

CFS announces food safety report for November

â€‹The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (December 31) released the findings of its food safety report for last month. The results of about 6 800 food samples tested were satisfactory except for 13 samples that were announced earlier. The overall satisfactory rate was about 99.8 per cent.

A CFS spokesman said about 1 500 food samples were collected for microbiological tests, and about 5 300 samples were taken for chemical and radiation level tests.

The microbiological tests covered pathogens and hygiene indicators; the chemical tests included testing for pesticides, preservatives, metallic contaminants, colouring matters, veterinary drug residues and others; and the radiation level tests included testing for radioactive caesium and iodine in samples collected from imported food from different regions.

The samples comprised about 2 400 samples of vegetables and fruit and their products; about 400 samples of cereals, grains and their products; about 800 samples of meat and poultry and their products; about 1 000 samples of milk, milk products and frozen confections; about 800 samples of aquatic and related products; and about 1 400 samples of other food commodities (including beverages, bakery products and snacks).

The 13 unsatisfactory samples comprised a prepackaged date sample, a prepackaged preserved cabbage sample, a prepackaged bamboo fungi sample and a prepackaged shrimp noodles sample in breach of the food labelling regulation, a pig fat sample, two papaya samples and an eggplant sample detected with pesticide residues exceeding the legal limit, a dried Chinese white cabbage sample and a mud crab sample detected with metallic contamination exceeding the legal limit, a frozen confection sample detected with a total bacterial count exceeding the legal limit, a prepackaged beef jerky sample detected with a non-permitted preservative, and a date sample detected with a preservative exceeding the legal limit.

The CFS has taken follow-up action on the unsatisfactory samples including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected food items and tracing the sources of the food items in question.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to ensure that food for sale is fit for human consumption and meets legal requirements. Consumers should patronise reliable shops when buying food and maintain a balanced diet to minimise food risks.

Second round of FEHD anti-rodent operations in designated target areas concludes with fruitful results

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) concluded the second round of this year's anti-rodent operations in designated target areas in all districts on December 24. The operations effectively enhanced the rodent prevention and control work at the district level. During the operations, the FEHD strengthened rodent control work at problematic spots such as rear lanes, refuse collection points, markets, hawker bazaars, cooked food markets and peripheral areas of construction sites. The FEHD placed poisonous baits at 9,366 locations, placed 26,309 traps and plugged 518 rat holes, with 871 dead rodents collected and 1,010 rodents caught in traps.

An FEHD spokesman said, "The FEHD launched the eight-week anti-rodent operations in designated target areas on November 1, with multi-pronged strategies including improving environmental hygiene and stepping up rodent disinfestation and enforcement actions to carry out targeted rodent prevention and control work in the districts. The FEHD also conducted a trial by including an enhanced version of the anti-rodent operations in designated target areas for the first time in Sham Shui Po, Wan Chai and Yuen Long to expand the scope of rodent control, so as to cover more rodent black spots, including those in public markets and municipal services buildings, hawker bazaars and rear lanes adjacent to food premises, and to conduct large-scale and targeted anti-rodent operations. FEHD staff also enhanced street cleaning services and cleaning of public markets and hawker bazaars in the target areas including sweeping and washing of streets and rear lanes, and clearing of refuse and waste on the streets, in public markets and at hawker bazaars so as to keep the environment clean."

The FEHD also stepped up public education and publicity, and arranged 134 health promotion and publicity activities for building management companies of private buildings, persons-in-charge of food premises and market and hawker stall operators to provide information and technical advice on rodent prevention and control.

"In addition, the FEHD stepped up inspections of markets, hawker bazaars, cooked food markets and food premises. Enforcement actions especially against premises causing poor environmental hygiene conditions, food preparation and scullery at rear lanes, and improper storage of articles and illegal dumping of refuse were strengthened. During the eight-week operations, the FEHD conducted 20,226 inspections and issued 2,801 health advisories, 1,306 verbal warnings, five warning letters and 1,059 fixed penalty notices, and took out 103 prosecutions."

