

Hong Kong Customs and universities join hands to enhance induction programmes and encourage in-service education (with photos)

â€‹Hong Kong Customs has all along attached great importance to staff training with a view to enhancing enforcement effectiveness. To enrich induction training and encourage in-service education, the department has entered into two memoranda of understanding (MoU) with two local universities this month. This is a significant step to map out the department's staff development strategy.

The Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Mr Hermes Tang, signed an MoU with the President of the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK), Professor Wong Yuk-shan, on June 11. All new trainee Inspectors and Customs Officers enrolled since May this year would take two new modules offered by the OUHK, namely "Social Studies in Law Enforcement" and "Psychological Studies in Law Enforcement", as one of the components of the induction programmes. The contents of the two modules combine both theories and practices. Apart from various concepts of criminology, sociology and psychology, the modules also cover practical knowledge in conflict management, psychological skills, media relations, etc, so as to fully enhance Customs officers' practical foundation training.

Upon completion of relevant programmes, graduate Inspectors and Customs Officers will be awarded the "Certificate in Law Enforcement and Customs Management" by the OUHK. They will be entitled to an exemption of 30 credits when pursuing the "Bachelor of Social Sciences in Law Enforcement and Security Management" (or with Honours). Together with the credit exemption offered by the OUHK since 2004, qualified Customs Officers will be granted at most an exemption of 50 credits, therefore, saving about one-third of curriculum time and course fee. Officers holding local accredited Higher Diplomas or Associate Degrees may even gain further credit exemptions.

Apart from the co-operation with the OUHK, Hong Kong Customs also established co-operation ties with City University of Hong Kong (CityU). The Deputy Commissioner of Customs and Excise, Ms Louise Ho, and the Vice-President (Development and External Relations) of CityU, Professor Matthew Lee, today (June 19) witnessed the signing of the MoU by the Assistant Commissioner (Administration and Human Resource Development), Mr Ellis Lai, and the Director of the School of Continuing and Professional Education (SCOPE) of CityU, Dr Louis Ma. Under the co-operation, the SCOPE of CityU will integrate the element of public service management into the induction programmes of which the graduates can gain an exemption of 36 credits when enrolling in the "Advanced Diploma in Management Studies" offered by the SCOPE of CityU. The Advanced Diploma course is also articulated with the "Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Public Administration and Management" jointly

organised by the SCOPE of CityU and De Montfort University of the United Kingdom to facilitate Customs officers to study the degree course.

Mr Tang expressed his gratitude to the two universities for joining hands with Hong Kong Customs in enhancing the department's staff training and encouraging continuous education. He said that the MoUs would not only raise the professional standard and academic status of Customs induction programmes, but also facilitate in-service education and encourage lifelong learning, which are extremely meaningful to the career prospects of Customs officers.

Mr Tang added that following the Hong Kong Customs College obtaining the accreditation approval from the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications in December 2018 to include the Customs induction programmes for Inspectors and Customs Officers in the Qualifications Register, the new MoUs reached between the department and the universities marked another milestone in the departmental staff training development.

He said that Customs' work is becoming more extensive and diversified in recent years. The department will continue to enhance staff training and promote in-service education in order to secure sustainable development of human resources.



[CFS urges public not to consume two kinds of prepackaged cheese spread that may be contaminated with Clostridium botulinum](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (June 19) urged the public not to consume two kinds of prepackaged cheese spread imported from the United Kingdom (UK) due to

possible contamination with *Clostridium botulinum*. The trade should also stop using or selling the products concerned immediately if they possess them.

Product details are as follows:

Product name: Original Cheese Spread

Brand: Primula

Place of origin: UK

Importer: CitySuper

Packing size: 150 grams per tube

Best-before dates: December 29, 2020; January 7, 2021; January 12, 2021; and January 14, 2021

Product name: Cheese Spread with Chives

Brand: Primula

Place of origin: UK

Importer: CitySuper

Packing size: 150g per tube

Best-before dates: December 29, 2020; January 5, 2021; January 12, 2021; and January 19, 2021

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS, through its Food Incident Surveillance System, noted notices issued by the UK Food Standards Agency that the manufacturer of the products is recalling the above-mentioned batches of the products which may be contaminated with *Clostridium botulinum* due to a production fault."

Upon learning of the incident, the CFS immediately followed up with major local importers and retailers. Preliminary investigation found that the above-mentioned importer had imported the above batches of the products which were sold in its retail outlets. Upon notification by the UK manufacturer earlier, the importer concerned had already stopped sale, removed from shelves the affected products and initiated a recall. Members of the public may call the importer's hotline at 2736 3866 during office hours for enquiries about the recall.

"Foodborne botulism is caused by ingestion of food containing very potent neurotoxin produced by *Clostridium botulinum*. Symptoms of intoxication include marked fatigue, weakness and vertigo, often followed by blurred vision and difficulty in speaking and swallowing. The toxin may paralyse the breathing muscles and cause death. Onset of symptoms is usually around 18 to 36 hours after the ingestion of the toxin, but may range from four hours to eight days," the spokesman said.

The spokesman urged consumers not to consume the affected batches of the products if they have bought any. The trade should also stop using or selling the products concerned immediately if they possess them.

