

CFS follows up on Hong Kong Customs' referral of import of hairy crabs suspected to be without health certificates

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (October 29) that the Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) had referred a case concerning a batch of some 5 200 hairy crabs (total weight of around 1 000 kilograms) suspected of not being accompanied with health certificates for follow-up by the CFS. None of the product concerned has entered the market. The CFS is following up on the case.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "To combat illegal imports and the import and sale of hairy crabs of unknown origin, the CFS and the C&ED have conducted a number of joint operations since October this year. The CFS received a referral from Customs about its interception of the abovementioned hairy crabs at the Shenzhen Bay Port yesterday (October 28). The crabs concerned were not accompanied with health certificates issued by the relevant authorities of the exporting economies, which did not comply with the requirements of the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit. The hairy crabs concerned were detained by the CFS and have not entered the market. The CFS is tracing the source of the product, and the investigation is ongoing."

According to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), all food available for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction. Moreover, under the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap 612), any person who, without reasonable excuse, does not register but carries on a food importation or distribution business commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Under the Import and Export Ordinance (Cap 60), any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

The CFS will continue to conduct joint operations with the C&ED to combat illegal imports or imports of hairy crabs of unknown origin.