

[Hong Kong Customs seizes \\$20 million worth of suspected smuggled frozen meat and fruit off Lung Kwu Chau in anti-smuggling operation \(with photos\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs conducted an anti-smuggling operation on the western waters on October 15 and detected a suspected smuggling case using cargo vessel, barges and tugboats off Lung Kwu Chau. Preliminary figures show that about 240 tonnes of suspected smuggled frozen meat and 600 cartons of fruit with a total estimated market value of about \$20 million were seized. Twenty-two persons were arrested, and one cargo vessel together with three tugboats, have been detained as well. This is also the first suspected case of using barges for high-end fruit smuggling activities as detected by the Customs.

On the day of the case occurred, Customs officers spotted seven suspicious vessels, comprising one cargo vessel, three barges and three tugboats, off Lung Kwu Chau in night hours. The cargo vessel was intercepted when it was about to leave the Hong Kong waters, while other barges and tugboats were also stopped for examination. The suspected smuggled frozen meat and fruit were seized as a result.

The frozen meat seized included beef, pork rib, pork offal worth about \$19.5 million, while the fruit products netted are high-end grape, honeydew and kirin fruits among others carry an estimated market value of around \$500,000.

Twenty-two men whose ages range between 20 and 67 were arrested. Four vessels have also been detained for investigation.

Investigation is ongoing.

Hong Kong Customs will continue taking stringent enforcement action against sea smuggling 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.

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).

