

FEHD commits to combating illegal sale of hairy crabs and sale of hairy crabs from dubious sources (with photos)

To safeguard food safety, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has launched a series of blitz operations since November 9 to inspect selling points of hairy crabs in various districts and combat the illegal sale of hairy crabs, with a view to ensuring that hairy crabs on sale in the market comply with regulations under relevant laws.

During the operations, FEHD officers will check the source documents and health certificates of the hairy crabs to ensure that the hairy crabs sold at the premises are in compliance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance and are fit for human consumption. The FEHD also distributed promotional leaflets to the operators of the premises, reminding them to pay attention to food safety and comply with regulations under relevant laws. Up till yesterday (November 10), FEHD officers have inspected about 60 premises selling hairy crabs, including retail outlets, food premises and public market stalls.

A spokesman for the FEHD said, "During the operations, the FEHD detected that the source of hairy crabs sold in two fresh provision shops (FPS) was found to be suspicious. The licensees of the FPS failed to provide a relevant health certificate for inspection that breached the relevant licensing conditions. The hairy crabs concerned were marked and sealed. The FEHD is tracing the source of the hairy crabs, and the investigation is ongoing. The department is very concerned about the illegal sale of hairy crabs and will continue to closely trace and monitor the situation. Relevant operations are ongoing."

In addition, the FEHD also conducted a blitz operation in Wan Chai on November 9 evening and found two FPS in the Canal Road West vicinity selling the restricted food, hairy crab, without permission. The FPS are suspected of violating the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) (the Regulation). Procedures on prosecution were initiated against the operators. In addition, about 10 kilograms of hairy crab without valid health certificates found in two premises were seized for disposal.

Under the Regulation, save for the written permission of the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH), no person shall sell any restricted foods, including shell fish. Operators selling hairy crabs (including physical premises and online sale) shall obtain the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit or relevant written permission granted by the FEHD. Furthermore, the relevant regulatory condition also stipulates that hairy crabs for sale shall be obtained from a reliable and reputable source. A copy of the health certificate issued by the relevant authority and acceptable to the DFEH shall also be kept. Under the Regulation, any person who operates an unlicensed

food business or sells restricted foods without permission commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

In addition, according to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), all food available for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction. Under the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap. 612), any person who, without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with the record-keeping requirement relating to movement of food commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for three months upon conviction.

The spokesman stressed that the department has all along been conducting regular inspections at food premises and public market stalls with the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit/relevant written permission to sell shell fish (hairy crabs), so as to ensure that the operators comply with the licensing/permit conditions as well as the hygiene standards prescribed under the law. Appropriate action will be taken when necessary.

In addition, the FEHD has also stepped up enforcement actions to combat against the online sale of restricted hairy crabs without permission. Enforcement actions were taken in September and October this year and two prosecutions were initiated against the persons concerned. The trial of one of the cases has concluded and the person concerned was convicted and fined \$3,000 in total for selling restricted food without permission and failing to produce acquisition records of the food.

The spokesman reminded the trade not to import or put on sale hairy crabs with an unknown origin, and consumers should make purchases at reputable shops with the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit or relevant written permission granted by the FEHD.

If members of the public suspect that there are operators selling hairy crabs without the relevant permits/permissions or the hairy crabs are not accompanied with health certificates, they may make a report by calling the FEHD hotline at 2868 0000 or through email (enquiries@fehd.gov.hk).



