

## Updates on CFS' investigation on French raw milk cheese suspected to be contaminated with E.coli (O26)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department said today (June 4) that the CFS had been closely following up on the incident of some French raw milk cheese suspected to be contaminated with Escherichia coli (E. coli) (O26) and had earlier suspended the import into and sale within Hong Kong of the affected cheese. CFS' further investigation and the latest information provided by the French authorities revealed that the product recall was extended to cover four other kinds of raw milk cheese which might be contaminated with E. coli (O26) and were manufactured by three processing plants. For the sake of prudence, the CFS has immediately suspended the import and sale in Hong Kong of all raw milk cheese products manufactured by the three plants. The trade should stop using or selling the affected products immediately if they possess them. Members of the public should not consume the products concerned if they have bought any.

The sanitary marks of the three plants are respectively FR 74.289.050CE, FR 74.096.050CE and FR 74.303.050CE. The four kinds of raw milk cheese include Demi-fromage AOP Reblochon laitier au lait cru (240 grams per pack) under the brand names of Chabert, Saveurs de nos Regions, and Nos Regions Ont du Talent as well as Fromage de Savoie au lait cru (450 grams per pack) under the brand name Tartiflard.

The CFS immediately contacted major local importers and retailers for follow-up. Preliminary investigation found that the above products have not been imported into Hong Kong. The CFS has also enhanced surveillance on raw milk cheese products imported from France. All results are satisfactory.

"People will contract E. coli causing gastro-intestinal disease through consumption of contaminated water or undercooked and contaminated foods. Intestinal bleeding and serious complications such as hemolytic uraemic syndrome may also develop in some people. Moreover, due to poor personal hygiene, person-to-person transmission of this pathogen is possible through the oral-faecal route. E. coli cannot survive under high temperature and can be killed by thorough cooking," said a spokesman for the CFS.

The CFS will alert the trade to the incident. It will continue to closely monitor the incident and take appropriate follow-up action. Investigation is on-going.