

Hong Kong Customs conducts joint enforcement operations with FEHD regarding sale of hairy crabs (with photos)

Hong Kong Customs and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) have been carrying out joint enforcement operations since last Thursday (September 15) to inspect hairy crab retail outlets in various districts, with the aim of protecting consumer rights and upholding food safety by ensuring hairy crabs on sale in the market comply with relevant stipulations and requirements under the laws.

During the inspections, Customs officers and officers of the Centre for Food Safety and the Environmental Hygiene Branch of the FEHD monitored the sale of hairy crabs and also checked supportive documents for the place of origin and health certificates of the hairy crabs to ensure that the hairy crabs sold at retail shops are fit for human consumption and are in compliance with the Trade Descriptions Ordinance (TDO), the Food Safety Ordinance and the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance.

Up till present, officers of the two departments have inspected 172 hairy crab retail shops and no irregularity has been found so far. The relevant joint enforcement operations will continue.

Apart from carrying out inspections in the market, Customs officers also made use of a big-data analytics system to conduct analyses and verify whether online shops selling hairy crabs had complied with the TDO with a view to safeguarding the interests of consumers while making online purchases.

Customs attaches great importance to the protection of consumer rights and will take appropriate enforcement action once activities in violation of the TDO are detected in the market. The department also reminds traders not to apply a false trade description to goods or services, or to supply or offer to supply goods or services to which a false trade description is applied. Those who violate the TDO are liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$500,000 and imprisonment for five years.

The FEHD reminds traders that according to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, all food available for sale in Hong Kong, whether imported or locally produced, should be fit for human consumption. Also, any person who operates an unlicensed food business or sells restricted foods without permission is liable upon conviction to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for six months. Under the Food Safety Ordinance, 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.

Customs and the FEHD remind traders not to import or put on sale hairy crabs of an unknown origin. Consumers should make purchases at reputable shops with the Shell Fish (Hairy Crab) Permit or relevant written permission granted by the FEHD.

Members of the public may make a report to Customs' 24-hour hotline 2545 6182 or its dedicated crime-reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) if they suspect that hairy crabs bought are of a falsely claimed place of origin.

In addition, 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 file a report to the FEHD by calling the hotline at 2868 0000 or through email (enquiries@fehd.gov.hk).

