

SFH visits Beijing to discuss food safety and supply of agricultural food to Hong Kong (with photos)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, today (October 29) met with officials from the General Administration of Customs, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council and the Ministry of Commerce during her visit in Beijing, with a view to fostering closer ties and enhancing exchanges with the relevant Mainland authorities in respect of matters relating to food safety and the supply of agricultural food to Hong Kong.

Professor Chan met with the Minister of the General Administration of Customs, Mr Ni Yuefeng, and the Vice Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, Mr Yu Kangzhen, this morning and took the opportunity to learn about the latest situation of the outbreak of African swine fever (ASF) on the Mainland.

Professor Chan said, "The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is very concerned with, and is paying close attention to, the outbreak of ASF on the Mainland, and has been maintaining close liaisons with the General Administration of Customs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs on the development and response actions. So far, no pig farm registered for supplying Hong Kong is affected and the supply of live pigs from the Mainland remains generally stable. I express my heartfelt gratitude to the General Administration of Customs and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs for their efforts over the past two months or so in the management and control work at source, as well as their efforts in ensuring steady supply of live pigs to Hong Kong. In particular, the announcement of a package of measures in quarantine and control in transporting live pigs to Hong Kong last week can ensure that live pigs for supply to Hong Kong undergo strict quarantine and control by the Customs authorities."

She added, "Although there is no food safety issue connected with ASF, the HKSAR Government has already stepped up bio-security measures in various areas, including pig farms, slaughterhouses and boundary checkpoints, to prevent infection to local pig farms. Among them, cleaning and disinfection of vehicles and personnel entering and leaving slaughterhouses and pig farms have been enhanced, and use of swill of animal origin as pig feed is being phased out."

In addition, Professor Chan told Mr Yu, "The HKSAR Government has been actively promoting the sustainable development of the fisheries industry in recent years, consistent with the direction of development on the Mainland. We believe that the option for HKSAR fishermen to develop aquaculture business in Mainland waters is worth exploring."

Aside from the outbreak of ASF, Professor Chan and Mr Ni also discussed other issues relating to food safety and supply. She also signed a protocol with the Director General of the General Office of the General Administration of Customs, Mr Zhang Guangzhi, on the importation of bird's nest products into the Mainland.

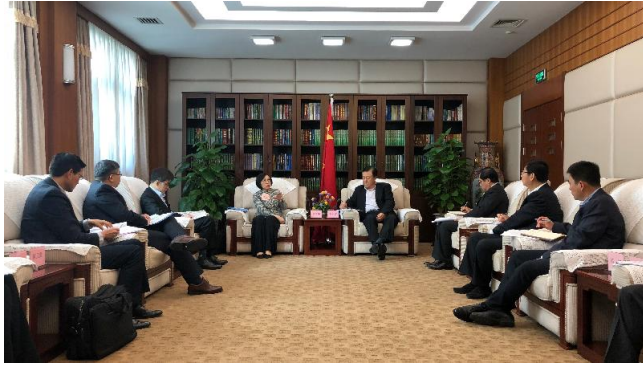
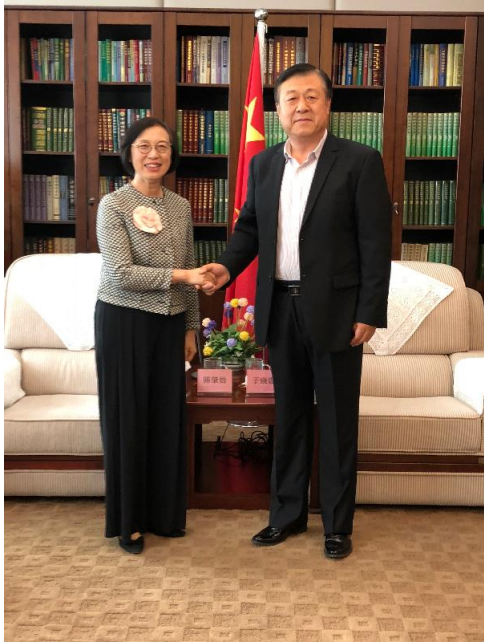
Professor Chan remarked, "The formal signing of the protocol on implementation of inspection and quarantine arrangements for imported bird's nest products from Hong Kong will help foster the trading of bird's nests between the Mainland and the HKSAR, and will also be welcomed by the trade of the two places. On behalf of the HKSAR Government, I thank the General Administration of Customs for its great support on this issue.

"In addition, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department and the General Administration of Customs will continue to work on the regulatory scheme on the carriage by travellers, as well as postage, of bird's nest products into the Mainland."

In the afternoon, Professor Chan paid a courtesy call to the Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Song Zhe, and the Assistant Minister of Commerce, Mr Ren Hongbin. Professor Chan told Mr Song that the Central People's Government and the SARG had attached great importance to the development of the Greater Bay Area, under the framework of which the Mainland and the HKSAR had been stepping up co-operation in all aspects.

During the meeting with the officials of the Ministry of Commerce, both sides exchanged views on food supply to Hong Kong, particularly on safeguarding the stable supply, quality and safety of agricultural products. They also agreed to maintain close co-operation on these issues.

