

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 9 to noon today (November 10), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 169 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_Nuclear_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).

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).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 13 407 samples of food imported from Japan (including 8 895 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 3 860 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Approved URA Kwun Tong Town Centre – Main Site Development Scheme Plan referred back for amendment

The Town Planning Board announced today (November 10) that the Secretary for Development has referred the approved Urban Renewal Authority (URA) Kwun Tong Town Centre (KTTC) – Main Site Development Scheme Plan (DSP) to the Board for amendment to reflect the latest land use proposals.

The DSP incorporating the respective amendments will be exhibited for public inspection under the provisions of the Town Planning Ordinance.

The URA KTCC – Main Site DSP was last approved by the Chief Executive in Council in July 2008.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (November 10) released the latest grading of water quality for nine gazetted beaches that are open for swimming in November.

Five beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1), three as Fair (Grade 2) and one as Poor (Grade 3).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Clear Water Bay Second Beach
Golden Beach
Middle Bay Beach

Repulse Bay Beach
St Stephen's Beach

Grade 2 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach

Silverstrand Beach

Grade 3 beach is:

Silver Mine Bay Beach

Compared with the grading released last week, Clear Water Bay Second Beach has been upgraded from Grade 2 to Grade 1. Silver Mine Bay Beach has been changed from Grade 2 to Grade 3.

"The changes are generally within the normal range of fluctuation of the bacteriological water quality of the beaches," an EPD spokesman said.

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), 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.

While the ratings represent the general water quality at the beaches, the EPD spokesman 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 tropical cyclone or heavy rainfall.

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 EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666. Members of the public can also obtain the latest daily water quality forecast information for all beaches that are open for swimming through the Beach Water Quality Forecast mobile application (available for download from: www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQApp) or the dedicated beach water quality forecast page (www.epd.gov.hk/en/BWQForecast) on the EPD's beach thematic website.

Auction for Fong Ma Po New Year Fair stalls at Lam Tsuen in Tai Po to be held on November 24

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (November 10) that stalls at the 2024 Fong Ma Po (FMP) New Year Fair at Lam Tsuen in Tai Po will be put up for open auction on November 24 (Friday).

A spokesman for the FEHD said the annual FMP New Year Fair will be held for 15 consecutive days from February 10 to 24, 2024. A total of 22 dry goods stalls and six wet goods stalls will be put up for auction, with upset prices of \$780 and \$770 respectively.

The auction will be held at the Assembly Hall, 2/F, Lai Chi Kok Government Offices, 19 Lai Wan Road, Lai Chi Kok, Kowloon, on November 24

(Friday), from 2pm until completion of the auction.

Bidders for FMP New Year Fair stalls must be at least 18 years old and ordinarily reside in Hong Kong. Anyone can bid for more than one stall. A bidder must pay the bid price and register in person with his or her own name as the licensee of the stall immediately after successfully bidding for a stall. The bidder is also required to sign at once a licence agreement with the FEHD, or he/she will forfeit the rights to operate the stall.

The FMP New Year Fair site will be made available to the licensees three days in advance of the fair (February 7 to 9, 2024) for the setting up of stalls. In the event of any unforeseeable incident that will result in shortening of the whole licence period (including the duration for setting up stalls and the business period of the fair), the Government has the right to postpone the commencement date and shorten the duration of the period. The bidding price (licence fee) paid will be refunded to the successful bidder on a pro-rata basis without interest.

The FEHD reminded licensees that the stalls are solely for the purpose of selling and promoting the sale of the permitted commodities, and no other activities are allowed in the licensed area. If the FEHD considers that any activity conducted by the licensee to publicise, promote, display, show or sell any permitted commodities in the venue is unlawful, contrary to the interest of national security, immoral or incompatible with the object of the FMP New Year Fair, the FEHD is entitled to direct the licensee to stop conducting such activity and the licensee must immediately comply with such direction.

Stall licensees should not destroy, damage or abandon any unsold commodities at or in the vicinity of the stall. They must completely remove the stall structure and all paraphernalia, together with all refuse, debris and unsold commodities (whether damaged or otherwise) from the licensed area before 6pm on February 24, 2024.

According to the licence agreement, except inside designated stalls, licensees shall not keep, store or use helium cylinders in the licensed area. Whereas licensees of the designated stalls could keep, store or use helium cylinders in the licensed area, the quantity of helium should be such that a licence is not required pursuant to the Dangerous Goods (Application and Exemption) Regulation 2012 (Cap. 295E), i.e. equivalent to 150 litres of helium. Sales of floating LED glowing balloons and aquarium fish by stall licensees are prohibited at the FMP fair.

In addition, as stated in the licence agreement, for wet goods stalls with a height of more than 3 metres from ground level, the licensee must, at his own cost, provide the FEHD with a certificate issued by an authorised person, a registered structural engineer, or a competent person under the Construction Sites (Safety) Regulations (Cap. 59I) to certify the structural safety of the stall structure before the FMP New Year Fair is opened to the public. The height of wet goods stalls must not exceed 4.5m from ground level.

Successful bidders shall comply with all the stipulations and provisions as set out in the licence agreement. Otherwise, the FEHD is entitled to terminate the agreement and the licensee shall immediately vacate the stall.

Details of the 2024 FMP New Year Fair such as the public notice, the location and layout of the fair venue, commodities allowed for sale at the fair stalls, open auction arrangements and related rules, as well as a sample of the licence agreement, are available on the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk). For enquiries, please call the FEHD's Tai Po District Environmental Hygiene Office at 3183 9162 or 2657 1137.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, November 10, 2023 is 106.4 (up 0.3 against yesterday's index).