

CFS launches online services and new measures for importation of milk and frozen confections

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (September 28) launched new services for the importation of milk and frozen confections through the Food Trader Portal (FTP), allowing traders to apply for import permission and report consignment arrival online. The CFS has also implemented a series of new measures in tandem with the roll-out of online services.

A CFS spokesperson said, "We have been rolling out different online services at the FTP in phases since the end of last year. At present, the online services provided include food trader registration, registration renewal, and dissemination of information on foods suspended from import. Importers of meat, poultry and game can apply for import licences and import permissions, check application status and records, and record information on the arrival of food consignments through the FTP. The online services launched today further expand the functions of the FTP, enabling importers of milk and frozen confections with FTP accounts to submit electronic applications for import permission and report the arrival of food consignments online."

In tandem with the roll-out of online services, the CFS has implemented a number of new measures for the importation of milk and frozen confections to assist the trade. The layout of the application forms has been redesigned to make their contents clear and easy to understand, with guidelines setting out important notes and the required information and supporting documents. The format of the new import permission has been rearranged to list out clearly the details of all permitted products along with the permission conditions. The validity period of import permissions, which was previously set at six months for the first two years and extendable to 12 months through renewal thereafter, is now uniformly set at 12 months and applied to all new and renewed import permissions. The CFS has also simplified the application procedure in that once a product with its basic container has been approved, the importer will no longer be required to reapply for import permission for the same product in different packages (e.g. half-dozen pack or twin pack), other than to provide packing size information when reporting consignment arrival.

The spokesperson added, "Besides applying for import permission, importers of milk and frozen confections can also report arrival of food consignments through the FTP. A worksheet template is provided by the CFS to facilitate rapid input of consignment data to the FTP by importers. After the report has been accepted, the CFS will approach the importers regarding inspection and release of the consignments. Upon completion of all the procedures, the CFS will issue the release letter through the FTP. Online

consignment reporting assists the trade and facilitates the clearance work of the CFS, and helps increase efficiency."

The spokesperson said, "Importers can still submit applications and report arrival of consignments on paper having regard to their operational needs. But importers who wish to use the online services at the FTP should open their user accounts as soon as practicable."

The CFS has produced presentation notes, training manuals and frequently asked questions to explain the above new measures and online services in detail. The materials have been uploaded to the FTP for traders' reference.

For more details, please visit the FTP at www.ftp.cfs.gov.hk.