

Import of poultry meat and products from areas in Germany and US suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (February 5) that in view of notifications from the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in the District of Schwalm-Eder-Kreis of the State of Hessen in Germany and the Daviess County of the State of Indiana in the United States (US), the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above-mentioned areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that according to the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong imported about 250 tonnes of frozen poultry meat from Germany, and about 37 770 tonnes of chilled and frozen poultry meat and about 83.84 million poultry eggs from the US last year.

"The CFS has contacted the German and American authorities over the issues and will closely monitor information issued by the WOAH and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

Provisional statistics of restaurant receipts and purchases for fourth quarter of 2023 and whole year of 2023

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released the latest provisional figures on restaurant receipts and purchases today (February 5).

The value of total receipts of the restaurants sector in the fourth quarter of 2023, provisionally estimated at \$27.4 billion, increased by 7.5% over a year earlier. Over the same period, the provisional estimate of the value of total purchases by restaurants increased by 7.6% to \$9.1 billion.

After netting out the effect of price changes over the same period, the provisional estimate of the volume of total restaurant receipts increased by 3.9% in the fourth quarter of 2023 compared with a year earlier.

Analysed by type of restaurant and comparing the fourth quarter of 2023 with the fourth quarter of 2022, total receipts of Chinese restaurants

increased by 10.4% in value and 6.5% in volume. Total receipts of non-Chinese restaurants increased by 2.1% in value, but decreased by 0.8% in volume. Total receipts of fast food shops increased by 7.6% in value and 3.6% in volume. Total receipts of bars increased by 19.7% in value and 16.1% in volume. As for miscellaneous eating and drinking places, total receipts increased by 13.5% in value and 9.2% in volume.

Based on the seasonally adjusted series, the provisional estimate of total restaurant receipts increased by 2.9% in value, but decreased by 0.7% in volume in the fourth quarter of 2023 compared with the preceding quarter.

For 2023 as a whole, the value of total receipts of the restaurants sector was provisionally estimated at \$109.5 billion, increased by 26.1% in value and 21.6% in volume compared with the whole year of 2022. Over the same period, the provisional estimate of the value of total purchases of restaurants increased by 23.2% to \$35.8 billion.

Analysed by type of restaurant and comparing the whole year of 2023 with the whole year of 2022, total receipts of Chinese restaurants increased by 34.2% in value and 29.4% in volume. Total receipts of non-Chinese restaurants increased by 22.8% in value and 18.6% in volume. Total receipts of fast food shops increased by 18.0% in value and 13.4% in volume. Total receipts of bars increased by 76.9% in value and 70.6% in volume. As for miscellaneous eating and drinking places, total receipts increased by 21.6% in value and 17.1% in volume.

To facilitate further understanding of the short-term business performance of the restaurants sector, statistics in respect of the restaurant receipts and purchases in individual months of the reference quarter are also compiled.

Analysed by month, it was provisionally estimated that the value of total receipts of the restaurants sector increased by 7.0%, 10.4% and 5.4% respectively in October, November and December 2023, compared with the corresponding months in 2022.

After discounting the effect of price changes, it was provisionally estimated that the volume of total restaurant receipts increased by 3.2%, 6.7% and 2.0% respectively in October, November and December 2023, compared with the corresponding months in 2022.

Commentary

A Government spokesman said that business of restaurants continued to recover in the fourth quarter of 2023. The value of total restaurant receipts increased by 7.5% over a year earlier, or by 2.9% over the preceding quarter after seasonal adjustment. For 2023 as a whole, the value of total restaurant receipts rebounded sharply by 26.1%.

Looking ahead, the expected further recovery in inbound tourism should benefit business of restaurants. Continued growth in domestic consumption

driven by improving household income and the Government's various measures should also provide support.

Further information

Table 1 presents the revised figures of restaurant receipts by type of restaurant and total purchases by the restaurants sector for the third quarter of 2023 as well as the provisional figures for the fourth quarter of 2023.

Table 2 and Table 3 present the revised value and volume indices respectively of restaurant receipts by type of restaurant for the third quarter of 2023 and the provisional indices for the fourth quarter of 2023.

Table 4 presents the year-on-year rate of change in total restaurant receipts in value and volume terms based on the original quarterly series, as well as the quarter-to-quarter rate of change based on the seasonally adjusted series.

The revised figures on restaurant receipts and purchases for the fourth quarter of 2023 (with breakdown by month) will be released through the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode540.html) and relevant publications of the Department from March 20, 2024.

The classification of restaurants follows the Hong Kong Standard Industrial Classification (HSIC) Version 2.0, which is used in various economic surveys for classifying economic units into different industry classes.

More detailed statistics are given in the "Report on Quarterly Survey of Restaurant Receipts and Purchases". Users can browse and download the publication at the website of the C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1080002&scode=540).

