

CFS follows up on incident that chicken wing sample from Brazil tested positive to novel coronavirus in Shenzhen

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) today (August 13) said that in view of a notice issued by the Shenzhen Headquarters for Prevention and Control of Pneumonia Epidemic Caused by Novel Coronavirus that a surface sample of chicken wings imported from Brazil tested positive to novel coronavirus in Shenzhen, the CFS has immediately contacted the relevant authorities in Shenzhen and Brazil to understand the incident, and followed up with major local importers and retailers. Preliminary investigation found that the concerned batch of chicken wings was not detected to be on sale in Hong Kong. For the sake of prudence, as a precautionary measure, the CFS has immediately enhanced sampling of frozen chicken meat from Brazil at import and wholesale levels for testing of the novel coronavirus. The Centre has also immediately suspended the licence application for import of poultry meat into Hong Kong from the plant concerned (registration number: SIF601).

A spokesman for the CFS said that according to current scientific information, there is no evidence indicating that human can be infected by the novel coronavirus via food. In addition, the World Health Organization and global food safety assessment authorities consider that it is unlikely that the novel coronavirus can be transmitted to human via food. Nevertheless, given that raw or undercooked food products are high-risk, if they are uncooked or underheated, consumption of food contaminated with bacteria or viruses may cause food poisoning.

The CFS reminded the public to cook food thoroughly and avoid consuming raw or undercooked animal products, as well as to handle raw and cooked food separately, especially when handling raw meat and offal, so as to avoid cross-contamination of food. Members of the public should also maintain personal, food and environmental hygiene at all times.

The spokesman also reminded food handlers that they should always keep their hands clean, and frequently clean and disinfect surfaces, especially food contact surfaces in food premises (such as tableware, kitchenware, insulated bags for takeaways, conveyor belts at cashier desks) and high-touch points (such as door handlers, handles of the shopping trolleys and water taps) to ensure environmental hygiene, while social distancing measures should also be adopted. Food handlers should cease engaging in any food handling work and seek medical advice promptly when suffering or suspected to be suffering from an infectious disease or symptoms of illness.

The CFS will continue to follow up on the incident and take appropriate action, including informing the Brazilian authorities concerned and the

trade. Investigation is ongoing.