

Trade instructed to suspend importing and selling of raw oysters produced by Zwembesi Farm (PTY) LTD. in South Africa

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (September 28) instructed the trade to suspend the import of raw oysters produced by Zwembesi Farm (PTY) LTD. in South Africa. The trade should also stop using or selling the product concerned immediately should they possess it.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS was notified by the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health of six food poisoning clusters which involved consumption of raw oysters at one restaurant in Mong Kok and one restaurant in Tsim Sha Tsui. The CFS conducted investigations at the restaurants concerned and found that both restaurants had sold raw oysters which were harvested from Zwembesi Farm (PTY) LTD. in South Africa. For the sake of prudence, the CFS has immediately instructed the trade to suspend the import into and sale within Hong Kong of all raw oysters produced by Zwembesi Farm (PTY) LTD. in South Africa."

The CFS has also instructed all importers and the restaurants concerned to stop supplying and selling the affected raw oysters immediately, and is tracing the distribution of the affected product. The trade should also stop using or selling the product in question.

The spokesman pointed out that as oysters feed by filtering a large volume of seawater, pathogens can accumulate in them if they are grown in or harvested from contaminated water. Raw or partially cooked oysters are high-risk foods. Susceptible groups, such as pregnant women, young children, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems or liver diseases, should avoid eating raw oysters.

The CFS will inform the South African authorities and will also notify the local trade. It will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action to safeguard food safety and public health. An investigation is ongoing.