Users who have enquiries about the survey results may contact the Distribution Services Statistics Section of C&SD (Tel: 3903 7401; email: qsr@censtatd.gov.hk).

[Hong Kong Monetary Authority tenders of Exchange Fund Bills to be held on February 9](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

Tenders of Exchange Fund Bills to be held on February 9, 2024:

Tender date : February 9, 2024
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : M2404
Issue date : February 14, 2024
Maturity date : March 13, 2024
Tenor : 28 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$2,000 MN

Tender date : February 9, 2024
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q2407
Issue date : February 14, 2024
Maturity date : May 16, 2024
Tenor : 92 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$59,887 MN

Tender date : February 9, 2024
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : H2436
Issue date : February 14, 2024
Maturity date : August 14, 2024
Tenor : 182 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$16,000 MN

Tender date : February 9, 2024
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Y2486
Issue date : February 14, 2024
Maturity date : February 12, 2025
Tenor : 364 Days
Amount on offer : HK\$3,000 MN

[Fraudulent social media accounts and phishing instant messages related to Airstar Bank Limited](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) wishes to alert members of the public to a press release issued by Airstar Bank Limited relating to fraudulent social media accounts and phishing instant messages, which have been reported to the HKMA. A hyperlink to the press release is available on the [HKMA website](#).

The HKMA wishes to remind the public that banks will not send SMS or emails with embedded hyperlinks which direct them to the banks' websites to carry out transactions. They will not ask customers for sensitive personal information, such as login passwords or one-time password, by phone, email or SMS (including via embedded hyperlinks).

Anyone who has provided his or her personal information, or who has conducted any financial transactions, through or in response to the social media accounts or instant messages concerned, should contact the bank using the contact information provided in the press release, and report the matter to the Police by contacting the Crime Wing Information Centre of the Hong Kong Police Force at 2860 5012.

[Transcript of remarks by SCST at media session \(with video\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, at a media session on Tatler XFEST Hong Kong, Hong Kong Team vs Inter Miami CF today (February 5):

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism: An exhibition match between Hong Kong Team and Inter Miami CF was held at the Hong Kong Stadium yesterday (February 4). The Hong Kong Team played very well. However, as Messi did not play in the match, we, the Government, like the many fans, especially those visitors who travelled to Hong Kong for the match, were deeply disappointed.

The match was organised by Tatler Asia, and the Government has provided matching fund under the "M" Mark system. One of the key terms of our funding agreement with Tatler Asia was for Messi to participate in the match for at least 45 minutes, subject to fitness and safety considerations. Yesterday before the match began, the organiser, Tatler Asia, still reaffirmed that Messi was going to play in the second half. When the second half began without Messi, we immediately followed up with the organiser, Tatler Asia, requesting them to liaise with Inter Miami CF to arrange for Messi to play as soon as possible, but was later informed by Tatler Asia that Messi could not play due to injury. We reiterated our request for Messi to play in the match about 10 minutes before the match ended. The organiser, Tatler Asia, confirmed that Messi could not play. We therefore immediately requested them to explore other remedies, such as Messi appearing on the field to interact

with his fans, and receiving the trophy. Unfortunately, as you all see, these did not work out.

We will take into account the experience of this incident and will further work with the Major Sports Events Committee to further improve our "M" Mark system. We will continue our efforts to promote more major events to be held in Hong Kong.

Reporter: First of all, I would like to know how the Government handled the issue with Tatler about the \$16 million subsidies. Has it all been paid or has it been called back in this situation? Has the Government cancelled originally scheduled event for the football team?

Second question is that because the Government subsidised that large amount of public money for this event, has the Government feel its responsibility in due diligence and supervision of the overall organising of this event? Because Messi getting injured is not a secret; it has been reported in the news, but seems the Government has not been following the situation, and made sure that he actually can show up at the pitch.

Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism: Firstly, for the sponsorship that we have agreed to provide for this event, we haven't paid any money yet. I think in the coming weeks, we will further liaise with the organiser Tatler Asia on the overall performance of the whole event, and then we will make the decision on how to deal with the sponsorship.

On other event, there will be no other event organised by us today. I understand that the team will be leaving later this afternoon.

About supervision, I think we have been following the practices that we have been using in the past for this event. We monitor closely the overall event. As I mentioned in my opening remarks, our team has been following up with Tatler Asia over the past few weeks, and has been helping them to liaise with different departments. In the process, of course we would keep ourselves abreast of the developments. But for this particular case, if you are talking about injury, we could not tell well in advance whether a particular player could play unless it is very serious. So, in this particular case, we will follow up with Tatler Asia to see when they were aware of the injury of Messi and also their dealing with the football team. But at this stage, we cannot tell for sure the real arrangement between the two parties.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)