

Hong Kong Customs mounts joint operation with FEHD and seizes “Yangcheng Lake hairy crabs” with suspected false claim of origin at food premises (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) mounted a joint operation on October 21 and seized 19 crabs described as "Yangcheng Lake hairy crabs" with a suspected false claim of origin and an estimated market value of about \$1,300 from a licensed food premises in Causeway Bay.

In response to intelligence, the FEHD suspected that the food premises had in its possession "Yangcheng Lake hairy crabs" which were displayed for sale. However, according to the FEHD's information, no imported Yangcheng Lake hairy crabs are available for sale in Hong Kong at the moment. A joint operation was then conducted with Customs.

In the operation, Customs officers seized 19 "Yangcheng Lake hairy crabs" with a suspected false claim of origin from the food premises. A 32-year-old male manager was arrested for suspected violation of the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO).

Investigation by Customs revealed that the food premises concerned earlier purchased a batch of hairy crabs, for which the country of origin was Japan and issued with relevant health certificates, from a local wholesaler.

Investigation is ongoing.

Customs reminds traders to comply with the requirements of the TDO. Under the Ordinance, any person who supplies goods with a false trade description in the course of trade or business, or is in possession of any goods for sale with a false trade description, commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

Customs also reminds consumers that no legally imported Yangcheng Lake hairy crabs are available for sale in Hong Kong at the moment. They may report any sale of hairy crabs claimed to be from Yangcheng Lake to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).

Also, Customs and the FEHD will keep up their close co-operation and intelligence exchanges with each other and joint operations at various boundary control points against illegal food imports will also continue. Both departments have jointly detected two large cases at boundary control points

this month and seized about 1 500 suspected smuggled hairy crabs with an estimated market value of about \$30,000.

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.

