

Sample of mushroom imported from Japan in breach of food labelling regulations

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 20) said that a kind of prepackaged mushroom imported from Japan has been found to contain a preservative, sulphur dioxide, that was not declared on the product's food label, in breach of the food labelling regulations. Follow-up is in progress.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Hana Donko (Oitakenshiitake Oitaken Dried Hana Donko Shiitake Mushroom)

Place of origin: Oita Prefecture, Japan

Net content: 100 grams

Best-before date: June 12, 2019

"The CFS took the abovementioned sample from a supermarket in Central for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained a preservative, sulphur dioxide. The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to stop sale and remove from shelves the affected batch of product. The CFS is also tracing the source of the affected product," a CFS spokesman said.

The spokesman pointed out that although the level of sulphur dioxide contained (24 parts per million) in the abovementioned sample is within the legal limit, susceptible individuals who are allergic to sulphur dioxide may experience breathing difficulties, headache and nausea if they consume this kind of food.

The spokesman urged the trade to observe the relevant laws and regulations. The Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W) require that the food ingredients of all prepackaged food for sale in Hong Kong should be listed out in the list of ingredients. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$50,000 and six months' imprisonment.

The CFS will notify the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.

Woman fined for managing unlicensed guesthouse

A woman was fined \$3,000 at the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts today (July 20) for contravening the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance.

The courts heard that in December last year, officers of the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA), the Home Affairs Department, inspected a licensed guesthouse on Hop Yick Road in Yuen Long. OLA officers posed as lodgers and successfully rented a room in an unlicensed guesthouse in the same building on a daily basis.

The woman responsible for managing the premises was charged with contravening section 21(3)(b) of the Ordinance for managing a guesthouse in a premises other than the one indicated in the licence.

A department spokesman stressed that operating or managing an unlicensed guesthouse is a criminal offence and will lead to a criminal record. Upon conviction, an offender is liable to a maximum fine of \$200,000 and two years' imprisonment.

The spokesman appealed to anyone with information about suspected unlicensed guesthouses to report it to the OLA through the hotline (Tel: 2881 7498), by email (hadlaeng@had.gov.hk), by fax (2504 5805) using the report form downloaded from the OLA website (www.hadla.gov.hk), or through the mobile application "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses".

Dead pine trees to be removed along Tolo Highway (Ma Liu Shui Section near Chak Cheung Street) (with photos)

The Highways Department (HyD) will remove some 130 dead pine trees along the Tolo Highway (Ma Liu Shui Section near Chak Cheung Street) starting in early August to protect road users' safety. Tree removal work will be carried out at night and will last about four weeks.

There are approximately 300 pine trees (*Pinus elliottii*) along the four roadside verges and slopes within the expressway boundary. Between late March and early May this year, around 130 pine trees died within a few months, and beetles were found on the tree bark. The HyD, together with the Greening, Landscape and Tree Management Section of the Development Bureau, has looked into the possible cause by collecting beetle samples for DNA identification

and consulting entomology and tree experts. The test results and experts' advice showed that the beetles are not the cause of tree death and they are not a medium of infestation. The actual cause has yet to be determined.

The pine trees are already dead. With continual decline in their structural stability, they will eventually collapse. In order to ensure road users' safety, the HyD will remove the dead trees. This would also avoid the spread of fungal disease, if any, to other trees in the vicinity.

The Government will examine the soil and dead branches in order to look into the cause of tree death. To restore the visual appeal of the slope landscape and prevent soil erosion, the HyD will replant with shrubs that are resistant to drought, strong wind, dust and harsh sunlight as well as effective in suppressing weed growth, including native and naturalised plant species (e.g. azalea and miniature umbrella plant).



Meetings of Legislative Council Committees

The following is issued on behalf of the Legislative Council Secretariat:

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Committees will hold two open meetings during the week from July 23 to 27 in the LegCo Complex. Details of the meetings are available in the meeting schedule attached.

The information in the meeting schedule is subject to change. Please refer to the "LegCo Calendar" on the LegCo Website (www.legco.gov.hk) for the latest details of meetings.

Members of the public are welcome to observe open meetings of LegCo Committees. Interested individuals and groups are advised to make advance booking of seats by calling the LegCo Secretariat at 3919 3399 during office hours. Members of the public can also listen to or watch all open meetings via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website.

Intermediate step on Public Light Buses

With a view to improving Public Light Bus (PLB) services and addressing public views about the high PLB compartment, which causes inconvenience to the elderly and people with mobility problems, the Government will require Green Minibuses (GMBs) and Red Minibuses (RMBs) which are newly registered on or after August 15, 2017 and September 15, 2017 respectively to be equipped with several passenger facilities, after following up and studying the matter with the PLB trade. At present, around 400 newly registered PLBs are equipped with additional seat handles and call bells with indicator lights, while 85 PLBs have been installed with newly designed intermediate step.

A spokesman for the Transport Department (TD) today (July 20) said that all the above-mentioned passenger facilities can help passengers in taking PLB services. Nevertheless, regarding the newly installed intermediate step, the TD has decided to cancel the requirement for PLBs to install intermediate step with effect from July 23, 2018, after conducting a detailed review on the results of the two different designs and inspecting the actual operation, as well as considering opinions from the trade. For those PLBs currently installed with this facility, the trade will arrange to remove it on their

own.

The spokesman noted that the newly registered GMBs and RMBs were originally required to install the intermediate step by mid-August 2017 and mid-September 2017 respectively. However, the TD has received reports of passengers tripping over while alighting the PLBs. The TD is very concerned about these cases, and has therefore suspended the requirement for installing the intermediate step on PLBs. The TD then worked closely with the PLB manufacturers for a revised design and exchanged views with the trade and conducted on-site trials with them. Moreover, the TD invited an elderly group to conduct a trial on the new design of intermediate step.

However, since the roll-out of the new design in mid-May this year, up till now there have been cases of passengers tripping over while boarding PLBs. The TD has re-examined the issue and conducted on-board surveys. As the total number of PLBs installed with the facility is currently still small, quite a number of passengers are not fully aware of the intermediate step. Moreover, PLBs in Hong Kong operate on busy roads with a high passenger volume and frequent picking up and dropping off of passengers. With such a fast-paced lifestyle, passengers may trip over the intermediate step when boarding or alighting the PLBs. In view of this and after careful consideration of the review results of the two different intermediate step, the TD has decided to cancel the requirement for PLBs to install intermediate step for the sake of prudence.

In taking forward the concept of "Transport for All", the TD will continue to work with the PLB trade to improve PLB services by introducing more low-floor PLB models and so forth. In fact, with the aim of assisting wheelchair users in using PLB services, the Government introduced a low-floor wheelchair-accessible PLB trial scheme early this year. The TD will review the operational effectiveness of the trial scheme, including aspects such as technical and operational feasibility, repair and maintenance and passengers' feedback. The TD will discuss with the trade on further promoting low-floor PLBs if the trial scheme proves to be effective.