

Hong Kong Customs combats packing and supply of suspected counterfeit rice (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs raided a suspected counterfeit rice packing and storage centre in an operation conducted in San Po Kong yesterday (May 18) to combat the packing and supply of suspected counterfeit rice. About 15 tonnes of suspected counterfeit rice in packs, 6 tonnes of packed low-priced rice, and 1.6 tonnes of genuine brand rice with an estimated market value of about \$178,000 were seized. Some rice-mixing apparatus and more than 7 000 suspected counterfeit rice bags were also seized during the operation.

Customs officers earlier received information about activities of packing and supply of counterfeit rice in the market. Initial investigation revealed that unscrupulous traders supplied low-priced rice to local food establishments as high-priced rice.

After an in-depth investigation and with the assistance of trademark owners, Customs officers conducted an operation yesterday in San Po Kong and seized the rice from four units in an industrial building.

Some rice-mixing apparatus and more than 7 000 rice bags with suspected counterfeit markings were also seized. A haul of low-priced rice in packs with an estimated weight of over 50 tonnes was found as well at the scene.

During the operation, Customs officers arrested a 27-year-old man and a 40-year-old woman, who are the persons-in-charge of a foodstuff company.

Investigation is ongoing and the arrested persons have been released pending further investigation.

Group Head (Intellectual Property Investigation (Operations)) of Customs Mr Guy Fong said at a press conference today (May 19) that Customs has all along been taking stringent enforcement actions against the sale of counterfeit goods.

He reminded that the sale of counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions.

Customs also appeals food establishments to procure from reputable supply sources; and to check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if there is any doubt in the product's authenticity.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, any person who sells or possesses for sale any goods with a forged trademark commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Members of the public may report any suspected infringing activities to

the Customs 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

