

Trade instructed to suspend importing and selling raw oysters harvested in area 50-07 Saint Vaast La Hougue in France

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (January 8) instructed the trade to suspend the import of raw oysters harvested in area 50-07 Saint Vaast La Hougue in France. The trade should also stop using or selling the product concerned immediately should they possess it.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "The CFS received notifications from the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed of the European Commission that ready-to-eat raw oysters harvested in area 50-07 Saint Vaast La Hougue in France were detected with norovirus and the area concerned was closed. A preliminary investigation by the CFS found that a local importer, Alliance Gourmet Limited, had imported the affected raw oysters. For the sake of prudence, the CFS has immediately suspended the import into and sale within Hong Kong of raw oysters harvested in the area concerned, and instructed the importer to stop sales and remove from shelves the affected oysters."

The spokesman said that preliminary investigation by the CFS found that five kilograms of the affected oysters had been imported by the importer concerned. All were distributed to a restaurant and were consumed. The trade should also stop selling other products from the affected area if they possess them.

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 French 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.