

Pesticide residue exceeds legal limit in two spinach samples

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 8) announced that two spinach samples were found to have a pesticide residue at levels exceeding the legal limit. The CFS is following up on the cases.

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS collected the two spinach samples from two supermarkets in Tsuen Wan and Lai Chi Kok respectively for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test results showed that the samples contained chlorpyrifos at respective levels of 0.2 parts per million (ppm) and 0.41ppm, exceeding the maximum residue limit (MRL) of 0.1ppm.

"Based on the levels of pesticide residue detected in the samples, adverse health effects would not be caused under usual consumption."

Generally speaking, to reduce pesticide residues in vegetables, members of the public can rinse vegetables thoroughly under clean running water, and scrub produce with hard surfaces with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances including pesticides and contaminants from the surface and the crevices, when appropriate.

Any person who imports, manufactures or sells any food not in compliance with the requirements of the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap 132CM) concerning pesticide residues commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

Since the regulation came into effect on August 1, 2014, the CFS has taken over 145 400 samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for testing for pesticide residues. Together with the unsatisfactory sample announced today, a total of 221 food samples (including 213 vegetable and fruit samples) have been detected as having excessive pesticide residues. The overall unsatisfactory rate is less than 0.2 per cent.

The spokesman added that excessive pesticide residues in food may arise from the trade not observing Good Agricultural Practice, e.g. using excessive pesticides and/or not allowing sufficient time for pesticides to decompose before harvesting. The MRLs of pesticide residues in food set in the Regulation are not safety indicators. They are the maximum concentrations of pesticide residues to be permitted in a food commodity under Good Agricultural Practice when applying pesticides. In this connection, consumption of food with pesticide residues higher than the MRLs will not necessarily lead to any adverse health effects.

The CFS will follow up on the unsatisfactory results, including tracing the sources of the food in question and taking samples for testing. Investigation is ongoing.

[HK university students to visit Shanghai financial institutions on exchange programme \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr James Lau, today (June 8) encouraged local university students embarking on an exchange programme to Shanghai to enhance their understanding of the financial systems and market developments in the two places.

Officiating at the launch ceremony of the Cross-boundary Study Tour for Post-secondary Financial Talents 2018 (the Scheme), Mr Lau said the Scheme is now in its seventh year and he was happy to know that it had been well received by the participating students and financial institutions.

He noted that the Scheme had nourished many high-calibre financial talents since its inception, and said he was glad to see many from the past cohorts had chosen to pursue their career in the financial sector after graduation. He further appealed to the students to make use of the opportunity in Shanghai to see for themselves the latest developments of the financial industry and the working culture of financial institutions in the Mainland, with a view to better equipping themselves for future career development.

Mr Lau also encouraged the students to get to understand more the national development strategies, including the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area development plan and the Belt and Road Initiative, and how Hong Kong's financial industry could tap these opportunities. He said that Hong Kong, being an international financial centre and the world's largest offshore Renminbi business hub, could leverage on its rich experience in financial services, including capital raising and financing as well as asset and risk management, to serve enterprises in the Bay Area and the Belt and Road economies.

Also speaking at the launch ceremony, the Executive Director of the Hong Kong Federation of Youth Groups, Mr Andy Ho, said the Federation is glad to be the assisting organisation again this year. He encouraged the students to make full use of the Scheme through networking and exchanges with instructors of their attached financial institutions for career development in related industries.

This year, 32 students from nine universities in Hong Kong are taking part in the Scheme. They will depart for Shanghai on June 18 for a six-week exchange programme comprising attachment to financial institutions for about five weeks; visits to government organisations, financial regulators and exchanges; and exchange activities with Shanghai students. Reciprocally, a

group of Shanghai post-secondary financial students will visit Hong Kong in late July.

Hong Kong and Shanghai signed the Memorandum of Understanding Concerning Advancing Hong Kong-Shanghai Financial Co-operation (MOU) in 2010. Both sides agreed to strengthen co-operation in four areas, namely the development of the securities markets, the development of the bond markets, the mutual establishment of financial institutions, and the training and exchange of financial talents. Under the MOU, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and the Shanghai Municipal Government Financial Services Office jointly launched the Scheme in 2012.



[Government to sell site in Yau Tong by public tender](#)

The Lands Department (LandsD) announced today (June 8) that a site, New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 6593 at Ko Chiu Road, Yau Tong, Kowloon, in the 2018-19 Land Sale Programme will be disposed of by public tender. The tender invitation for the lot will commence on June 15 and close on August 10.

