

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**FHB(FE)312****(Question Serial No. 4568)**

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:

With regard to nutrition labelling of food items, the Centre for Food Safety is requested to list the following information by year.

- (1) Has the Government conducted food samplings for the checking of irregularities in nutrition labelling over the past 5 years? Please provide tabulated information on the sample size, places of origin of the food items, food types and the test results.
- (2) Please provide the number of samplings/inspections conducted, cases of irregularities detected, summons issued, prosecutions instituted and cases convicted in each of the past 5 years, with a breakdown by retail outlet inspected.
- (3) Please provide the details of the Department's work plan on food samplings and inspections in relation to nutrition labelling. What are the estimated expenditure and manpower involved?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Ka-ki (LegCo internal reference no.: 149)

Reply:

- (1) The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has all along adopted a risk-based approach in checking the nutrition labels of prepackaged food products. The results of checking from 2015 to 2019, with breakdowns by nature of non-compliance and food type, are tabulated below:

	Number of cases					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Number of prepackaged food products checked	5 369	5 625	7 023	7 170	7 035	32 222

Number of non-compliant cases	29	54	34	62	80	259
(a) Breakdown of non-compliant cases by nature of non-compliance						
Nature of non-compliance	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
No nutrition label or incomplete labels on the energy content and seven core nutrients (i.e. “1 + 7” nutrition label)	17	18	8	19	32	94
Inappropriate nutrition label format	1	0	2	0	7	10
Inappropriate nutrient claim	0	0	1	2	1	4
Inappropriate language	0	2	4	6	1	13
Involving more than one type of the abovementioned irregularities	0	0	0	1	0	1
Discrepancy between declared nutrient value and chemical analysis result	11	34	19	34	39	137
Total	29	54	34	62	80	259
(b) Breakdown of non-compliant cases by food type						
Food type	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Bakery and cereal products	5	9	4	21	16	55
Candies and snacks	15	13	14	23	15	80
Drinks	1	7	2	2	10	22
Oils, sauces and condiments	2	12	10	9	4	37
Others	6	13	4	7	35	65
Total	29	54	34	62	80	259

- (2) The number of prepackaged food products sampled by CFS for checking of nutrition labels in each year from 2015 to 2019 is set out in the table of (1) above. In these 5 years, 32 222 samples were checked and 259 non-compliant cases were detected. CFS instituted prosecution on 128 cases, of which 117 cases were convicted, 10 were pending a court decision and 1 was withdrawn upon the advice of the Department of Justice (DoJ). A breakdown on the number of the prosecution cases by year is as follows:

	Number of prosecution cases					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Number of summons	17	19	18	28	46	128
Number of convictions	16*	19	18	28	36 [#]	117

* 1 case was withdrawn upon DoJ's advice.

10 cases were pending court decision.

- (3) CFS will continue to adopt a risk-based approach to take samples for nutrition label checking and chemical analysis. Non-compliant cases would be followed up and prosecution actions would be taken if there is sufficient evidence. The expenditure on enforcement of nutrition labelling requirements forms part of the expenditure on food surveillance and complaint handling and cannot be separately identified. The estimated expenditure for food surveillance and complaint handling in 2020-21 is \$78 million.

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