

# Pickled mustard sample detected with excessive preservative and in breach of food labelling regulations

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (December 18) that a prepackaged pickled mustard sample was found to contain a preservative, sulphur dioxide, at a level exceeding the legal limit, and the preservative was not declared on the food label. The CFS is following up on the case.

Details of the product are as follows:

Product name: Pickled Mustard  
Product brand: Not available in English  
Place of Origin: China  
Manufacturer: Not available in English  
Net weight: 280 grams  
Best-before date: December 31, 2019

"The CFS collected the abovementioned sample from Kai Bo Food Supermarket in Cheung Sha Wan for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained sulphur dioxide at a level of 438 parts per million (ppm), exceeding the legal limit of 100 ppm. The preservative was also not declared on the food label of the sample," the spokesman said.

The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularities and instructed it to stop sale, remove from shelves the affected batch of the product and initiate a recall. Enquiries about the recall can be made to the vendor's hotline at 3987 8000 during office hours. The CFS is also tracing the source of the affected product.

Sulphur dioxide is a commonly used preservative in a variety of foods including dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables and meat products. This preservative is of low toxicity. As it is water soluble, most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headache and nausea after consumption.

The spokesman reminded the food trade that the use of preservatives in food must comply with the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD). Furthermore, the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap 132W) require that the food ingredients of all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong should be listed out on the list of ingredients. Offenders are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and

take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.