

# CFS finds ethylene oxide in prepackaged white pepper powder sample from India

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (October 5) that a sample of prepackaged white pepper powder imported from India was found with a pesticide, ethylene oxide. Members of the public should not consume the affected batch of the product. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batch of the product immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Organic WHITE PEPPER POWDER  
Brand: Passion by Mama  
Place of origin: India  
Net weight: 55 grams per bottle  
Retailer: Healthy Express  
Best-before date: September 29, 2023

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a retail outlet in Tsuen Wan for testing when following up on a related incident. The test result showed that the sample contained a pesticide, ethylene oxide. The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and instructed them to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of the product. According to the CFS's instructions, the retailer concerned has initiated a recall on the affected batch of the product. Members of the public may call its hotline at 3565 1770/9555 5280 during office hours for enquiries about the recall of the product concerned."

The spokesman continued, "The International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified ethylene oxide as a Group 1 carcinogen. According to the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM), a food for human consumption containing pesticide residue may only be sold if consumption of the food is not dangerous or prejudicial to health. An offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months upon conviction."

The spokesman urged the public not to consume the affected batch of the product if they have bought any. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batch of the product concerned immediately if they possess it.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. An investigation is ongoing.