

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)130

(Question Serial No. 2430)

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 (Ms Irene YOUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

1. There are repeated complaints from the fresh meat trade that since the Government's enhancement of the control measures against African Swine Fever, many meat stalls have made a reckless move to sell frozen meat disguised as fresh meat to the public and even added borax into such meat to mimic the quality of fresh meat to the detriment of public health. Will additional provision be made for stepping up inspections against the malpractice of selling frozen meat disguised as fresh meat? If yes, what are the details and the expenditure to be involved? If no, what is/are the reason(s)?
2. What is the number of successful prosecutions against the sale of frozen meat disguised as fresh meat to the public and what is the fine?

Asked by: Hon LI Sai-wing, Stanley (LegCo internal reference no.: 41)

Reply:

1. During regular inspection of licensed fresh provision shops (FPSs) and market meat stalls or complaint investigation, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will request the persons-in-charge of the shops/stalls concerned to provide invoices as proof of origin of the pig carcasses. In case of suspected illegal operations of the shops/stalls or doubts over the invoices or sources, the Department will carry out investigation, including collecting evidence and information by posing as customers, taking pork samples for testing for preservatives, etc. To enhance the regulation of licensed FPSs and market stalls, the Department also deploys resources to carry out blitz inspections as the situation warrants. If there is sufficient evidence, the Department will take appropriate enforcement actions. To achieve a greater deterrent effect, since December 2021, shops/stalls selling chilled/frozen meat disguised as fresh meat have been subject to immediate cancellation of licences or termination of public market tenancies by the Department. The relevant work is undertaken by staff tasked with day-to-day environmental hygiene work and management of public markets in their respective districts, and staff of the Intelligence Unit.

2. In the past 3 years, the numbers of successful prosecutions instituted by the Department for sale of chilled/frozen meat without permission, sale of fresh meat and un-prepackaged chilled meat in the same premises or sale of meat containing preservatives, and the average amounts of fine imposed are set out below:

2020 to 2022	Number of successful prosecutions	Average amount of fine
Sale of chilled/frozen meat without permission	44	\$1,602
Sale of fresh meat and un-prepackaged chilled meat in the same premises	5	\$1,700
Sale of meat containing preservatives	13	\$3,192

Moreover, in 2022, a total of 8 licensed FPSs had their licences cancelled due to the sale of chilled/frozen meat disguised as fresh meat in contravention of the licensing conditions, and the tenancy of 1 public market meat stall was terminated.

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