

## **Import of poultry meat and products from Saitama Prefecture in Japan suspended**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (November 30) that in view of a notification from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5 avian influenza in Saitama Prefecture in Japan, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the area 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 1 080 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and about 200.84 million poultry eggs from Japan in the first nine months of this year.

"The CFS has contacted the Japanese authority over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the World Organisation for Animal Health and the relevant authorities on the avian influenza outbreak. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

---

## **Government announces arrival of new generation XBB vaccine**

The Government today (November 30) announced that the first shipment of about 100 000 doses of the new generation XBB mRNA vaccine (Comirnaty Omicron XBB.1.5 30mcg/dose) has arrived in Hong Kong. Government staff had immediately carried out stringent checking and inspection in accordance with established procedures to ensure that the vaccine complies with the product specifications and that the transportation process followed the relevant cold-chain requirements. The vaccines have been put in validated ultra-low temperature freezers to ensure its proper storage in accordance with the temperature specified by the drug manufacturer.

â€‹The Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health discussed the use of the new generation XBB mRNA vaccine in a meeting on October 11 and experts considered that the XBB vaccine can provide better protection. In view of the limited local supply of the XBB vaccine, the Government will arrange the vaccination

of high-risk individuals in batches. Those with higher risks, i.e. residential care home residents and elderly aged 65 or above, would be accorded priority to receive the first batch of XBB mRNA vaccines. The details of the vaccination arrangements will be announced early next month.

---

## [Effective Exchange Rate Index](#)

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Thursday, November 30, 2023 is 104.1 (down 0.1 against yesterday's index).

---

## [Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan](#)

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt, and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on November 29 to noon today (November 30), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 116 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" ([www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme\\_rafs/programme\\_rafs\\_fc\\_01\\_30\\_Nucl](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nucl))

[ear\\_Event\\_and\\_Food\\_Safety.html](#)).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website ([www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological\\_testing/Radiological\\_Test.html](http://www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html)).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website ([www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html](http://www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html)).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 17 279 samples of food imported from Japan (including 11 436 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 4 862 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

---

## [Hong Kong Customs detects incoming passenger drug trafficking case at airport \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs on November 28 detected an incoming passenger drug trafficking case at Hong Kong International Airport and seized about 580 grams of suspected heroin with an estimated market value of about \$460,000.

A 31-year-old male passenger arrived in Hong Kong from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, on that day. During customs clearance, Customs officers found 15 pieces of suspected heroin with a total weight of about 420g strapped around his body. He was also suspected to have foreign objects concealed inside his body cavity. The man was thus arrested immediately and escorted to the hospital for examination.

Upon examination, a doctor confirmed that foreign objects were concealed inside the passenger's body cavity. As at 1pm today (November 30), the arrested person has discharged 31 pellets of suspected heroin weighing about 160g in total.

A holding charge with one count of trafficking in a dangerous drug has been laid against the arrested man. The case will be brought up at the West Kowloon Magistrates' Courts tomorrow (December 1).

Following the resumption of normal travel and exchanges with the Mainland and other parts of the world, the number of visitors to Hong Kong

has also been increasing steadily. Customs will continue to apply a risk assessment approach and focus on selecting passengers from high-risk regions for clearance to combat transnational drug trafficking activities.

Under the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, trafficking in a dangerous drug is a serious offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$5 million and life imprisonment.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account ([crimereport@customs.gov.hk](mailto:crimereport@customs.gov.hk)) or online form ([eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002](http://eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002)).

