

Import of poultry meat and products from Kandiyohi County, Minnesota, US, suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (October 24) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about an outbreak of low-pathogenic H5N2 avian influenza in Kandiyohi County, Minnesota, the United States (US), the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products, including poultry eggs, from the county with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that Hong Kong imported about 142 000 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and 240 million poultry eggs from the US in the first six months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the US authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the OIE on avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Vehicle owner convicted for illegal deposit of waste with evidence collected through IP cameras

A vehicle owner was fined \$5,000 by the Shatin Magistrates' Courts today (October 24) for being involved in a case in which someone illegally deposited waste from his goods vehicle, with the illegal act captured by Internet protocol (IP) cameras installed by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD).

A spokesman for the FEHD said that the department's IP cameras recorded footage of someone driving a goods vehicle to Tai Po Tau Village Refuse Collection Point (RCP) in Tai Po and illegally depositing disused furniture outside the RCP from the vehicle on June 9, 2018. The goods vehicle owner was hence charged.

To address the environmental hygiene problems caused by frequent illegal deposits of refuse and waste at black spots in various districts, the FEHD progressively extended the scheme on installation of IP cameras at illegal

refuse deposit black spots to all districts in the territory starting from June this year, for enhanced monitoring of the situation on illegal dumping of waste and planning of more effective enforcement action so as to strengthen the effectiveness of evidence collection and law enforcement. Since the scheme was launched, the FEHD has instituted some 80 prosecutions.

According to the Public Cleansing and Prevention of Nuisances Regulation (Cap 132BK), it is an offence to litter in public places. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction. The FEHD will continue to closely monitor the targeted black spots. Members of the public are urged not to litter and offenders will be prosecuted.

Managers of unlicensed guesthouses fined

A man and a woman were fined \$10,000 each at the Kowloon City Magistrates' Courts today (October 24) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in March this year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected two suspected unlicensed guesthouses on Portland Street in Mong Kok. During the inspections, the OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented rooms in these guesthouses on an hourly or daily basis.

According to the OLA's records, these guesthouses did not possess licences under the Ordinance on the days of inspection. The man and woman responsible for managing the premises were charged with contravening section 5(1) of the Ordinance.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, the offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaenq@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Traveller jailed for smuggling rhino horns (with photo)

A traveller who smuggled rhino horns and was convicted for violating the Protection of Endangered Species of Animals and Plants Ordinance was sentenced to imprisonment at the District Court today (October 24).

A spokesman for the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) said that the 21-year-old male passenger arrived on June 17 from Beira, Mozambique, via Johannesburg, South Africa, and Doha, Qatar. About 3.1 kilograms of rhino horn cut pieces were found in the baggage of the passenger by Customs officers.

Subsequent to follow-up investigations, the AFCD charged the man with illegal import of specimens of listed species in Appendix I to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). He was convicted on October 19. Today, the court handed down 12-month imprisonment as the starting point for sentencing. The defendant was sentenced to eight months behind bars after one-third reduction as he pleaded guilty.

Rhinos are listed in Appendix I to the CITES and regulated under the Ordinance in Hong Kong. The penalties under the Ordinance have been amended and drastically increased since May 1 this year. Any person importing, exporting or possessing specimens of endangered species not in accordance with the Ordinance will be liable to a maximum fine of \$10 million and imprisonment for 10 years. The specimens will also be forfeited upon conviction. Members of the public are urged not to break the law.

To enquire about the control of endangered species or to report suspected irregularities, the public can call the AFCD on 1823 or visit the website www.cites.hk.



Hong Kong Customs combats restaurant supplying short-weight seafood

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (October 23) found a restaurant in San Po Kong to be suspected of supplying short-weight seafood.

Customs officers yesterday conducted a test-buy operation at the restaurant and ordered an Alaskan crab. A staff member of the restaurant weighed a crab with a set of Chinese ching and declared that the weight of the crab was 84 taels.

Customs officers found that the crab was short of weight by about 18 taels after examination. The set of Chinese ching was also found to be inaccurate.

Investigation is ongoing.

Under the Weights and Measures Ordinance (WMO), any person who in the course of trade supplies goods to another person by weight or measure should supply the goods in net weight or net measure. Any shortage of the quantity purporting to be supplied is an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$10,000. In addition, any person who uses for trade, or has in his possession for use for trade, any weighing or measuring equipment which is false or defective commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$20,000.

Customs will continue to take stringent enforcement action against short-weight activities at restaurants to protect consumers' interests and uphold a fair trading environment.

Members of the public may report any suspected violations of the WMO to the Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).