

Hong Kong Customs steps up enforcement action with approach of Lunar New Year and seizes suspected counterfeit-branded cherries (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs yesterday (February 4) conducted an operation against the sale of counterfeit-branded fruits and seized 196 boxes of suspected counterfeit-branded cherries weighing about 400 kilograms in total, with an estimated market value of about \$80,000.

Customs earlier received information alleging that a shop was suspected of selling counterfeit-branded cherries. Upon investigation, Customs officers yesterday took action and seized the batch of suspected counterfeit-branded cherries together with a batch of packing materials from a fruit shop in Yau Ma Tei. A 41-year-old saleswoman was also arrested.

Investigation is ongoing. Customs is looking into the source of the cherries involved in the case and samples will be sent to the Government Laboratory for safety testing.

With the Lunar New Year around the corner, Customs will continue to step up inspections and enforcement to combat the sale of counterfeit goods and festive counterfeit food items before and during the holiday.

Customs appeals to consumers to purchase at shops with a good reputation and to check with the trademark owners or their authorised agents if the authenticity of a product is in doubt.

Customs also reminds traders to be cautious and prudent in merchandising since selling counterfeit goods is a serious crime and offenders are liable to criminal sanctions.

Under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance, it is an offence to sell or possess for sale any goods with a forged trademark. Upon conviction, offenders shall be liable to a maximum penalty of imprisonment for five years and a fine of \$500,000.

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

