

Excessive metallic contaminants found in two imported food samples

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (November 14) announced that a sample of imported sweet potato from the Mainland and a sample of imported crab from the Philippines were detected with lead and cadmium respectively, which are metallic contaminants, at levels exceeding the legal limits.

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned samples at the import levels for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test results showed that the sweet potato sample contained lead at a level of 0.5 parts per million, exceeding the legal limit of 0.1 ppm; while the crab sample contained cadmium at a level of 2.93 ppm, exceeding the legal limit of 2 ppm," a spokesman for the CFS said.

"Long-term excessive dietary exposure to lead may cause anaemia and damage to the nervous system and kidneys, and long-term excessive intake of cadmium may affect the kidney functions. The CFS has informed the importers concerned of the irregularities and instructed them to stop sales and remove from shelves the affected products. The CFS is also tracing the sources and distributions of the products concerned," the spokesman added.

According to the Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap. 132V), any person who sells food with metallic contamination above the legal limit is liable upon conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

The CFS will alert the Mainland and Philippine authorities as well as the trade, and continue to follow up on the incidents and take appropriate action. The investigations are ongoing.