

Hong Kong Customs detects suspected frozen Wagyu beef smuggling case involving speedboat (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (September 2) mounted an anti-smuggling operation in the south-western waters of Hong Kong and detected a suspected smuggling case involving a speedboat. About 10.1 tonnes of suspected smuggled frozen Wagyu beef and a high-powered speedboat equipped with six outboard engines, with a total estimated market value of about \$21 million, were seized.

Last night, Customs officers conducted an anti-smuggling operation in waters west of Lamma Island and spotted a suspicious speedboat heading towards Mainland waters at a high speed, with its navigation light off. Officers immediately took action to pursue and intercept the speedboat, but the speedboat accelerated and fled.

Later, Customs stopped the speedboat in waters off the south of Lamma Island and boarded the vessel for investigation. The speedboat was discovered to be equipped with six powerful outboard engines and the batch of suspected smuggled frozen Wagyu beef was seized onboard the vessel. Five men, aged between 22 and 36, were also arrested.

An investigation is ongoing.

Customs stresses that it will keep up its enforcement action and will continue to vigorously combat sea smuggling activities through proactive risk management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, and carry out anti-smuggling operations at suitable times to crack down on such activities.

Smuggling is a serious offence. 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.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002).