Those accompanying Professor Chan on the visit included the Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food), Mr Philip Yung; the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation, Dr Leung Siu-fai; the Controller of the Centre for Food Safety, Dr Ho Yuk-yin; and the Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise (Boundary and Ports), Ms Louise Ho. Professor Chan departed for Hong Kong after her Beijing visit this evening.



Postal services to United States return to normal

Hongkong Post announced today (October 29) that, as advised by the postal administration of the United States, mail delivery services to North Carolina, South Carolina, southwest Virginia (postcodes 27000 to 29999 and 23000 to 23999) and Florida (postcodes 32300 to 32499) that were previously affected by a hurricane have returned to normal.

Transcript of remarks by STH

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a media session after attending the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Housing today (October 29):

Reporter: Can you also talk about the road permits?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: As of today, we have issued altogether 5 000 permits to enable private cars to travel through the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge. Our plan is to limit the number of cars, so that the traffic affecting the three cities, including Hong Kong, Zhuhai and Macao, would be good. Therefore, it's our plan and strategy to limit the number of private cars using the bridge. We will start issuing 5 000 more (permits) starting from next week. We are expecting to have this process completed within November so that more private cars would be allowed to go through the bridge. At the same time, we have 12 000 cargo vehicles that are allowed to use the bridge anytime they like, but given the routing and also the businesses of the factories, I would expect the logistics sector and the cargo handling sector would be using more of it in due course.

Reporter: Can you also comment on last night's incident – that people had to wait for a shuttle bus for more than an hour?

Secretary for Transport and Housing: We do have a quite amazing turnout yesterday because the number of passengers travelling through Hong Kong border (boundary) is up to 78 000 and the peak is about 3 500 per hour. Although the shuttle buses had been operating according to the schedule, we had altogether 90 shuttles getting out of the port during the hours from 6 o'clock to 8 o'clock in the evening, so the number of passengers was indeed very high in that sense. Therefore it takes a little bit of time to digest.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

Stage 2 application exercise for space in Legal Hub launched

Applications from law-related organisations (LROs) are now invited under the Stage 2 exercise for using the space in the West Wing of the former Central Government Offices (CGO) and the former French Mission Building (FMB) for the provision of legal and dispute resolution services.

A spokesman for the Department of Justice (DoJ) said today (October 29) that underpinning the policy objective of consolidating Hong Kong as a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, the Government will provide certain space to LROs in the West Wing of the former CGO and the former FMB for the provision of such services. Together with the DoJ offices in the Main Wing, the East Wing and part of West Wing of the former CGO, the whole area will become a Legal Hub at the heart of Hong Kong.

Under the Stage 1 and Supplementary application exercises conducted earlier, based on assessment of the relative merits of the respective applications, the Committee on Provision of Space in the Legal Hub has recommended a total of 17 LROs for provision of space in the West Wing of the former CGO and the former FMB. These cover reputable local, regional and international LROs.

As in the arrangement for the Stage 1 and Supplementary application exercises, applicants for the current Stage 2 exercise should be LROs which meet the following eligibility criteria:

- (a) the applicant should normally be a non-profit making or inter-governmental LRO which has been operating in the law-related or dispute resolution field in or outside Hong Kong;
- (b) the services to be provided on the premises should be compatible with the policy objective of enhancing Hong Kong's status as a leading hub for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region; and
- (c) the applicant should not have received a capital grant from the Government or any other sources for constructing or buying its own premises, or subsidy of any kind from any other sources for accommodation support.

The application form and a guide to application can be downloaded from www.doj.gov.hk/eng/public/legalhub.html. The application deadline is December 28, 2018. Late applications will not be accepted. Enquiries about the application exercise can be made to the Special Duties Team of the DoJ on 2867 4590 or by email (legalhub@doj.gov.hk).

The provision of space to LROs in the Legal Hub will enable those already in Hong Kong to further develop their services and create a favourable environment to attract more reputable international legal and dispute resolution institutions to provide services or set up offices in Hong Kong, which will further enhance the status and competitiveness of Hong Kong as a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region. It is expected that space in the Legal Hub can be made available to international, regional and local LROs commencing around mid-2019.

[Grants approved for typhoon victims in the Philippines](#)

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has accepted the advice of the Disaster Relief Fund Advisory Committee and approved from the Disaster Relief Fund two grants totalling \$4.851 million to two agencies for providing relief to typhoon victims in the Philippines.

Announcing the grants today (October 29), a spokesman for the Government said that the two grants – one of HK\$3.602 million to World Vision Hong Kong and one of HK\$1.249 million to Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) China, will be used to provide food, kitchen utensils, hygiene and household items to benefit around 45 000 typhoon victims in the Philippines. As the types of relief items to be distributed by the two relief agencies are different, there will be no overlapping of resources. The Committee hopes the grants will facilitate the provision of timely relief to the victims and help them restore their normal living. The grants, together with the one approved earlier for victims of this typhoon in the Philippines, will take the accumulative value of grants and number of beneficiaries to \$5.399 million and 55 000 respectively.

"To ensure that the money is used for the designated purposes, the relief agencies will be asked to submit evaluation reports and audited accounts on the use of the grants after the relief projects have been completed," the spokesman said.