

Hong Kong Customs detects food smuggling case in third phase of operation "Ice Breaker" (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs mounted the third phase of the enforcement operation against food smuggling codenamed "Ice Breaker" in November this year. On November 5, Customs detected one related case and seized approximately 300 kilograms of frozen meat and 1 000kg of other food items with a total estimated market value of about \$100,000.

Based on intelligence analysis and in-depth investigations, Customs speculated that criminals intended to use cross-boundary trucks to smuggle food into Hong Kong, which would be supplied to local food retail shops.

On November 5, Customs officers identified a suspicious truck, entering Hong Kong through the Man Kam To Control Point, which delivered a batch of suspected smuggled goods to Tsuen Wan. Later, some of the goods were distributed to a food retail shop in the area. Customs officers then took action and seized the batch of suspected smuggled goods at the shop. A 51-year-old truck driver and a 52-year-old male shop manager were arrested. They have been released on bail pending further investigation.

During the operation, a total of about 300kg of frozen meat and 1 000kg of other food items, including hairy crabs, seafood and frozen food, with a total estimated market value of around \$100,000, were seized.

Operation "Ice Breaker" is continuing.

Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years upon conviction.

According to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK), it is an offence to import or bring any game, meat, poultry or eggs into Hong Kong without a health certificate issued by an issuing entity of the place of origin and/or without prior written permission granted by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department. An offender shall be liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).

