

CFS follows up on pesticide found in prepackaged white pepper powder sample from India

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department said today (October 12) that following further investigation on the incident of prepackaged white pepper powder imported from India being found with a pesticide, ethylene oxide, another sample batch was also 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: June 28, 2023

A spokesman for the CFS said, "Subsequent to announcing earlier that a sample of white pepper powder taken from a retail outlet in Tsuen Wan was found to contain a pesticide, ethylene oxide, the CFS detected a similar irregularity in another batch of white pepper powder sample taken from the same retail outlet for testing during follow-up investigations. 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. Prosecution will be instituted should there be sufficient evidence."

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. The investigation is ongoing.