

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-FHB(FE)09**

**(Question Serial No. S0086)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Miss Vivian LAU)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Despite the Government's saying that all imported Mainland foods including vegetables, fish, meats are supplied by registered establishments on the Mainland, such an arrangement is merely an administrative order and measure without any legal binding effect. Please advise whether non-registered establishments are still allowed to import foods into the territory if relevant food standards are met.

Asked by: Hon WONG Pik-wan, Helena (Member Question No. )

Reply:

The Government is committed to enhancing food safety through a multi-pronged approach. It adopts the "from farm to table" strategy to safeguard public health by ensuring that food consumed by the public meets safety standards. This includes not only formulating and updating the legislation to govern food safety but also surveillance at the import, wholesale and retail levels and proper control at source.

As the Mainland is the major supplier of foods to Hong Kong, the Government and the Mainland authorities have established administrative arrangements under which chilled/frozen meat or poultry from the Mainland must come from processing plants registered for export to Hong Kong by the Mainland authorities. There are also similar administrative arrangements under which vegetables and aquatic food animals must come from registered farms and production and processing establishments under the supervision of the relevant Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau. Every year, officers of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) inspect some of these registered establishments on the Mainland to ensure that the foods imported are wholesome and safe at source.

Notwithstanding the above administrative arrangements, CFS will ensure that all food imported for sale in Hong Kong, whether they be imported into Hong Kong from the Mainland or other countries, must comply with the legal requirements governing food safety and are fit for human consumption. CFS enforces the law by conducting surveillance at the import, wholesale and retail levels through its Food Surveillance Programme. By

using a risk-based approach, CFS will take food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing. The Food Surveillance Programme is thus a key component to ensure food safety at the downstream of the food supply chain. Where CFS detects foods that violate the relevant legal requirements, CFS will follow up rigorously including, where appropriate, taking out prosecutions. If these foods are imported from the non-registered establishments of the Mainland, CFS will inform the relevant Mainland authorities so that they could follow up by tracing the source at their end. The Mainland authorities will then investigate and take appropriate follow up actions.

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