

Sample of prepackaged vegetarian bean curd roll detected with non-permitted preservative

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 5) announced that a sample of prepackaged vegetarian bean curd roll was found to contain sorbic acid, a preservative not permitted to be added in soy protein powders and mixes, and the preservative was not declared on its food label, breaching the food labelling regulations. The CFS is following up on the incident.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Not available in English
Place of origin: China
Manufacturer: Huizhou Huamei Food Co Ltd
General agent: Chung Hing Development Co
Net weight: 110 grams per pack
Best-before date: July 28, 2019

"Following up on cases referred by a relevant organisation, the CFS collected the above-mentioned sample from a retail outlet in Tsuen Wan for testing. The test result showed that the sample contained sorbic acid at a level of 88 parts per million. According to the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD), sorbic acid is not permitted to be added in soy protein powders and mixes," a CFS spokesman said.

The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of the product. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be initiated.

The spokesman said, "Sorbic acid is a preservative of low-toxicity. Based on the level detected in the above-mentioned sample, adverse health effects will not be caused under usual consumption."

The spokesman reminded the food trade that the use of preservatives in food must comply with the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap 132BD). Offenders of the regulation are liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment upon conviction.

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