

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 is 106.4 (up 0.4 against last Friday's index).

Import of poultry meat and products from Szamotulski District of Wielkopolskie and IÅ,awski District of WarmiÅ„sko-Mazurskie in Poland suspended

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced today (January 29) that in view of notifications from the General Veterinary Inspectorate of Poland about outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N8 avian influenza in Szamotulski District of Wielkopolskie and IÅ,awski District of WarmiÅ„sko-Mazurskie in the country, the CFS has instructed the trade to suspend the import of poultry meat and products (including poultry eggs) from the above areas with immediate effect to protect public health in Hong Kong.

A CFS spokesman said that Hong Kong imported about 13 060 tonnes of frozen poultry meat and 23.2 million poultry eggs from Poland in the first nine months of last year, according to the Census and Statistics Department.

"The CFS has contacted the Polish authorities over the issue and will closely monitor information issued by the World Organisation for Animal Health and the relevant authorities on avian influenza outbreaks. Appropriate action will be taken in response to the development of the situation," the spokesman said.

DH to extend Free Measles Vaccination Mop-up Programme to adult Hong Kong

residents

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health today (January 29) announced that the Free Measles Vaccination Mop-up Programme will be extended to cover adult Hong Kong residents, with the aim of boosting the community's herd immunity against measles. Hong Kong adult residents who are non-immune to measles may receive free measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccines at designated clinics starting from next Monday (February 3). The service period will last for around six months.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles. Following the implementation of a one-off mop-up programme for healthcare workers, airport staff and foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) working in Hong Kong last year, the CHP is extending the programme to cover more residents, hoping to further boost the community's herd immunity against measles as a public health strategy to prevent and control measles."

The spokesman added, "This programme will cover all adults who are non-immune to measles, especially those born between the years 1967 and 2002. In particular, the CHP also encourages participation from people who are non-locally born, people of all ethnicities, post-secondary students, FDHs and people who have frequent contact with tourists. These groups can receive free MMR vaccines under this programme if they are non-immune and are Hong Kong residents."

The spokesman explained that persons who have received two doses of measles vaccines at or after 1 year old, or who have had laboratory confirmed measles infection, are considered to be immune to measles and do not require MMR vaccination.

Hong Kong residents who fulfil the following criteria are eligible to receive free MMR vaccination under the programme:

1. Born between 1967 and 2002, and has not received two doses of measles vaccines at or after 1 year old, and does not have laboratory confirmed measles infection; or
2. Born before 1967, and has laboratory evidence of testing non-immune to measles (i.e. tested negative/indeterminate for measles immunoglobulin G (IgG)).

For those who are uncertain about their past measles vaccination history and do not have laboratory confirmed measles infection, please refer to the charts in the CHP website (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/101938.html) to understand if there may be a need for vaccination. Before vaccination, healthcare workers would also perform health assessment to assess whether mop-up measles vaccination is recommended.

The spokesman appealed to the public that, as vaccination is the most effective way to prevent measles, all people, except for pregnant women and those who are known to be unfit for vaccination, should consider to receive measles vaccination. Regarding the schedule, non-immune adults who have no history of receiving any measles-containing vaccine or with unknown vaccination history are advised to receive two doses at least four weeks apart. Only one dose is required for those who had already received one dose of measles vaccination in the past.

Eligible Hong Kong residents who wish to join the programme must make prior booking for vaccination. For details on designated clinics, please refer to www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/101938.html. In addition, residents are reminded to bring along their Hong Kong identity card or Certificate of Exemption (both original and one copy). Those born before 1967 are required to bring along a laboratory test result report confirming non-immunity to measles (both original and one copy) in addition to the above.

The spokesman said, "The designated one-off mop-up programme providing free measles vaccination to FDHs working in Hong Kong will end on February 15. Eligible FDHs can receive measles vaccination before the programme ends. For details and appointment methods, please visit the CHP's website at www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/102004.html."

The MMR vaccines to be used in the mop-up programme were additionally procured by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in April last year from one of the suppliers of registered MMR vaccines in Hong Kong, Merck Sharp & Dohme (Asia) Ltd (MSD). These vaccines were allocated to the Hong Kong market from other markets amid tight supply for MMR vaccines around the world. Although they were manufactured by the same manufacturer with the same master formula (including gelatin originated from porcine skin collagen as one of the inactive ingredients) and finished product specifications as the MMR vaccine registered by MSD in Hong Kong, the packing of these vaccines is labelled in Spanish.

For information on the free mop-up programme for measles vaccination and measles, please visit the designated webpage for the programme (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/101938.html) and the measles designated webpage (www.chp.gov.hk/en/features/100419.html).

Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley cancelled

Owing to the special admission arrangements of race meeting in Happy Valley today (January 29) by the Hong Kong Jockey Club, the "Special traffic arrangements for race meeting in Happy Valley tomorrow" issued by the Police

at 11.16am yesterday (January 28) has been cancelled.

Special arrangements for fire protection work of Fire Services Department between January 29 and February 2

To reduce the risk of the spread of the novel coronavirus in the community, special work arrangements for government departments will be implemented after the Lunar New Year holidays (starting from January 29 to February 2 inclusively). During the period, fire protection units of the Fire Services Department (FSD) will provide essential public services. The FSD will make special arrangements for licence and acceptance applications. Meanwhile, the Shroff Office of the Licensing and Certification Command Headquarters located on 5/F, Fire Services Headquarters Building will also provide limited services. For enquiries regarding licensing matters including fire services certificates, dangerous goods licences, applications for dangerous goods vehicle inspections, fire service installations acceptance inspections of new buildings and compliance inspections of ventilating systems and fee payments, and other services please call the hotline 2733 7619 during office hours.

Regarding matters relating to the collection of building plans at the Fire Safety Command Headquarters on 7/F, Fire Services Headquarters Building, please call 2170 9665 during office hours for special arrangements if necessary.

For complaints regarding fire hazards or dangerous goods, please call the FSD Complaint Hotline 2723 8787.

The above arrangements were also announced yesterday (January 28) on the FSD website (www.hkfsd.gov.hk).