

CFS finds traces of malachite green in grass carp sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (August 1) announced that a trace amount of malachite green was found in a grass carp sample. A follow-up is in progress.

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS collected the abovementioned grass carp sample from a stall in Kowloon City Market for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained a trace amount of malachite green at a level of 1.7 parts per billion."

The spokesman said the CFS had informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and instructed the vendor to stop the sale of the affected product. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be initiated. The CFS is also tracing the source of the product concerned.

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, 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 continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. An investigation is ongoing.