

EEB and GACC sign Cooperation Agreement on Supervision of Safety and Facilitation of Customs Clearance of Food Products Manufactured in Hong Kong Exported to Mainland

The Environment and Ecology Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and the General Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China (GACC) signed the Cooperation Agreement on the Supervision of Safety and Facilitation of Customs Clearance of Food Products Manufactured in Hong Kong Exported to the Mainland today (November 27). The Cooperation Agreement seeks to fully implement the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area by providing a facilitating arrangement for customs clearance for food products that meet relevant requirements so as to shorten the time required for customs clearance, further enhancing the safety of local food products exported to the Mainland and facilitating trade.

The Cooperation Agreement will initially cover three major categories of food, namely (1) beverages and cold drinks (excluding alcoholic and dairy beverages); (2) biscuits, pastries and bread; and (3) candies and chocolates (including chocolate, cocoa butter substitute chocolate and their products). The arrangement will be available at the ports under the Shenzhen Customs and the Gongbei Customs. According to the Census and Statistics Department, the export volume to the Mainland of relevant categories of domestic food products in 2022 was over 46.4 million kilograms with the value of approximately \$2.88 billion, which accounted for approximately 75 per cent of the total value of all Hong Kong-manufactured food exports to the Mainland in the same year and about 12 per cent of the total value of all domestic goods exported to the Mainland.

The Cooperation Agreement will aid the monitoring of food safety from the source for Hong Kong-manufactured food products exported to the Mainland, thus achieving the goal of customs clearance facilitation. Not only will this promote food trade between the Mainland and Hong Kong, the Greater Bay Area in particular, but also deepen exchanges and co-operation in food safety monitoring between the Mainland and Hong Kong.

After the Hong Kong-manufactured food products of the concerned categories covered by the Cooperation Agreement are confirmed in compliance with the specific requirements, a food product which shows no abnormality during an on-site inspection but needs to be sampled can be released upon completion of sampling without waiting for the results, which will facilitate the trade and promote the development of relevant local

production.

Upon signing the Cooperation Agreement, the Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will discuss with the GACC the operational details of the Cooperation Agreement, including the food standard, testing method, sampling methodology and the template of the official certificates, and make necessary preparation for the implementation of relevant measures. The new measure is expected to commence in the first half of next year.