

Public consultation on proposed amendments to Preservatives in Food Regulation launched

The Government launched today (May 29) a public consultation exercise on the proposed amendments to the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD) (the Regulation). It will last for three months until August 28.

A Government spokesman said, "One of the initiatives set out in the Policy Measures of the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address is to review and update by phases the food safety legislation relating to additives in food to further enhance food safety. The first phase covers preservatives and antioxidants in food."

The Government proposes to enhance and update the Regulation, so as to keep local standards of preservatives and antioxidants in food on par with international standards. At the same time, putting more preservatives and antioxidants under regulation would enhance clarity and offer more choices of permitted preservatives and antioxidants applicable to a wide range of food categories to the food trade. It would also enhance consumer protection.

The spokesman said the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department have made reference to the latest General Standard on Food Additives of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) and its relevant commodity standards in reviewing the Regulation and formulating the proposed amendments. The review is also supplemented with standards of the Mainland and other major food trading partners.

The proposed amendments include:

- * updating the definitions of "preservatives" and "antioxidants" with reference to the definitions of the Codex;
- * updating the list of permitted preservatives/antioxidants; and
- * updating/stipulating the maximum permitted levels of the permitted preservatives/antioxidants in specific food categories.

The Government proposes that a transitional period of 18 months be given after enactment of the amended legislation, so that the food trade and other stakeholders will have reasonable time to make adjustments to comply with the amended Regulation.

The consultation document is available at the websites of the Environment and Ecology Bureau (www.eeb.gov.hk/food/en/press_and_publications/consultation/index.html) and the CFS (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/whatsnew_fstr/whatsnew_fstr_Proposed_Amendments_Preservatives_Food_Regulation.html).

Members of the public are welcome to offer their views on the proposals by email (Preservative_consultation@fehd.gov.hk), fax (2893 3547) or post (43/F, Queensway Government Offices, 66 Queensway, Hong Kong) within the consultation period.

The Government will also conduct consultation forums to collect views from the public. For details of the consultation forums, please visit the CFS website.