

CFS follows up on packaging sample of imported frozen shrimp tested positive for COVID-19 virus in Macao

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department said today (May 16) that the CFS is proactively following up on a packaging sample of imported frozen shrimp from Indonesia being tested positive for COVID-19 virus in Macao. The CFS's initial investigations showed that the affected batches of product had been imported to Hong Kong. For prudence's sake, the spokesman urged the public not to consume the affected batches of product concerned and to observe personal, food and environmental hygiene. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batches of product immediately if in possession.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Wild Caught Frozen White Shrimp

Brand: Java Sea

Place of origin: Indonesia

Importer: PARKnSHOP (HK) Limited

Net weight: 300g

Best-before dates: February 1, 2024; March 1, 2024 and April 1, 2024

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS noted a recent announcement from the Department of Food Safety of Macao that an inner packaging sample of imported frozen shrimp from Indonesia was tested positive for COVID-19 virus. The CFS immediately contacted the Macao Authority and local importers for follow-up. Initial investigations found that PARKnSHOP (HK) Limited had imported the affected batches of product.

For the sake of prudence, the importer concerned has voluntarily removed from shelves, stopped sale of the affected batches of product, and has initiated a recall. Members of the public may call the importer's hotline at 2606 8658 during office hours for enquiries about the recall.

The CFS has inspected the importer's warehouse in Sheung Shui, marked and sealed the affected batches of frozen shrimp and will arrange their disposal. In addition, the CFS will continue to follow up on the incident, and will step up sampling of similar products for testing.

To prevent the import of the COVID-19 virus through imported frozen foods, the CFS has stepped up precautionary testing measures since mid-2020, including enhanced testing of various types of frozen foods and their packaging imported from different countries/regions, which involves taking samples at the Airport Food Inspection Offices and cold stores of importers. Up to now, over 32 000 samples of foods and their packaging were collected for testing of the virus, only the pomfret fish and packaging samples announced last August, the cuttlefish slice and packaging samples announced

last November, the packaging samples of beef and pork skin announced this February, and the packaging samples of ox offal and chicken leg announced this April were found to be positive. The CFS will continue the sampling of imported frozen foods and their packaging for testing.

The COVID-19 virus is predominantly transmitted through droplets and cannot multiply in food or food packaging. According to current scientific knowledge, the World Health Organization and food safety assessment authorities in overseas countries consider that it is unlikely that the COVID-19 virus can be transmitted to humans via food consumption. Nevertheless, members of the public should always observe personal, food and environmental hygiene. The CFS reminds the public to pay attention to the following:

- * Always keep hands clean, particularly before touching the mouth, nose or eyes;
- * Rub hands with liquid soap for at least 20 seconds when washing before and after handling chilled and frozen food and its packaging, if any; after going to the toilet; and before eating;
- * Handle raw and cooked food separately, and pay special attention when handling raw meat and offal, to avoid cross-contamination of food; and
- * Cook food thoroughly and avoid consuming raw or undercooked animal products.