The spokesman said that to optimise the effectiveness of the rodent prevention and control work, the first phase of the territory-wide anti-rodent campaign will start on January 3, 2022, and will last for 10 weeks to strengthen the collaboration of departments and raise the public awareness of rodent prevention. He called on all sectors of the community to continue to participate in the campaign and eliminate the three fundamental survival conditions of rodents in their daily life, namely food, harbourage and passages, i.e. the elimination of the food sources and hiding places of rodents as well as blockage of their dispersal routes, so as to work together to combat the rodent problem.

Government announces list of seventh-cycle designated quarantine hotels

The Government announced today (December 31) the list of designated quarantine hotels for the seventh cycle of the Designated Quarantine Hotel (DQH) Scheme. A total of 44 hotels will provide about 12 500 rooms in the new cycle, which runs from March 1 to July 31, 2022. The Government may adjust the number of rooms available in this cycle as and where necessary.

A Government spokesman said, "The Government issued letters to some 2 000 hotels and guesthouses with valid licences on November 30 to invite applications for enlisting as DQHs in the seventh cycle. We have received 60 applications.

"Upon assessment, 44 hotels, including 37 in the sixth cycle, were selected as DQHs to join the seventh cycle (see list in Annex) to provide about 12 500 rooms of various types and rates for selection by arrivals in Hong Kong from places other than the Mainland and Macao. Among the seven new DQHs, four of them will commence business before March 1, 2022, with a view to alleviating the current market demand for hotel rooms. W Hong Kong and Crowne Plaza Hong Kong Kowloon East will commence business in January 2022, and Nina Hotel Causeway Bay and iclub Mong Kok Hotel will start operation in February 2022."

The spokesman added, "To enable travellers who will return from abroad during the summer holidays to plan ahead, we have increased the duration of the seventh cycle by two months as compared to that of the sixth cycle. Furthermore, in view of the strong demand for rooms under the sixth cycle, as well as the long public holidays and summer holidays to be covered under the seventh cycle, some 1 000 additional hotel rooms have been made available under this new cycle in anticipation of a possible increase in market demand."

The Government fully implemented the DQH Scheme and the Designated Transportation Scheme on December 22, 2020, requiring all arrivals from

specified places to undergo compulsory quarantine at DQHs as a measure to further prevent the importation of COVID-19 cases and reduce contact between arrivals and the local community. The first to fifth cycles of the DQH Scheme have ended while the sixth cycle, with 40 hotels, will end on February 28, 2022.

The list of DQHs in the seventh cycle and related details, including room rates, will be uploaded to the thematic webpage at www.designatedhotel.gov.hk.

Import of poultry meat and products from Ehime Prefecture in Japan suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (December 31) that in view of a notification from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5 avian influenza in Ehime Prefecture in Japan, 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 40 tonnes of chilled poultry meat, about 2 530 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 210.28 million poultry eggs from Japan in the first nine months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the Japanese authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the World Organisation for Animal Health 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.

New editions of Code of Practice for Energy Efficiency of Building Services

Installation and Code of Practice for Building Energy Audit gazetted

The Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) today (December 31) gazetted the 2021 Edition of both the Code of Practice for Energy Efficiency of Building Services Installation (BEC) and the Code of Practice for Building Energy Audit (EAC), pursuant to section 40 of the Buildings Energy Efficiency Ordinance (BEE0), to enhance the energy efficiency of buildings services installations and promote decarbonisation of buildings.

Following the enactment of the BEE0 in 2012, the BEC and the EAC were promulgated in the same year and are reviewed once every three years. In the course of the review process, the EMSD examines the global development of relevant technology and energy efficiency standards to keep the Codes of Practice abreast of the times.

The new edition of the BEC uplifts the energy efficiency standards with an improvement of more than 15 per cent as compared with the 2015 edition. By 2035, the estimated annual energy saving is expected to bring about an annual energy saving of around 4.7 billion to 5.3 billion kWh from buildings in Hong Kong (compared with 2015), which will help Hong Kong achieve the carbon neutrality target before 2050 as set out in the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan 2050.

The new editions of the BEC and EAC will take effect on July 1 and October 1, 2022, respectively. For more details about the BEE0 and the two Codes of Practice, please visit the EMSD's website (www.emsd.gov.hk/beeo).