

# 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 February 28 to noon today (February 29), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 160 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](http://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](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 33 400 samples of food imported from Japan (including 22 388 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 9 324 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.

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## Overview of tuberculosis in Hong Kong educational institutions in second half of 2023

The Tuberculosis and Chest Service (TB&CS) of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) announced today (February 29) tuberculosis (TB) notification in educational institutions in the second half of 2023. The CHP urges the public, especially the stakeholders of schools, including school management, students and parents, to maintain personal and environmental hygiene at all times to prevent TB infections.

The DH received 1 654 notifications of TB cases (provisional figure) from July to December 2023, among which 48 cases were aged 3 to 24 (usual school age), accounting for 2.90 per cent of the total notified cases in the same period. The corresponding proportion of TB cases for the above age group in the second half of 2021 and 2022 were 4.32 per cent and 4.12 per cent respectively.

For TB in school settings in Hong Kong, two TB clusters were found from July to December 2023 comprising four cases. The information has been uploaded to the [TB&CS statistics webpage](#).

"Early identification of TB cases and prompt initiation of anti-TB treatment remain the mainstay of TB control. While the TB notification rate in Hong Kong has showed a consistent decrease in the past few decades, TB remains a relatively common disease in Hong Kong. The DH has all along promoted awareness of TB and its prevention in schools, the community and the healthcare sector so as to facilitate early identification, diagnosis and effective control of the disease at its source," a spokesman for the DH said.

The spokesman explained that TB is an airborne disease. When a TB patient coughs or sneezes, small droplets containing the tubercle bacilli are generated and spread in the air. If another person breathes in these small airborne droplets, he or she may be infected with the germ. Prolonged exposure, however, is usually the most important condition for the disease to be effectively transmitted.

The TB&CS of the CHP also conducts contact investigations for the close contacts of the index case where necessary. The TB&CS has also prepared guidelines on handling TB cases in the school setting for reference by schools. For more information, please refer to the guidelines available at [https://www.info.gov.hk/tb\\_chest/en/contents/Guidelines\\_School.htm](https://www.info.gov.hk/tb_chest/en/contents/Guidelines_School.htm).

Members of the public should maintain continued vigilance against TB and adopt a healthy lifestyle with a balanced diet, avoid smoking and alcohol, and have suitable exercise and adequate rest. If symptoms develop,

such as a persistent cough, blood in sputum, weight loss, fever and night sweating, they should seek prompt medical advice. If diagnosed as having TB, a patient should strengthen respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, and receive TB treatment under supervision. For more TB-related information, services and figures, the public may also visit the [website of the TB&CS](#) or call the telephone hotline (2572 6024).

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## **CFS announces food safety report for January**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (February 29) released the findings of its food safety report for last month. The results of about 3 400 food samples tested were found to be satisfactory except for eight unsatisfactory samples which were announced earlier. The overall satisfactory rate was 99.8 per cent.

A CFS spokesman said about 600 food samples were collected for microbiological tests, and about 2 800 samples were taken for chemical and radiation level tests.

The microbiological tests covered pathogens and hygiene indicators; the chemical tests included testing for pesticides, preservatives, metallic contaminants, colouring matters, veterinary drug residues and others; and the radiation level tests included testing for radioactive caesium and iodine in samples collected from imported food from different regions.

The samples comprised about 1 500 samples of vegetables and fruit and their products; about 200 samples of cereals, grains and their products; about 300 samples of meat and poultry and their products; about 600 samples of milk, milk products and frozen confections; about 300 samples of aquatic and related products; and about 500 samples of other food commodities (including beverages, bakery products and snacks).

The eight unsatisfactory samples comprised five prepackaged dried porcini samples with excessive metallic contaminant, a Chinese wolfberry leaf sample and a kiwi fruit sample detected with pesticide residues at levels exceeding the legal limit, and a salty chicken sample found to contain Salmonella.

The CFS has taken follow-up actions on the above-mentioned unsatisfactory samples including informing the vendors concerned of the test results, instructing them to stop selling the affected food items and tracing the sources of the food items in question.

The spokesman reminded the food trade to ensure that food is fit for

human consumption and meets legal requirements. Consumers should patronise reliable shops when buying food and maintain a balanced diet to minimise food risks.

Separately, as the Japanese Government has commenced the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the CFS will continue enhancing the testing on imported Japanese food, and make reference to the risk assessment results to adjust relevant surveillance work in a timely manner. The CSF will announce every working day on its dedicated webpage

([www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme\\_rafs/daily\\_japan\\_nuclear\\_incident\\_s.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/daily_japan_nuclear_incident_s.html)) the radiological test results of the samples of food imported from Japan, with a view to enabling the trade and members of the public to have a better grasp of the latest safety information.

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## **SHYA to visit Guangzhou and Foshan**

The Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Miss Alice Mak, will depart for an official visit to Guangzhou and Foshan tomorrow (March 1). The Commissioner for Youth, Mr Eric Chan, will join the visit.

Miss Mak will call on the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the People's Government of Guangdong Province and the Human Resources and Social Security Department of Guangdong Province to exchange views on youth development between the two places. She will also visit member bases of the Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovation and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Greater Bay Area and attend a sharing session regarding Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area youth innovation and entrepreneurship. Moreover, she will lead members of the Youth Link, who are participating in exchange activities in Guangzhou, to exchange views with local representatives of Hong Kong's chambers of commerce.

Miss Mak will return to Hong Kong on March 2. During her absence, the Under Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs, Mr Clarence Leung, will act as the Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs.

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## **“Quarterly Report on General Household Survey” for October to December 2023**

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The "Quarterly Report on General Household Survey" for October to December 2023 is now available for access and download.

The report contains statistics on labour force, employment, unemployment and underemployment for the fourth quarter of 2023. It also contains detailed analyses of the characteristics of different categories of members of the labour force, including their age, sex, educational attainment, employment status, occupation, industry, hours worked per week and monthly employment earnings, etc. Information on reasons for leaving last job and duration of unemployment for the unemployed is also presented.

Users can browse and download the report at the website of the Census and Statistics Department ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050001&scode=200](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/EIndexbySubject.html?pcode=B1050001&scode=200)).

The summary of broad survey findings published in the report is shown in Table 1 attached. Enquiries about the contents of the report can be directed to the General Household Survey Section (3), Census and Statistics Department (Tel: 2887 5508 or email: [ghs@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:ghs@censtatd.gov.hk)).