

FEHD commits to combatting illegal sale of hairy crabs and sale of hairy crabs from dubious sources (with photo)

To safeguard food safety, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) launched a blitz operation yesterday (November 18) in Tsuen Wan to inspect grocery shops in the Yi Pei Square vicinity to 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 operation, five grocery shops were found to be selling the restricted food, hairy crab, without permission. The grocery shops were suspected of violating the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) (the Regulation). Procedures on prosecution were initiated against the operators of the five grocery shops concerned. In addition, a total of about 45 kilograms of hairy crabs without valid health certificates found in the five 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.

An FEHD spokesman said, "The FEHD is very concerned about illegal sale of hairy crabs and will continue to closely monitor the situation and take stringent enforcement action."

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).

