

Prepackaged popcorn product may contain allergen (milk)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (September 3) said that a kind of prepackaged popcorn product manufactured in the United Kingdom might contain an allergen, milk, but it was not declared on the product's food label. Consumers who are allergic to milk are advised not to eat the affected product. The trade should also stop using or selling the product concerned immediately should they possess it.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Cinema Sweet Popcorn
Brand: The Big Night In
Place of origin: United Kingdom
Producer: Thomas Tucker Ltd
Importer: Chef's Garden Ltd
Net weight: 250 grams per bucket
Best-before date: November 21, 2019

"The CFS, through its Food Incident Surveillance System, noted a notice issued by the Food Standards Agency of the UK that several kinds of popcorn products (including the above-mentioned product) are under recall because they may contain milk but the ingredient is undeclared on the food label. A related notification was also received from the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed of the European Commission, indicating that the above local importer had imported the above affected batch of product into Hong Kong," a spokesman for the CFS said.

Upon learning of the incident, the CFS immediately followed up with the importer concerned as well as major local importers and retailers. Preliminary investigation confirmed that the importer concerned had imported the above batch of the affected product which was on sale in its retail outlets and it had already stopped sale and removed from shelves the affected batch of product and initiated a recall after being notified by the supplier. Members of the public may call its hotline at 2501 5811 during office hours for enquiries about the recall.

The spokesman advised consumers who are allergic to milk to stop consuming the product concerned. They should seek medical treatment if they feel unwell after consuming it.

"People who are allergic to milk may have immunologic response like vomiting, diarrhoea and rash upon consumption of food containing this allergen. In severe cases, anaphylactic shock may even develop. As for other members of the public, generally speaking, they would not be subject to such reactions when the food in question is consumed," he said.

The Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap 132W) require that all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong should list out the food ingredients in its list of ingredients. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment.

The CFS will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.