

Import of poultry meat and products from Łosicki District of Mazowieckie Region in Poland suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 7) that in view of a notification from the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in Łosicki District of Mazowieckie Region in Poland, 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 4 070 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 24.82 million poultry eggs from Poland in the first nine months of last year.

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

2021 warmest year on record for Hong Kong

With 11 months warmer than usual, 2021 was the warmest year on record in Hong Kong. The monthly mean temperatures of 22.0 degrees in March, 29.0 degrees in May and 29.7 degrees in September were record highs. The annual mean temperature was 24.6 degrees, 1.1 degrees above the 1991-2020 normal (Note 1) (or 1.3 degrees above the 1981-2010 normal). The annual mean maximum temperature of 27.5 degrees and the annual mean minimum temperature of 22.6 degrees were also the highest on record.

The highest temperature recorded at the Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) in the year reached 36.1 degrees on May 23, the joint third highest on record. There were 61 hot nights (Note 2) and 54 very hot days (Note 3) in 2021, both ranking as the highest on record and breaking the previous records set in 2020.

The lowest temperature recorded at the HKO in the year was 7.7 degrees on January 8. The number of cold days (Note 4) in the year was 13 days, 2.2 days less than the 1991-2020 normal (or 4.1 days less than the 1981-2010

normal).

The annual total rainfall in 2021 was 2 307.1 millimetres, about 5 per cent below the 1991-2020 normal of 2 431.2mm (or about 4 per cent below the 1981-2010 normal of 2 398.5mm). The HKO issued six Red Rainstorm Warnings and two Black Rainstorm Warnings in the year. The number of days with thunderstorms reported was 41 days in 2021, one day less than the 1991-2020 normal (or two days more than the 1981-2010 normal).

A total of 27 tropical cyclones occurred over the western North Pacific and the South China Sea in 2021, less than the long-term (1961-2010) average of about 30. There were 10 tropical cyclones reaching typhoon intensity (Note 5) or above during the year, less than the long-term average of about 15, with five of them having reached super typhoon intensity (with a maximum 10-minute sustained wind speed of 185 kilometres per hour or above near the centre). A total of eight tropical cyclones necessitated the issuance of Tropical Cyclone Warning signals, more than the long-term average of about six in a year. The No. 8 Gale or Storm Signals were issued during the passages of Lionrock and Kompasu in October.

Globally, 2021 is likely to be between the fifth and seventh warmest year on record according to the World Meteorological Organization's preliminary assessment. The global mean sea level reached a new record high in 2021. Different parts of the world were ravaged by various extreme weather events in 2021, including heatwaves in western North America, the Mediterranean region and eastern Europe; extreme cold events in many parts of the central United States, northern Mexico, northern Asia and Europe; severe drought in subtropical South America, western North America, southwest Asia and southern Madagascar; extreme rainfall triggered severe flooding in Henan Province of China, western Europe, eastern New South Wales in Australia, Afghanistan, the Mediterranean and Black Sea coasts, northern South America, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and western Japan; and severe damage and heavy casualties brought by tropical cyclones in the United States, Venezuela, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, Australia, Mozambique, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, Madagascar, India, Pakistan, Oman, Iran and the Philippines. Exacerbated by widespread drought and high temperature weather, destructive wildfires wreaked havoc in northern California of the United States, Algeria, southern Turkey, Greece, Siberia and parts of Brazil.

A short-lived La Niña event was established in January 2021 and ended in March. Sea surface temperatures of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific remained normal throughout spring and summer, but became below normal again in October. The colder-than-normal sea surface temperatures persisted afterwards, indicating the development of another La Niña event.

A detailed description of the local weather for individual months is available on the Monthly Weather Summary webpage:

www.weather.gov.hk/en/wxinfo/pastwx/mws/mws.htm.

A detailed version of the year's weather for 2021 with some significant weather events in Hong Kong is available at:

www.weather.gov.hk/en/wxinfo/pastwx/ywx.htm.

Note 1: Climatological normals for the reference period of 1961-1990, 1971-2000, 1981-2010 and 1991-2020 are available at www.weather.gov.hk/en/cis/normal.htm. Climatological normals of 1991-2020 are referenced in the text unless otherwise stated.

Note 2: "Hot night" refers to the condition with the daily minimum temperature equal to or higher than 28.0 degrees.

Note 3: "Very hot day" refers to the condition with the daily maximum temperature equal to or higher than 33.0 degrees.

Note 4: "Cold day" refers to the condition with the daily minimum temperature equal to or lower than 12.0 degrees.

Note 5: Information on the classification of tropical cyclones is available at www.weather.gov.hk/en/informtc/class.htm.

Labour Department's occupational health public talks cancelled

In view of the latest COVID-19 situation, the Labour Department announced today (January 7) that the occupational health public talks entitled "Work and Cardiovascular and Cerebrovascular Diseases" and "First Aid in the Workplace" at the Lecture Theatre of the Hong Kong Central Library scheduled for January 13 and January 20 respectively have been cancelled. Enrolled participants will be informed of the cancellations individually.

Director of Immigration issues statement

The Director of Immigration, Mr Au Ka-wang, said today (January 7), "I visited a restaurant in Wan Chai for a short time in the evening of January 3 and left immediately after congratulating my friend without having a meal sitting down."

He added, "This is currently a time for the whole community to fight the virus together. All departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and members of the public are working together to fight the epidemic, riding out difficult times. Regarding the additional burden to the epidemic prevention work and the disturbance to the public as a result of my personal behaviour, I offer my sincere apology to all people of Hong Kong. I have reflected on this incident and shall be more vigilant in future. I will

be sure to fully co-operate with the arrangements made by the Centre for Health Protection and undergo quarantine at the Penny's Bay Quarantine Centre."

Cancellation and refund arrangements for live-streaming programme "Techno Circus" in "Cheers!" Series

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (January 7) that in view of the latest situation of COVID-19, the live-streaming programme "Cheers!" Series: "Techno Circus" scheduled for January 15 and 16 at the Studio Theatre of the Hong Kong Cultural Centre has been cancelled.

Details of the refund arrangements will be announced in due course. Ticket holders are advised to keep their original intact tickets (with stubs) for refunds, and check the latest announcements at the programme website (www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/multi_arts/programs_1257.html).

For enquiries, please call 2268 7323 during office hours, or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CP.