

# CFS announces test results of imported salmon samples

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (June 16) said that in view of recent media reports that the novel coronavirus was detected on chopping boards used for cutting salmon during a COVID-19 case investigation in Beijing, for the sake of prudence, the CFS yesterday had immediately taken 16 salmon samples from import and wholesale levels from different countries, including Norway, Chile, Ireland, Iceland and Denmark, for testing as a precautionary measure. All samples are tested negative for novel coronavirus.

In addition, the Centre has reviewed the recent imports of chilled salmon from various places into Hong Kong by air, and confirmed that salmon sold in Hong Kong are mainly from the United States and European countries such as Norway, while there is no record of import of salmon from the Mainland.

A spokesman for the CFS said that according to current scientific information, there is no evidence indicating that human can be infected by the novel coronavirus via food (including aquatic products). In addition, the World Health Organization and global food safety assessment authorities consider that it is unlikely that the novel coronavirus can be transmitted to human via food. Nevertheless, raw or undercooked aquatic products are high-risk food items, susceptible populations such as pregnant women, infants, young children, the elderly and people with weakened immunity should avoid consuming raw and undercooked foods to minimise the risk of foodborne illness. The spokesman reminded members of the public to maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times, and cook food thoroughly to safeguard food safety.

The spokesman also reminded food workers that they should always keep their hands clean, and frequently clean and disinfect surfaces, especially food contact surfaces in food premises (such as tableware, kitchenware, insulated bags for takeaways, conveyor belts at cashier desks) and high-touch points (such as door handlers, handles of the shopping trolleys and water taps) to ensure environmental hygiene, while social distancing measures should also be adopted. Food workers should cease engaging in any food handling work and seek medical advice promptly when suffering or suspected to be suffering from an infectious disease or symptoms of illness.