

Updates on examination of radiation level in food imported from Japan

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Risk management in Hong Kong

- After the earthquake on 11 March – media reported about nuclear power plants in Fukushima from 12 March
- There were reports that radioactive materials had been released from the affected plants – based on radioactivity found in air, soil and water
- It is known that immediately after a nuclear incident mainly fresh food produce are likely to be contaminated with radioactive materials
- Therefore, CFS immediately stepped up surveillance of fresh produce imported from Japan on 12 March starting at the airport

Surveillance at import level (1)

■ At airport

- Check prefecture and production date
- Every consignment to be screened by hand-held survey meter for surface contamination
- Samples were taken for screening by the Contamination Monitoring System
- Any sample tested above the threshold will be sent to Government Laboratory for detailed analysis (I-131, Cs-137 and Cs-134)

Surveillance at import level (2)



Screen by
Hand-held
survey meter



Prepare
sample for
screening by
Contamination
Monitoring
System (CMS)



Placing
sample into the
CMS



Reading
and print-
out from
the CMS



Surveillance at import level (3)

■ At seaports

- ❑ Surveillance is same as those produce arrived by air
- ❑ Importer needs to notify CFS the arrival of chilled and frozen meat, milk and frozen confection imported via sea route for inspection as importation required permission/ health certificate
- ❑ For other food items, Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) now screens cargo manifests and notifies CFS of food consignments from Japan

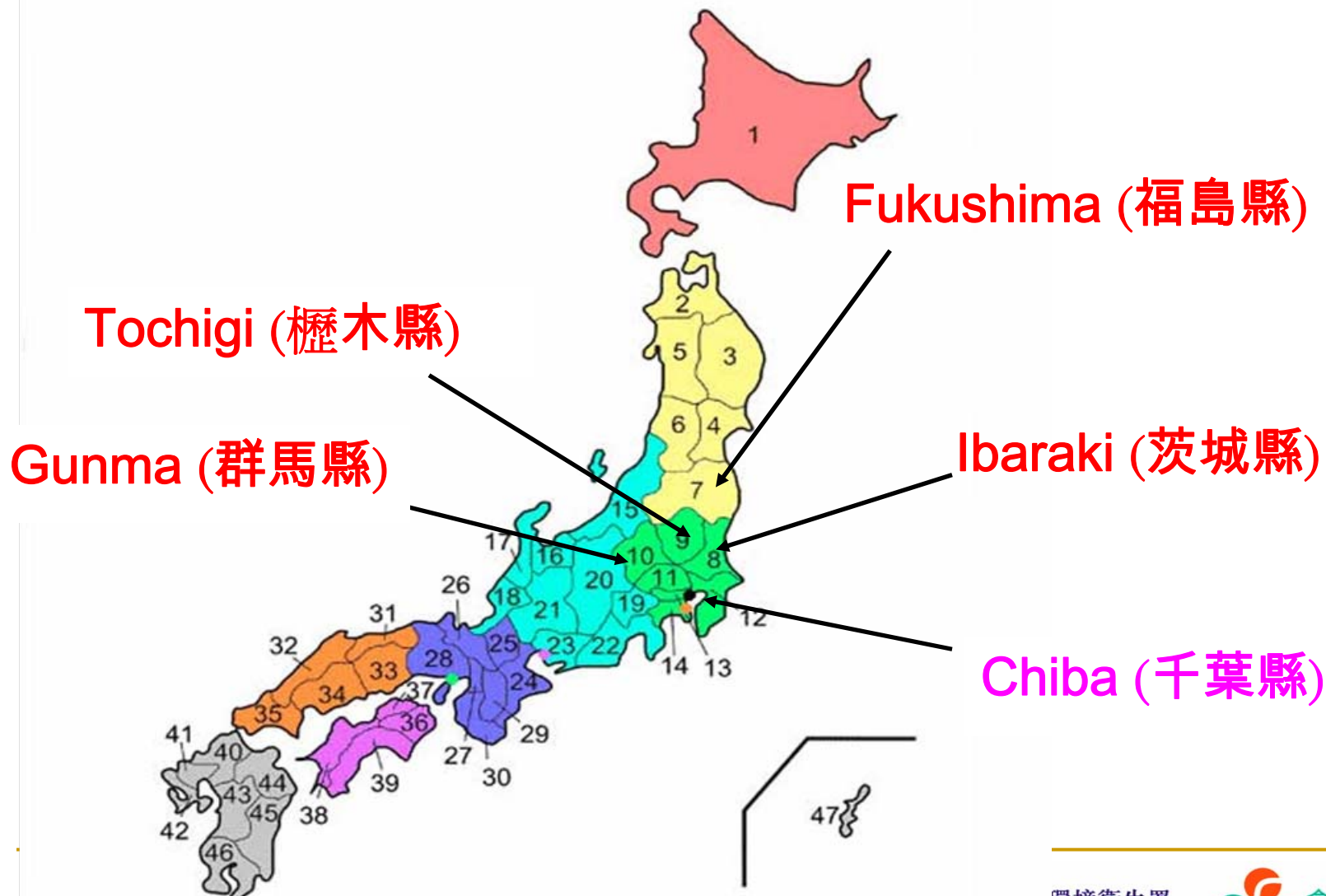
Number of samples tested for radiation levels for food imported from Japan

- As at noon 5 July 2011, about 26 000 food samples from Japan had been tested
- Three samples imported from Chiba prefecture were found to be unsatisfactory for I-131 *spinach* (1000 Bq/kg), *white radish* (260 Bq/kg) and *turnip* (800 Bq/kg)
- The values for all 3 samples were above the CODEX standards (I-131:100 Bq/kg)
- Remaining samples have satisfactory results

Prohibition of imports

- Prohibition order announced on 23 March and came into force on 24 March noon
- Prohibit importation into Hong Kong and supplying within Hong Kong of food harvested, manufactured, processed or packed on or after March 11 from 5 prefectures in Japan -Fukushima (福島縣), Ibaraki (茨城縣), Tochigi (栃木縣), Gunma (群馬縣) and Chiba (千葉縣).
- Food items include: (1) all fruits and vegetables, (2) all milk, milk beverages and dried milk, (3) all chilled or frozen game, meat and poultry, poultry eggs, and live, chilled or frozen aquatic products unless accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent authority of Japan certifying that the radiation levels do not exceed the standards laid down by CAC

Five prefectures that are prohibited from importing food into HK



Enhanced surveillance at retail level

- Routine radiological surveillance at retail level will be continued but high percentage will be given to Japanese food
- Enhanced surveillance at retail level on Japanese food started on 23 March 2011

Comparison of Codex and Japanese standards

Codex standards

All Food

I-131 (100 Bq/kg);

Cs-134,137 (1000 Bq/kg)

Japan limit

Milk*

I-131 (300 Bq/kg);

Cs-134,137 (200 Bq/kg)

Vegetable & Aquatic Products

I-131 (2000 Bq/kg);

Cs-134,137 (500 Bq/kg)

Meat

Cs-134,137 (500 Bq/kg)

* Milk for baby formula or for direct drinking to baby: I-131 (100 Bq/kg)

Action to be taken by CFS

- Continue close communications with Consulate General of Japan and closely monitor the situation
- Make reference to recommendations from the international authorities, such as World Health Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency
- Keep in view of the situation and adjust surveillance strategy if necessary

Thank You