

Eggs imported from US suspected to be contaminated with Salmonella

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (April 17) that the import into and sale in Hong Kong of poultry eggs produced by a plant (Plant No. P – 1065) of Rose Acre Farms' Hyde County farm in Hyde County, North Carolina, the United States (US), has been suspended with immediate effect, as the products might have been contaminated with Salmonella, a pathogen. The trade should also stop using or selling the products concerned immediately if they possess them.

"The CFS, through its Food Incident Surveillance System, noted a notice issued by the Food and Drug Administration of the US about a recall of eggs produced by the above-mentioned plant as they might have been contaminated with Salmonella. For the sake of prudence, the CFS has immediately suspended the import into Hong Kong of the poultry eggs produced by the plant concerned," a spokesman for the CFS said.

"The CFS also contacted the major local importers and retailers for follow-up. Preliminary investigation found that five Hong Kong importers, namely General Hero Ltd, Shun Hing Hoo, Tai Cheong Eggs Company Ltd, Luen Tai Hong and Maxim's Caterers Ltd, had imported in different batches a total of about 6,000 cartons of the affected products into Hong Kong," the spokesman added.

"According to the information provided by them, except for Maxim's Caterers Ltd which has all the affected products stored in the warehouse without any entering the market, the remaining four have distributed all the affected products. The four importers have initiated a recall according to the CFS' advice. Enquiries about the recall can be made to General Hero Ltd at 2381 9138, Shun Hing Hoo at 2543 4655, Tai Cheong Eggs Company Ltd at 2546 1834 and Luen Tai Hong at 2857 9389 during office hours. Maxim's Caterers Ltd will dispose of all affected products. The CFS is also tracing the distribution of the affected products. The trade should stop using or selling the products immediately should they possess them.

"Salmonella infection may cause fever and gastrointestinal upset such as vomiting, abdominal pain and diarrhoea. The effects on infants, young children, the elderly and persons with a weak immune system could be more severe and sometimes may even lead to death. Generally speaking, Salmonella cannot survive under high temperature and can be killed by thorough cooking," he said.

The spokesman advised consumers, particularly the elderly, infants and pregnant women, to avoid eating raw or inadequately cooked eggs and egg products. Eggs should be thoroughly cooked until the yolk and white are firm. Consumers should choose pasteurised eggs or egg products or dried egg powder to prepare dishes not requiring heat treatment.

The CFS has contacted the US authorities concerned over the incident. It will alert the trade, continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action. Investigation is ongoing.

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