

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

FHB(FE)148

(Question Serial No. 1783)

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 Diane WONG)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Food and Health

Question:

Under Programme (1), the work of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (the Department) includes exercising import control on high-risk food and issuing health certificates for food exports. As the Mainland has banned the import of pork and pork products from Taiwan since 1 January 2021, and the Mainland Customs has announced the suspension of import of pineapples from Taiwan with effect from March 2021 due to seizure of “quarantine pests”, will the Department step up sample testing of agricultural products from Taiwan so as to ensure food safety of Hong Kong residents and plug the safety loopholes lest the aforesaid agricultural products from Taiwan will be transhipped to the Mainland via Hong Kong? If yes, what are the estimated manpower and expenditure required? If no, what is/are the reason(s)?

Asked by: Hon NG Wing-ka, Jimmy (LegCo internal reference no.: 317)

Reply:

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department collects samples of food from different places of origin at the import, wholesale and retail levels for testing having regard to a risk-based principle under the routine Food Surveillance Programme to ensure that foods in Hong Kong comply with the local statutory requirements and are fit for human consumption. In 2020, the CFS tested about 66 600 food samples (including meat, poultry, aquatic products, milk, cereals, vegetables, fruits and related products) from various places of origin for pesticide residues, metallic contaminants, veterinary drug residues, preservatives, colouring matters, nutrients, pathogens, etc. All but 99 samples were found satisfactory. The overall satisfaction rate was about 99.9%.

Hong Kong does not import fresh, chilled or frozen meat from Taiwan. With regard to other foods from Taiwan, the CFS will continue to adopt a risk-based principle in taking samples for tests. As this is part of the overall food surveillance and import control work of the Department, we do not have a breakdown of the estimated manpower and expenditure involved in this aspect of work.

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