CFS announces results of risk assessment study on T-2 toxins, HT-2 toxins and 4,15-diacetoxyscirpenol in food

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (March 19) announced the results of a risk assessment study on T-2 toxins, HT-2 toxins and 4,15-diacetoxyscirpenol (DAS) in food. The study results showed that it is unlikely for adults and younger populations in Hong Kong to experience adverse health effects due to dietary exposure to these mycotoxins.

A spokesman for the CFS said, "T-2, HT-2 and DAS are produced by the Fusarium species which grow and invade crops under cool, moist conditions. Therefore, these mycotoxins are commonly found in cereals and their derived products. In recent years, the Joint Food and Agriculture Organization/World Health Organization Expert Committee on Food Additives established the tolerable daily intake of 25 nanograms/kilograms body weight for T-2, HT-2 and DAS, alone or in combination."

The CFS collected a total of 327 samples (including cereal grains, breakfast cereal, bakery and pastry items and vegetable oils etc) between October and December 2023 from local retailers. After analyses, the sum of T-2, HT-2 and DAS ranged from not detected to 23.718 micrograms/kg. The study results showed that the dietary exposures to T-2, HT-2 and DAS for the average and high consumers of the local adult and younger population were well below the health-based guidance value and thus unlikely to pose health risks.

The CFS recommends that members of the public should follow basic dietary advice on healthy eating and maintain a balanced and varied diet to minimise the risk of exposure to contaminants from a limited range of food items. The public should also purchase cereals and cereal-based products from reliable sources and store them properly in a cool, dry place to prevent fungal growth. The trade is also advised to store food commodities properly to prevent mould growth.

â€‹Details and results of the study are available on the CFS website.