

CFS announces test results of seasonal food surveillance project on lap-mei

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (November 15) announced the test results of a recently completed seasonal food surveillance project on lap-mei. Around 140 samples were collected and all passed the tests.

A CFS spokesman said, "Lap-mei is popular in winter and the CFS has therefore collected a variety of lap-mei samples including Chinese pork sausages, Chinese liver sausages, preserved duck meat and preserved pork from different retailers including online retailers for chemical tests and nutrition content analyses."

Chemical tests targeted veterinary drug residues and preservatives usually found in preserved food including nitrate and nitrite, as well as other food additives which may be used in the production process such as sulphur dioxide and colouring matters. For nutrition content analyses, the contents of energy, carbohydrates, protein, total fat, saturated fatty acids, trans fatty acids, sodium and sugars of the samples were tested to see if they were consistent with their declared values on the nutrition label.

"Members of the public should maintain a balanced diet and avoid excessive consumption of lap-mei in view of its nitrate/nitrite level and potential risk of nitrosamine, as well as relatively higher sodium, sugar and fat contents in some lap-mei. Infants are highly susceptible to nitrite toxicity and should avoid consuming lap-mei. The intake of lap-mei among young children should also be restricted.

"Furthermore, the International Agency for Research on Cancer of the World Health Organization has classified processed meat as 'carcinogenic to humans' (Group 1). The public should avoid excessive consumption of processed meat to reduce the risk of developing colorectal cancer," the spokesman said.

The spokesman also advised the trade to comply with the legal requirements, follow good manufacturing practice and use permitted food additives in an appropriate manner. Retailers should source food from reliable suppliers and maintain a good recording system in accordance with the Food Safety Ordinance to allow source tracing if needed.