

Import of poultry meat and products from City of Hawkesbury of State of New South Wales in Australia suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (June 21) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H7N8 avian influenza in the City of Hawkesbury of the State of New South Wales in Australia, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the area with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 130 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 4.06 million poultry eggs from Australia in the first three months of this year.

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

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, June 21, 2024 is 106.8 (up 0.2 against yesterday's index).

CHP investigates three food poisoning clusters

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (June 21) investigating three epidemiologically linked food poisoning clusters affecting nine persons involving a restaurant located in The Kimberley Hotel. The CHP reminded the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene to prevent foodborne diseases.

The first cluster involved three females aged between 54 and 82, who

developed abdominal pain, fever, nausea and vomiting, diarrhoea and weakness about 28 hours after having a lunch buffet at the Coffee House in the Kimberley Hotel located in Tsim Sha Tsui on June 17.

The second cluster involved four females aged between 7 and 50, who developed similar symptoms about 14 hours after having a dinner buffet at the same restaurant of the hotel on June 18.

The third cluster involved a male and a female, who developed similar symptoms about 12 hours after having a dinner buffet at the same restaurant of the hotel on June 18.

Among the nine affected persons, seven of them sought medical advice. Three of them required hospitalisation. The stool specimen of one affected person was positive for Salmonella upon laboratory testing. All patients are in stable condition.

Initial investigations by the CHP revealed that the clusters involved buffets, and the affected persons had consumed different types of food including cold seafood platters and desserts. The CHP appeals to persons who have patronised the Coffee House in the Kimberley Hotel on June 17 or 18, and have experienced relevant acute gastroenteritis symptoms such as abdominal pain, fever, nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, to seek medical attention and contact the CHP immediately. The CHP has set up an enquiry hotline (2125 2372) which operates from Monday to Friday from 9am to 5.30pm.

The personnel from the Centre for Food Safety and the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) conducted a site investigation at the food premises last night (June 20), and found that its hygienic condition was unsatisfactory. The FEHD therefore summonsed the operator of the food premises concerned. After site investigations, the FEHD considered a thorough cleaning and disinfection shall be conducted in the food premises. The management is co-operating and will temporarily close the food premises for a thorough cleaning and disinfection from today onwards. Business will resume upon a satisfactory review by the FEHD. Food and environmental samples were taken by the personnel from the FEHD for testing, and an investigation is ongoing.

To prevent foodborne diseases, members of the public are reminded to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. When dining out:

- Patronise only reliable and licensed restaurants;
- Avoid eating raw seafood;
- Be a discerning consumer in choosing cold dishes including sashimi, sushi and raw oysters, at a buffet;
- Pre-cooked or leftover foods should be stored and reheated properly before consumption;
- Ensure food is thoroughly cooked before eating during a hotpot or barbecue meal;

- Handle raw and cooked foods carefully and separate them completely during the cooking process;
 - Use two sets of chopsticks and utensils to handle raw and cooked foods;
 - Do not patronise illegal food hawkers;
 - Drink boiled water;
 - Do not try to use salt, vinegar, wine or wasabi to kill bacteria as they are not effective; and
 - Always wash hands before eating and after using the toilet.
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Approved Ma Tau Kok Outline Zoning Plan referred back for amendment

The Town Planning Board (the Board) announced today (June 21) that the Secretary for Development has referred the approved Ma Tau Kok Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) to the Board for amendment to reflect the latest land use proposals.

The OZP incorporating the amendments will be exhibited for public inspection under the provisions of the Town Planning Ordinance.

The Ma Tau Kok OZP was last approved by the Chief Executive in Council in September 2023.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (June 21) released the latest grading of water quality for 39 gazetted beaches (see Note 1) and one non-gazetted beach (see Note 2).

Fourteen beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 20 as Fair (Grade 2), and six as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Chung Hom Kok Beach	Middle Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach*	Repulse Bay Beach*
Hap Mun Bay Beach*	South Bay Beach*
Hung Shing Yeh Beach*	St. Stephen's Beach

Kiu Tsui Beach
Kwun Yam Beach
Lo So Shing Beach

Tong Fuk Beach
Trio Beach
Turtle Cove Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach*
Cafeteria New Beach
Casam Beach*
Cheung Chau Tung Wan Beach*
Clear Water Bay First Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach*
Discovery Bay Tai Pak Beach
Golden Beach*
Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Kadoorie Beach

Lido Beach*
Lower Cheung Sha Beach
Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach*
Pui O Beach*
Shek O Beach*
Silver Mine Bay Beach*
Silverstrand Beach*
Stanley Main Beach*
Tai Po Lung Mei Beach*
Upper Cheung Sha Beach

Grade 3 beaches are:

Approach Beach
Big Wave Bay Beach*
Butterfly Beach*

Cafeteria Old Beach
Castle Peak Beach
Ting Kau Beach*

Compared with the grading released last week, Kwun Yam Beach and Trio Beach have been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1, and Kadoorie Beach from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Big Wave Bay Beach and Butterfly Beach have been changed from Grade 2 to Grade 3.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a tropical cyclone or heavy rainfall.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach

hotline, 2511 6666. Members of the public can also obtain the latest daily water quality forecast information for all beaches that are open for swimming through the Beach Water Quality Forecast mobile application (available for download from: www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQApp) or the dedicated beach water quality forecast page (www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQForecast) on the EPD's beach thematic website.

Note 1: Lifesaving services are provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department at 21 gazetted beaches, marked with an asterisk (*) above, from June 1. Due to the damage caused to the footpaths leading to Chung Hom Kok Beach by landslides, the beach is temporarily closed until further notice. For details, please refer to the Leisure and Cultural Services Department's Special Announcement (www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/beach/index.html).

Note 2: This refers to Discovery Bay Tai Pak Beach which is a non-gazetted beach that has no lifesaving service.