

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**FHB(FE)209****(Question Serial No. 1303)**

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:

Regarding food supplied to Hong Kong, please provide information as follows:

- (a) At present, all fresh vegetable consignments from the Mainland via land transport to Hong Kong should be imported through Man Kam To Control Point (MKTCP). Please set out in the table below the number of vegetable vehicles that passed through MKTCP, the number of vehicles inspected by the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) and the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) at MKTCP, and the percentage of such vegetable vehicles using MKTCP in the past 5 years.

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of vehicles importing fresh vegetables to Hong Kong through MKTCP					
Number of vehicles inspected by CFS and C&ED					
Percentage					

- (b) Do registered vegetable farms on the Mainland and their corresponding registered entities and plants provide examination reports to the C&ED and the CFS in respect of their vegetables before, during or after customs clearance? If yes, please list in tabular form the Chinese and English names of the suppliers which provided examination reports to the C&ED in the past 5 years.
- (c) At present, all fresh vegetable consignments from the Mainland via land transport to Hong Kong should be imported through MKTCP. How are vehicles carrying vegetables from the Mainland to Hong Kong identified for inspection? As for the inspected vehicles, please provide information on their vehicle types, tonnage and the names of the transportation companies to which they belong, based on which the vehicles were identified for inspection in the past.

(d) At present, the CFS has a Food Control Office at Man Kam To. Vegetable vehicles will be inspected by the CFS upon arrival at Man Kam To Food Control Office. In each of the past 5 years, how many vehicles bypassed the office and delivered vegetables to Hong Kong?

(e) Please list in the following table the number of inbound vegetable vehicles intercepted by the CFS and the C&ED at control points other than MKTCP in the past 5 years:

	Number of vehicles in 2013	Number of vehicles in 2014	Number of vehicles in 2015	Number of vehicles in 2016	Number of vehicles in 2017
Lo Wu					
Lok Ma Chau					
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line					
Sha Tau Kok					
Shenzhen Bay					

(f) Further to the previous question, please advise whether the vegetables carried by vehicles intercepted by the CFS and the C&ED were found to contain excessive pesticide residues. How many samples were detected with excessive pesticide residues in each of the past 5 years and what penalties were imposed in respect of the vehicles and on the suppliers concerned?

(g) Please set out in the table below the number of passengers intercepted by the CFS and the C&ED at various control points for carrying fresh vegetables into Hong Kong in the past 5 years. How did the Department handle the passengers concerned and the fresh vegetables seized?

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Hong Kong International Airport					
Lo Wu					
Hung Hom					
Lok Ma Chau					
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line					
Man Kam To					
Sha Tau Kok					
China Ferry Terminal					
Macau Ferry Terminal					
Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal					
Shenzhen Bay					

Kai Tak Cruise Terminal					
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Asked by: Hon TAM Man-ho, Jeremy (Member Question No. (LegCo use): 514)

Reply:

(a) The information sought is provided as follows -

	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of vehicles importing fresh vegetables to Hong Kong through Man Kam To Control Point	84 523	87 583	96 891	99 793	108 536
Number of vehicles inspected by the Centre for Food Safety and the Customs and Excise Department	32 721	34 736	33 898	33 643	28 004
Percentage	38.7%	39.7%	35.0%	33.7%	25.8%

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) takes food samples at the import, wholesale and retail levels and adopts a risk-based principle in determining the types of samples to be collected, the sampling frequency, the sample size, and the types of laboratory analysis to be conducted. Of note is that samples collected at the retail level would cover vegetables imported through not only Man Kam To but also other channels. For vegetables and fruits, the total number of samples taken at these levels for testing remained generally around 30 000 in the past few years, with the satisfaction rate over 99.5%.

(b) - (c) CFS has put in place mechanisms in safeguarding the safety of vegetables (though not regarded as high-risk foods) on sale in the local market to ensure their compliance with the legal standards and fitness for human consumption.

As the Mainland is the major supplier of vegetables to Hong Kong, the Government and the Mainland authorities have established administrative arrangements under which vegetables supplied to Hong Kong must come from registered vegetable farms and production and processing establishments under the supervision of the relevant Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau. CFS has all along closely liaised with the Mainland authorities to arrange regular visits and audit inspections to the Mainland vegetable farms and processing plants to ensure their compliance with our requirements.

The list of registered vegetable farms and processing plants eligible for supplying vegetables to Hong Kong is maintained by the Mainland authorities and posted

onto their website. CFS makes reference to the list in performing its gate-keeping function.

CFS has put in place a food surveillance programme under which food samples are collected at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing to safeguard food safety. Vehicles carrying vegetables from the Mainland to Hong Kong must enter through Man Kam To Control Point (MKTCP) under an administrative arrangement between CFS and the Mainland authorities. Those vehicles will be identified through the Road Cargo System of the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED). A risk-based approach is adopted for inspection and sampling. CFS does not keep information on the vehicle types, tonnage and the names of the relevant transportation companies.

- (d) - (f) CFS maintains close liaison with C&ED and exchange intelligence on activities of importing vegetables through control points other than MKTCP. If C&ED intercepts any inbound vehicles carrying vegetables at control points other than MKTCP, it will refer them to CFS for investigation. There have been no such referrals in the past 5 years
- (g) The Government exercises vigilance over vegetables that are brought, in the name of self-consumption, into Hong Kong by travellers via the Lo Wu Control Point but are subsequently sold in the market. CFS maintains close liaison with C&ED and exchanges intelligence on activities of importing vegetables through control points other than MKTCP. To intercept these imports, C&ED and CFS conduct joint operations from time to time. If travellers are found to have brought into Hong Kong vegetables which are suspected not to be for self-consumption, C&ED will refer the cases to CFS for follow-up.

From 2015 to 2017, C&ED referred 34 cases of passengers carrying vegetables into Hong Kong at Lo Wu to CFS, namely 19 cases in 2015, 7 cases in 2016 and 8 cases in 2017. There were no such referral cases in Lo Wu in 2013 and 2014, nor in other control points in the past 5 years. CFS had initiated prosecutions against non-compliance with the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap. 612) in 3 cases. The remaining 31 cases could not be taken forward because of insufficient evidence. In all cases, the travellers concerned had voluntarily surrendered the vegetables to CFS for disposal.

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