/>(0.16%)</b>                      |

Note: The Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM) came into operation on 1 August 2014.

The CFS has taken appropriate follow-up actions regarding the unsatisfactory samples, including tracing the sources of the food consignments concerned, recording information of the relevant production and processing establishments, and informing the regulatory authorities of the places of export. The CFS has kept statistics of the overall number of unsatisfactory samples over the past 10 years (as listed above). However, it has not maintained an annual breakdown by the number and name of the farms involved.

## Chilled pork

The FEHD conducts regular inspections on fresh provision shops and market meat stalls and will follow up on reports of selling of chilled or frozen pork disguised as fresh pork. During investigation, if there is sufficient evidence indicating the sale of chilled or frozen pork as fresh pork, the licences of the fresh provision shops breaching the relevant licence conditions may be cancelled.

The FEHD conducted 36 blitz operations against 78 fresh provision shops in the past 3 years (i.e. 2018 to 2020). There were 35 prosecutions instituted under the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) against 34 fresh provision shops for selling fresh pork and un-prepackaged chilled pork in the same premises or selling of restricted food without permission. Of these cases, 27 have been convicted and fined (the maximum fine being \$4,000), and the remaining 8 are pending a trial by the court. For the fresh provision shops convicted of related offences by the court, the FEHD will consider cancelling their licences under the demerit point system.

Yours sincerely,



( TSE Oi-yee )

for Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene

c.c. Food and Health Bureau