

Hong Kong Customs seizes about 4 250 kilograms of suspected smuggled hairy crabs, meat and poultry (with photo)

The Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department yesterday (November 24) seized about 1 800 suspected smuggled hairy crabs, weighing about 550 kilograms, and about 3 700 kg of meat and poultry, with an estimated market value of about \$520,000 at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port.

Based on risk assessment, Customs intercepted an incoming goods vehicle declared as carrying a batch of cross-boundary merchandise including food items at the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port. Upon inspection, the batch of suspected smuggled hairy crabs, meat and poultry were found inside the container.

The seized hairy crabs did not come with health certificates issued by the relevant authorities of the exporting economies, and failed to comply with the requirements of the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit. The meat and poultry seized also came without health certificates issued by an issuing entity from the place of origin or obtaining prior permission in writing from the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). The batch of suspected smuggled hairy crabs, meat and poultry were handed over to the FEHD for follow-up investigation.

Customs reminds members of the public that 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.

According to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations, any person who imports game, meat, poultry or eggs should produce a health certificate issued by an issuing entity from the place of origin or obtain prior permission in writing from the FEHD. Offenders are liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment.

Customs also reminds the trade not to import or put on sale hairy crabs with an unknown origin, and consumers should make purchases at reputable shops with the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit or relevant written permission granted by the FEHD.

According to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, all food available for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction. Moreover, under the Food Safety Ordinance, any person who, without reasonable excuse, does not register but carries on a food importation or distribution business commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

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).