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

Hong Kong Customs spares no effort to combat sea smuggling of frozen meat (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs has conducted a series of enforcement actions targeting frozen meat smuggling activities in Hong Kong's western waters since early this year, and has mounted a special operation codenamed "Minesweeping" from early May to present with a view to expand enforcement efforts. As at June 17 this year, a total of 23 sea smuggling cases of frozen meat have been detected, resulting in seizures of about 2 500 tonnes of suspected smuggled frozen meat, including beef, chicken feet and pork feet, with an estimated market value of about \$90 million. The seizure amount this year has surpassed the total amount recorded over the past 11 years.

Since early this year, Customs had discovered an upward trend of frozen meat smuggling activities from Hong Kong to the Mainland. Smugglers would first use barges to transport large batches of frozen meat to the western waters of Hong Kong. Then they would move the frozen meat from the barges to speedboats or fishing vessels by nightfall or late evening in order to smuggle the frozen meat into the Mainland.

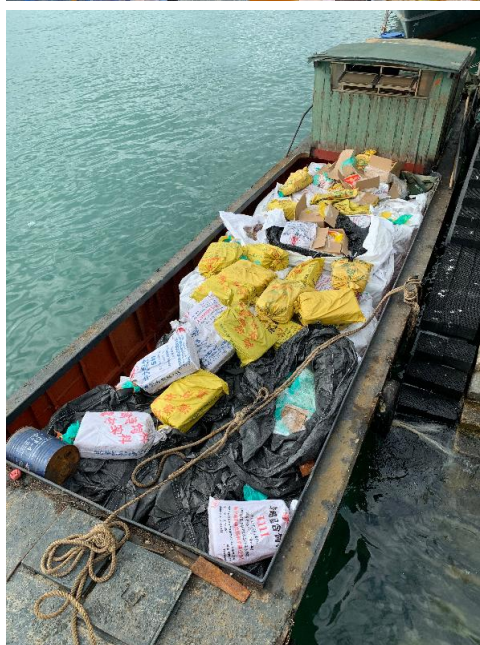
Customs has detected 13 frozen meat smuggling cases from January to April this year and has made seizures of about 800 tonnes of suspected smuggled frozen meat with an estimated market value of about \$30 million. To expand the enforcement efforts, Customs has strengthened its deployment and launched the "Minesweeping" special operation in early May to further step up enforcement against frozen meat smuggling activities. During the special operation, a total of 10 cases have been detected so far and about 1 700 tonnes of suspected smuggled frozen meat with an estimated market value of about \$60 million has been seized. Both the seizure amount and market value have surpassed the total of the first four months by more than double.

Significant results have been achieved through Customs' operations against sea smuggling of frozen meat this year. The department stresses that it will keep up its enforcement action and will continue to fiercely combat sea smuggling of frozen meat by actively pursuing risk-management and intelligence-based enforcement strategies, along with mounting targeted anti-smuggling operations at suitable times and maintaining close co-operation in its intelligence exchanges with local and overseas law enforcement agencies to land a solid blow against relevant activities.

Smuggling is a serious offence. Under the Import and Export Ordinance, any person found guilty of importing or exporting unmanifested cargo is liable to a maximum fine of \$2 million and imprisonment for seven years.

Members of the public may report any suspected smuggling activities to

Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk).



Man sentenced for violating compulsory quarantine regulation

A 51-year-old man was sentenced to immediate imprisonment for three weeks by the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts today (June 19) for violating the Compulsory Quarantine of Certain Persons Arriving at Hong Kong Regulation (Cap. 599C).

The man was issued a compulsory quarantine order stating that he must conduct quarantine at the residential address stated by himself on the quarantine order for 14 days. The man was later found to have given a false residential address for use as the place of quarantine to an authorised officer at Shenzhen Bay Control Point upon return to Hong Kong from the Mainland on May 8. He was charged with contravening Section 9 of the Regulation and was sentenced by the Tuen Mun Magistrates' Courts today to immediate imprisonment for three weeks.

Pursuant to the Regulation, save for exempted persons, all persons who have stayed in the Mainland, Macao or Taiwan in the 14 days preceding arrival in Hong Kong, regardless of their nationality or travel documents, will be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Moreover, pursuant to the Compulsory Quarantine of Persons Arriving at Hong Kong from Foreign Places Regulation (Cap. 599E), starting from March 19, all persons arriving from countries or territories outside China would also be subject to compulsory quarantine for 14 days. Giving false or misleading information to an authorised officer is a criminal offence and offenders are subject to a maximum fine of \$25,000 and imprisonment for six months. The Department of Health (DH) solemnly reminds persons under quarantine to comply with the statutory requirements and provide accurate information to authorised officers.

A spokesman for the DH said the sentence sends a clear message to the community that giving false or misleading information to an authorised officer is a criminal offence and that the Government will not tolerate such actions. As of today, a total of 21 persons have been convicted by the court for offences related to violation of compulsory quarantine with sentences to imprisonment for up to three months or a fine of \$10,000. The spokesman reiterated that resolute actions will be taken against anyone who has violated the law relating to compulsory quarantine.

Meetings of Legislative Council and its Committees

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

Details of the meetings of the Legislative Council (LegCo) and its Committees to be held in the LegCo Complex during the week from June 22 to 26 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 can watch or listen to the meetings via the "Webcast" system on the LegCo Website. To observe the proceedings of the meetings at the LegCo Complex, members of the public may call 3919 3399 during office hours to reserve seats.