

CFS finds malachite green in samples of freshwater grouper and roast eel

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 27) announced that malachite green was found in a freshwater grouper sample and a prepackaged frozen roast eel sample. Follow-up is in progress.

Details of the roast eel sample are as follows:

Product name: Not available in English

Brand: Not available in English

Place of origin: China

Importer: Nisoon Frozen Food Hong Kong

Best-before date: February 27, 2021

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS collected the above-mentioned freshwater grouper sample from a stall in Po On Road Market, Cheung Sha Wan and the above-mentioned roast eel sample from a shop in Kwun Tong for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test results showed that they contained malachite green at respective levels of 1.3 parts per billion (ppb) and 26.3 ppb.

"The CFS has informed the vendors concerned of the irregularities and instructed them to stop sale of the affected products. The importer of the roast eel product has also initiated a recall according to the CFS' instruction. Members of the public may call its hotline at 2850 7568 during office hours for enquiries about the recall," the spokesman added.

Malachite green is a type of industrial dye and has been used for treating infections in fish. Malachite green is possibly both genotoxic and carcinogenic. According to the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), there is no safe level of residues of malachite green or its metabolites in food that represents an acceptable risk to consumers. Currently, malachite green has been prohibited for use in food producing animals in many countries. According to the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap 132AF), no food sold in Hong Kong is allowed to contain malachite green. Offenders will be prosecuted and will be liable to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incidents and take appropriate action, including tracing the sources of the affected products. Investigation is ongoing.