

FEHD cracks down on sale of chilled or frozen pork disguised as fresh pork

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) said today (September 26) that the FEHD has all along been committed to combating the sale of chilled or frozen pork disguised as fresh pork, and has taken stringent enforcement actions against violations.

From January this year till now, the FEHD has conducted 28 blitz operations against 64 fresh provision shops and public market stalls, and initiated prosecutions against a number of cases. Among them, two shops were convicted and fined. Subsequently, the fresh provision shop concerned surrendered its licence, while the tenancy of the market stall concerned was terminated by the FEHD. Other prosecution cases are pending trial by court.

An FEHD spokesman said, "The number of live pigs supplied to Hong Kong from the Mainland has been lower than that before the African Swine Fever epidemic. As the prices of live pigs remain high, some unscrupulous traders have sold chilled or frozen pork disguised as fresh pork for profit. Apart from contravening the local legislation, this would cause food safety problems and pose unfairness to other shops which comply with the requirements."

The spokesman urged relevant shops to abide by the law, saying that the FEHD conducts regular inspections at fresh provision shops and market meat stalls, and would actively handle the complaints received. In detecting any irregularities, the FEHD carries out immediate investigations and takes appropriate enforcement actions. In addition, the FEHD also proactively investigates suspected violations from time to time and conducts blitz inspections and enforcement actions as necessary. If there is sufficient evidence, prosecutions will be initiated and follow-up actions will be taken on the breach of licence conditions or tenancy agreements. The licences of fresh provision shops breaching the licence conditions may be cancelled, while the tenancies of market meat stalls breaching the tenancy agreements may be terminated.

From January this year till now, the FEHD has received a total of 147 complaints about selling chilled or frozen pork disguised as fresh pork. In addition, the FEHD has conducted a total of 7 649 inspections of fresh provision shops and market stalls during the same period. 35 prosecutions were initiated against 33 fresh provision shops and market stall for selling fresh pork and un-prepackaged chilled pork and / or restricted food in the same premises under the Food Business Regulation. Among them, 10 cases were convicted and fined, and the remaining 25 cases are pending trial by court.

In addition, since the number of live pigs supplied to Hong Kong from the Mainland has dropped in recent years, some fresh provision shops permitted to sell fresh pork only has applied to the FEHD for conversion to sell chilled pork instead. Since January this year, the FEHD has received a

total of 23 relevant applications, all of which have been approved. The FEHD will process such applications as soon as possible so as to help the trade adapt to the changes in the business environment.

At present, there are 477, 399 and 596 licensed fresh provision shops which are allowed to sell fresh pork, chilled pork, and both (chilled pork needs to be pre-packaged) respectively, while 553, 26 and 14 public market stalls are allowed to sell fresh pork, chilled pork, and both respectively.

The spokesman stressed that the FEHD is very concerned and has been committed to combating the sale of chilled or frozen pork disguised as fresh pork by taking stringent enforcement actions against the violations.