

FEHD continues to combat illegal sale of hairy crabs and sale of hairy crabs from dubious sources (with photo)

To safeguard food safety, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has launched a series of blitz operations in the preceding week to inspect selling points of hairy crabs in various districts and combat the illegal sale of hairy crabs, with a view to ensuring that hairy crabs on sale in the market comply with regulations under relevant laws.

A spokesman for the FEHD said today (November 17), "Up till yesterday (November 16), officers from the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) and the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the FEHD have inspected over 110 premises selling hairy crabs, including retail outlets, food premises and public market stalls. The source documents and health certificates of the hairy crabs were checked to ensure that the hairy crabs sold at the premises are in compliance with the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance and are fit for human consumption. The FEHD also distributed promotional leaflets to the operators of the premises, reminding them to pay attention to food safety and comply with regulations under relevant laws."

"During the operation, apart from the premises suspected of breaching licensing conditions announced earlier, the FEHD further found one distributor selling the restricted food, hairy crab, without permission. The distributor is suspected of violating the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X) (the Regulation) and investigation is ongoing. In addition, the CFS also collected hairy crab samples from all-you-can-eat restaurants supplying hairy crabs for chemical testing including metallic contaminants, veterinary drugs and colouring matters. Testing results are still pending."

Under the Regulation, save for the written permission of the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH), no person shall sell any restricted foods, including shell fish. Operators selling hairy crabs (including physical premises and online sale) shall obtain the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit or relevant written permission granted by the FEHD. Furthermore, the relevant regulatory condition also stipulates that hairy crabs for sale shall be obtained from a reliable and reputable source. A copy of the health certificate issued by the relevant authority and acceptable to the DFEH shall also be kept. Under the Regulation, any person who operates an unlicensed food business or sells restricted foods without permission commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction.

In addition, according to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), all food available for sale in Hong Kong, locally produced or imported, should be fit for human consumption. An offender is subject to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months upon conviction. Under the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap. 612), any person who,

without reasonable excuse, fails to comply with the record-keeping requirement relating to movement of food commits an offence and is liable to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and imprisonment for three months upon conviction.

The spokesman reminded the trade not to import or put on sale hairy crabs with an unknown origin, and consumers should make purchases at reputable shops with the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit or relevant written permission granted by the FEHD.

If members of the public suspect that there are operators selling hairy crabs without the relevant permits/permissions or the hairy crabs are not accompanied with health certificates, they may make a report by calling the FEHD hotline at 2868 0000 or through email (enquiries@fehd.gov.hk).

