

CFS announces test results of poultry meat samples from Brazil

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (August 18) said that in view of a notice issued by the Shenzhen Headquarters for Prevention and Control of Pneumonia Epidemic Caused by Novel Coronavirus that a surface sample of chicken wings imported from Brazil tested positive for COVID-19 in Shenzhen, the CFS had taken a total of 40 samples of frozen chicken meat from Brazil at import and wholesale levels for testing of the COVID-19 as a precautionary measure. All samples tested negative for the COVID-19.

A spokesman for the CFS said that upon learning of the incident on August 13, the CFS had immediately contacted the relevant authorities in Shenzhen and Brazil to understand the incident, and followed up with major local importers and retailers. An investigation revealed that the batch of chicken wings concerned has not been on sale in Hong Kong so far. For the sake of prudence, the Centre has also temporarily suspended the import licence application for import of poultry meat into Hong Kong from the plant concerned (registration number: SIF601), while waiting for further case investigation and testing details from the relevant authorities.

The spokesman said that according to the World Health Organization and global food safety authorities, there is no evidence indicating that humans can be infected by the COVID-19 via food. The CFS reminded the public to cook food thoroughly and avoid consuming raw or undercooked animal products, as well as to handle raw and cooked food separately, especially when handling raw meat and offal, so as to avoid cross-contamination of food. Members of the public should also maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times. In particular, the public should observe hand hygiene and avoid touching the eyes, ears, mouth or nose after contacting the surfaces of environment and uncooked food.

The spokesman also reminded food handlers 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 frequent-touch points (such as door handles, handles of shopping trolleys and water taps) to ensure environmental hygiene, while social distancing measures should also be adopted. Food handlers 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.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action in light of the latest development.