

CFS finds traces of malachite green in freshwater grouper sample

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department today (July 15) announced that a trace amount of malachite green was found in a freshwater grouper sample. Follow-up is in progress.

A CFS spokesman said, "The CFS collected the above-mentioned freshwater grouper sample from a stall at the Cheung Sha Wan Wholesale Food Market for testing under its routine Food Surveillance Programme. The test result showed that the sample contained a trace amount of malachite green at a level of 2.8 parts per billion."

The spokesman added, "The CFS has informed the vendor concerned of the irregularity and instructed it to stop sale of the affected product."

Malachite green is a type of industrial dye and has been used for treating infections in fish. Malachite green is possibly both genotoxic and carcinogenic. According to the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), there is no safe level of residues of malachite green or its metabolites in food that represents an acceptable risk to consumers. Currently, malachite green has been prohibited for use in food producing animals in many countries. According to the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (Cap 132AF), no food sold in Hong Kong is allowed to contain malachite green. Offenders will be prosecuted and will be liable to a fine of \$50,000 and to imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action, including tracing the source of the affected product. Should there be sufficient evidence, prosecution will be initiated. Investigation is ongoing.