New Kowloon Inland Lot No. 6593 has a site area of about 3,680 square metres and is designated for non-industrial (excluding godown, hotel and petrol filling station) purposes. The minimum gross floor area and the maximum gross floor area are 19,872 square metres and 33,120 square metres respectively.

Land sale documents including the Form of Tender, the Tender Notice, the Conditions of Sale and the sale plan of the lot will be available for downloading from the LandsD website (www.landsd.gov.hk), and the sale plan will be available for distribution and inspection by the public from June 15, when the particulars of the tender will also be gazetted.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (June 8) released the latest grading of water quality for 37 gazetted beaches and one non-gazetted beach (Discovery Bay) that are open for swimming.

Twenty-five beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), 12 as Fair (Grade 2) and one as Very Poor (Grade 4).

Grade 1 beaches are:

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Grade 2 Beaches

Grade 2 beaches are:

Anglers' Beach
Approach Beach

Hoi Mei Wan Beach
Kadoorie Beach

Butterfly Beach	Lido Beach
Casam Beach	Ma Wan Tung Wan Beach
Castle Peak Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Clear Water Bay First Beach	Ting Kau Beach

Grade 4 beach is:

Discovery Bay

Compared with the grading released last week, Cafeteria New Beach has been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1, and Lido Beach and Ting Kau Beach from Grade 3 to Grade 2. Silverstrand Beach has been changed from Grade 1 to Grade 2 and Discovery Bay from Grade 1 to Grade 4.

"The deterioration of water quality at Discovery Bay was due to the heavy rain yesterday (June 7), while the changes in other beaches are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," the EPD spokesman said.

The EPD spokesman also reminded members of the public that water quality could be temporarily affected during and after periods of heavy rain. Bathers should avoid swimming at beaches for up to three days after a storm or heavy rainfall.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the department's websites on Beach Water Quality (www.beachwq.gov.hk and www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Strategic Public Policy Research Funding Scheme 2018-19 opens for application

The Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office (PICO) today (June 8) announced that the Strategic Public Policy Research (SPPR) Funding Scheme 2018-19 is now open for application.

The SPPR Funding Scheme, together with the Public Policy Research (PPR) Funding Scheme, both managed by the PICO, are unique in Hong Kong in that they are the only government-subsidised funding schemes dedicated to fostering and supporting public policy research in Hong Kong. The total annual provision for the two schemes is \$30 million. Both schemes aim to promote public policy research and evidence-based research to facilitate public policy discussion. Specifically, the SPPR Funding Scheme aims to support longer-term public policy research on strategic themes, build up research capacity, and facilitate collaboration among institutions/think tanks on the strategic themes. Applications for the PPR Funding Scheme are accepted throughout the year, while applications for the SPPR Funding Scheme are invited once a year.

Nine strategic themes have been identified for the SPPR Funding Scheme 2018-19, namely (a) Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area; (b) Belt and Road Initiative; (c) Economic and Trade Co-operation Zones; (d) Big Data and/or Smart City; (e) Re-industrialisation; (f) Sharing Economy; (g) Land and Housing Strategy; (h) Youth Development; and (i) Challenges of Population Ageing.

A sum ranging from \$3 million to \$5 million may be granted to each successful SPPR project for a research period of three to five years.

The SPPR Funding Scheme 2018-19 is open for application until August 3, 2018.

Assessments will be conducted by an Assessment Panel set up by the PICO which is chaired by and comprises experienced academics. The Panel will determine the assessment criteria and details of the two funding schemes. Applications will be assessed by the Panel as well as local and non-local reviewers, who are academics and experts outside the Panel. Suggestions and views of relevant government bureaux/departments will also be sought for reference by the Panel. A declaration of interests system is in place to ensure that the assessments are fair and impartial.

Research quality and the strategic relevance to the public policy development of Hong Kong are the primary considerations in evaluating research proposals under the SPPR Funding Scheme. In considering a research proposal, the Assessment Panel will also take into account factors such as deliverables of the research, the research team's capability, the feasibility and practicality of the proposal, the implementation schedule, and the proposed budget. Institutional support towards capacity building in public policy research (e.g. infrastructure support or matching funds) and any external funding sources and support will also be taken into consideration.

Details of the SPPR Funding Scheme including eligibility criteria, the strategic themes, composition of the Assessment Panel, application method and other related information, are available on the PICO website (www.pico.gov.hk/en/PRFS).