

Hong Kong Customs summarises effectiveness of second phase of enforcement operation “Ice Breaker” against food smuggling (with photo)

Hong Kong Customs mounted the second phase of the operation against food smuggling, codenamed "Ice Breaker", with Mainland Customs between August and September 2024. During the operation, Hong Kong Customs detected six relevant cases and seized a batch of smuggled or regulated food items, including approximately 260 kilograms of frozen meat, 170kg of hairy crabs and 600 eggs, with an estimated total value of about \$200,000.

On August 8, 9, and 19, Hong Kong Customs, acting on intelligence analysis, speculated that some persons would illegally import frozen meat into Hong Kong from the Mainland side of Chung Ying Street in Sha Tou Kok. Customs officers then took action, intercepting and arresting three suspicious persons, aged between 38 and 59, entering Hong Kong on Chung Ying Street. A batch of suspected illegally imported frozen meat was seized on-site. The cases were handed over to the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) for follow-up investigation.

Later, on September 3, 23, and 26, Hong Kong Customs intercepted three vehicles, declared as carrying vegetables, at the Man Kam To Control Point and found a batch of unmanifested goods, including frozen meat, eggs, and hairy crabs, in the cargo compartments. Three male drivers, aged between 53 and 60, were arrested. They have been released on bail pending further investigation by Hong Kong Customs and the CFS.

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.

Under the Import and Export (General) Regulations, it is an offence to import frozen or chilled meat into Hong Kong without an import licence issued by the FEHD. An offender shall be liable on conviction to a fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for two years.

According to the Imported Game, Meat, Poultry and Eggs Regulations (Cap. 132AK), it is an offence to bring any game, meat, poultry or eggs into Hong Kong without a health certificate issued by an issuing entity of the place of origin and/or an import permission granted by the FEHD. An offender shall be liable on conviction to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).

