

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**FHB(FE)121**

**(Question Serial No. 1417)**

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:

The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued an order under section 78B of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) on 24 March 2011 to prohibit the import of vegetables and fruits, milk, milk beverages and milk powder from the five most affected prefectures of Japan, namely Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma. The import of all chilled or frozen game, meat and poultry, poultry eggs and all live, chilled or frozen aquatic products from the five prefectures is prohibited, unless they are accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent authority of Japan attesting that the radiation levels do not exceed the guideline levels. In this connection, please advise on the following:

- (a) details of the work on testing of food products imported from Japan performed by the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) under the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) in the past 3 years, and the number of food samples that failed to meet food safety standards;
- (b) the total value and quantity of food products imported from Japan in the past 3 years (tabulated by food type);
- (c) the value and quantity of food products imported from the 5 prefectures, namely Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma, in the past 3 years (tabulated by food type);
- (d) the regulatory measures applied by various regions or countries in the world to food products imported from Japan;
- (e) given that the "Japan Aizu Fair" recently held by an enterprise was found by members of the public to be related to Fukushima, where Aizu is situated, hence the query that the organiser failed to label Fukushima as the origin of the food products, whether the existing legislation has any provisions requiring that food products from Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Gunma shall be specified as originated from these 5 prefectures; and

- (f) whether the Department plans to review the strategies for the regulatory control of food products imported from Japan, such as requiring the production of certificates of origin for all the food products imported from Japan, and requiring clear indication on the package as to whether the food product concerned is originated from Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba or Gunma.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (Member Question No. 51)

Reply:

- (a) - (c) The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has been testing the radiation levels of every consignment of food products imported from Japan since the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in Japan in 2011. Only food products with satisfactory test results are released for sale in the market. For the past 3 years, CFS tested more than 200 000 samples of food imported from Japan and the test results of all samples were satisfactory. In fact, no samples were found unsatisfactory since the import restriction on Japanese food had taken effect. Test results on food imported from Japan are made public on CFS's website. CFS does not have information on the total value of food products imported from Japan. Also, it does not have readily available records on the total quantities of food products imported from Japan.
- (d) In the wake of the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident, individual countries or economies have implemented different import restrictions on Japanese food of varying magnitude. For instance, the Mainland suspended the import of all types of food from Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma and Chiba prefectures in Japan. In the U.S., import restrictions on Japanese food mirrored the export prohibition measures taken by Japan. Singapore imposed import ban on certain food types from the Fukushima Prefecture. Countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada have already lifted their import restrictions previously imposed on Japanese food.
- (e) According to the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W), all prepackaged food shall be labelled with the name and full address of the manufacturer or packer. Otherwise, the prepackaged food shall be labelled with its country of origin, together with the name and office address of the distributor or brand owner in Hong Kong provided that the full address of the manufacturer or packer of the food in its country of origin has been notified in writing to the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

Besides, CFS requires importers to provide relevant import documents such as invoices, airway bills / bills of lading, packing lists and health certificates, whichever applicable. For Japanese food, the prefectures of origin have to be shown in the relevant import documents and the information will facilitate CFS to check against the import restrictions. Also, CFS checks the labels on the packing of the products against the information in the documents.

- (f) The CFS will continue to adopt a risk-based approach in formulating strategies to monitor food imports from Japan, and will adjust the surveillance measures as necessary to safeguard food safety and protect public health. In doing so, CFS makes reference to the test results of the Japanese authority and local surveillance, latest measures taken by other countries/economies against food products imported from Japan, and recommendations made by international agencies including the World Health Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency on the issue.

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