

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 May 6 to noon today (May 7), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 198 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 48 762 samples of food imported from Japan (including 31 745 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 12 734 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

Fresh beef and pork samples found to contain sulphur dioxide

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (May 7) that a fresh beef sample and two fresh pork samples were found to contain sulphur dioxide, a preservative which is not permitted to be used in fresh meat. The CFS is following up on the cases.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS took the fresh beef sample from a fresh provision shop (FPS) at Tin Shui Market in Tin Shui Wai, and the fresh pork samples from a FPS at Homantin Market in Kowloon City and a supermarket in Yau Tong respectively for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test results showed that the fresh beef sample contained sulphur dioxide at a level of 812 parts per million (ppm), and the two fresh pork samples contained sulphur dioxide at levels of 10 ppm and 11 ppm respectively. The CFS is following up with the FPSs and the supermarket concerned about the irregularities."

According to the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD), it is an offence to add sulphur dioxide to fresh or chilled meat. The maximum penalty is a \$50,000 fine and six months' imprisonment.

Sulphur dioxide is a preservative which can be used in a variety of foods including dried vegetables, dried fruits, pickled vegetables and salted fish products, but under the Regulation it is not permitted in fresh or chilled meat. Individual meat traders have been found illegally using sulphur dioxide to make meat look fresher. Sulphur dioxide is water soluble, and most of it can be removed through washing and cooking. However, susceptible individuals who are allergic to this preservative may experience breathing difficulties, headaches and nausea after consumption.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to comply with the law and not to sell fresh or chilled meat adulterated with sulphur dioxide. Members of the public should purchase meat from reliable market stalls or fresh provision shops. They should avoid buying or consuming meat which is unnaturally red and maintain a balanced diet to avoid malnutrition or excessive exposure to chemicals from a small range of food items.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the cases and take appropriate action. Investigations are ongoing.

LCSD to launch “Harmonious Journeys: Classical Music Excursion” lecture series

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department will launch the "Harmonious Journeys: Classical Music Excursion" lecture series from June to August. Hosted by seasoned music practitioner Jimmy Shiu, the lecture series will introduce different classical music masterpieces and analyse their rhythms, instrumental combinations, lyrics and more in a lively manner, allowing audiences to embark on a journey to explore the world of classical music, thereby appreciating the art and experiencing the joy it brings.

Details of the 10 lectures are as follows:

Lecture 1: A Parade of Golden Melodies

Date: June 5 (Wednesday)

Content: Featuring the works of Mozart, Bizet, Tchaikovsky, Grieg, Rachmaninov and more, to analyse the power and beauty of timeless melodies.

Lecture 2: The World of Tone Colours

Date: June 12 (Wednesday)

Content: Introducing the maestros of orchestration, such as Rimsky-Korsakov, Ravel and Respighi, to explore their use of instrumental positions and combinations, as well as tonal ranges and mutes.

Lecture 3: Rhythm: The Unsung Hero

Date: June 19 (Wednesday)

Content: Using Mozart's "Symphony No. 40" as an introduction to discuss the rhythms of his works, and learning about various compositions named after rhythms.

Lecture 4: In Harmony

Date: June 26 (Wednesday)

Content: To analyse the harmonic systems in Western music, and how they bring different musical resonances and layers, and become the foundation for producing counterpoint works.

Lecture 5: A Musical Existence

Date: July 10 (Wednesday)

Content: To introduce classical music masterpieces with themes on different stages of life, such as "Land of Hope and Glory", "Wedding March" and "Canon in D Major".

Lecture 6: The Storyteller

Date: July 17 (Wednesday)

Content: To analyse famous compositions such as Vivaldi's "The Four Seasons", Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" and Berlioz's "Symphonie fantastique", how to tell stories vividly through music.

Lecture 7: Virtuosity Unlimited!!

Date: July 24 (Wednesday)

Content: To analyse the difficulties involved and the interpretative skills required in performing the selected virtuoso works by Mozart, Paganini and Chopin.

Lecture 8: A Condensed Music History

Date: July 31 (Wednesday)

Content: To give an overview of the history of Western music, from the medieval period to the modern time, and related terminology.

Lecture 9: The Power of Words!

Date: August 7 (Wednesday)

Content: To explore how composers are inspired by lyrics, and create moving pieces by skilfully combining lyrics with music. A professional singer will be invited to give a live demonstration.

Lecture 10: The Land, the Music, the Nation

Date: August 14 (Wednesday)

Content: To explore how musical elements such as scales and instruments formulate the musical languages that are rich in local characteristics.

Shiu holds a music degree from the Hong Kong Baptist University, with a major in Composition. He then pursued further studies at the University of Sheffield, the United Kingdom, where he earned a double Master's degree in Composition and Vocal Performance. He has been invited to give lectures and serve as a master of ceremonies at concerts. Shiu has published several works related to music appreciation, composition of sacred music (original and arrangements).

All lectures will be conducted in Cantonese and will start at 7.30pm at the Lecture Hall of the Hong Kong Science Museum. Tickets priced at \$80 (for each lecture, with free seating) are now available at URB TIX (www.urbtix.hk). For telephone bookings, please call 3166 1288. For programme enquiries and concessionary schemes, please call 2268 7321 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/CE/CulturalService/Programme/en/music/programs_1742.html.

Applications for funding from Elder Academy Development Foundation invited

The Committee on Elder Academy Development Foundation (EADF) is inviting a new round of funding applications from school-sponsoring bodies of primary and secondary schools as well as post-secondary institutions interested in setting up elder academies (EAs) and organisations interested in organising activities that encourage elderly learning and inter-generational harmony. Applications should reach the Secretariat of the Committee on the EADF by May 31.

The Elder Academy Scheme aims to promote continuous learning for elderly people, active ageing and inter-generational harmony. The EADF mainly provides funding for primary and secondary schools as well as post-secondary institutions to set up EAs to provide learning opportunities in a school setting for the elderly. Funding is also provided for activities that encourage elderly learning and inter-generational harmony.

Each approved EA in a primary or secondary school will be provided with funding of \$122,000 for implementing a three-year programme. EAs which completed the first three-year programme may apply for funding of \$60,000 for running a two-year programme.

As regards applications for organising EA courses in post-secondary institutions or other applications, the Committee on EADF will assess and decide the funding amount according to the merits of individual proposals.

Details of the funding applications can be downloaded from the website of the EA Scheme (www.elderacademy.org.hk). For enquiries, please contact the Secretariat of the Committee on EADF (Tel: 3655 5861/3655 5007; email: ea@lwb.gov.hk).

Red flag hoisted at Stanley Main Beach

Attention TV/radio announcers:

Please broadcast the following as soon as possible:

Here is an item of interest to swimmers.

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced today (May 7)

that due to big waves, the red flag has been hoisted at Stanley Main Beach in Southern District, Hong Kong Island. Beachgoers are advised not to swim at the beach.