

[FEHD, Customs and AFCD carried out blitz operations to combat sale of hairy crabs from dubious sources \(with photo\)](#)

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) continued to conduct a series of blitz operations to inspect selling points of hairy crabs in various districts and combat the illegal sale of hairy crabs, and will conduct joint operations with relevant departments if necessary to investigate the suspected sale of hairy crabs from dubious sources, with a view to ensuring that hairy crabs on sale in the market comply with regulations under relevant laws, protecting food safety and consumer rights.

A spokesman for the FEHD said today (November 15), "During the recent joint operations, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) and the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the FEHD, Hong Kong Customs (Customs) and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) detected that the source of hairy crabs sold in two retailers and their supplier which are holding Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit was found to be suspicious. The premises claimed that the hairy crabs were originated from local aquaculture farm or imported from other places, but the operators failed to provide health certificate acceptable to the FEHD for inspection that breached the relevant licensing conditions. The hairy crabs claimed to be originated from local aquaculture farm were also not tagged with traceable QR code of the Accredited Fish Farm Scheme (AFFS). The FEHD has marked and sealed over 1 300 hairy crabs from the three premises. In addition, a local aquaculture farm which provided hairy crabs to the supplier was inspected during the operation. The investigation is ongoing. The department is very concerned about the sale of hairy crabs from dubious source and will continue to closely monitor the situation."

Under the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) (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.

Customs attaches great importance to the protection of consumer rights and will take appropriate enforcement action once activities in violation of the Trade Description Ordinance (TDO) are detected in the market. The department also reminds traders not to apply a false trade description to goods or services, or to supply or offer to supply goods or services to which a false trade description is applied. Those who violate the TDO are liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

In addition, the AFCD will monitor the culture cycle of the hairy crab farms registered under AFFS. According to the Aquaculture Manual of AFFS, before selling the hairy crabs in the registered farms, the AFCD would submit the hairy crab samples to the Government Laboratory for food safety testing and the product should pass the quality assurance prior to selling. The AFCD would issue a certificate of compliance for the batch of hairy crabs that passed the testing. Each hairy crab should also be tagged with a traceable QR code of the AFFS for identification.

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).

