

Prepackaged fresh bean curd sticks sample in breach of food labelling regulation

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (December 13) that a sample of prepackaged fresh bean curd sticks was found to contain sulphur dioxide, a preservative which is allowed to be used in certain foods, but the functional class and the name of the additive were not declared on the food label. Members of the public should not consume the affected batch of the product. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batch of the product immediately if they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: FRESH BEAN CURD STICKS
Brand: NEW MOON BRAND
Place of origin: China
Net weight: 200 grams
Use By: April 25, 2024
Sole agent: NGAR YAT IND CO LTD

"The CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a supermarket in Kwun Tong for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained sulphur dioxide. The functional class and the name of the additive were not declared on the food label of the sample," a spokesman for the CFS said.

"The CFS has informed the sole agent concerned of the irregularities and instructed them to stop sales and remove from shelves the affected batch of the product. The sole agent concerned has initiated a recall according to the CFS's instructions. Members of the public may call its hotline at 2692 8961 during office hours for enquiries about the recall," the spokesman added.

Sulphur dioxide is a preservative which can be used in a variety of foods including dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables and salted fish products. Sulphur dioxide is water soluble, and most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headaches 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 for all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong containing sulphite in a concentration of 10 parts per million or more, the functional class of the sulphite and its name shall be specified in 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. The investigation is ongoing.