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# Japan nuclear incident

## Examination of radiation levels in food imported from Japan

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

12 May 2011

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## Risk management action taken in Hong Kong

- After the earthquake on 11 March – incidents were reported relating to nuclear power plants in Fukushima starting on 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 an 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

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## Food items tested under the stepped up surveillance programme

- Vegetables and fruits
- Milk and milk powder
- Frozen confection
- Meat and aquatic products including live aquatic animals
- Currently it is extended to other food
- Poultry and poultry eggs were suspended from import due to avian influenza outbreak since 2010

# Surveillance at import level (1)

## ■ At the airport

- ❑ Check the prefectures and production dates
- ❑ Every consignment– Screened by hand-held survey meter for surface contamination
- ❑ Samples were taken for screening using the Contamination Monitoring System
- ❑ Any sample tested above a threshold sent to Government lab for detailed analysis (I-131, Cs-137 and Cs-134)

## Surveillance at import level (2)



Screen by  
Hand-held  
survey meter

Reading  
and print-  
out from  
the CMS



Prepare  
sample for  
screening in  
the  
Contamination  
Monitoring  
System (CMS)

Placing  
sample into the  
CMS



## Surveillance at import level (3)

### ■ At the seaports

- ❑ Surveillance methodology is same as produce arriving by air
- ❑ CFS keeps track of chilled and frozen meat, milk and frozen confection imported via the sea route as they need licence / health certificate for importation
- ❑ For other food items, Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) now screens cargo manifests and notifies CFS of food consignments

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## Number of samples tested

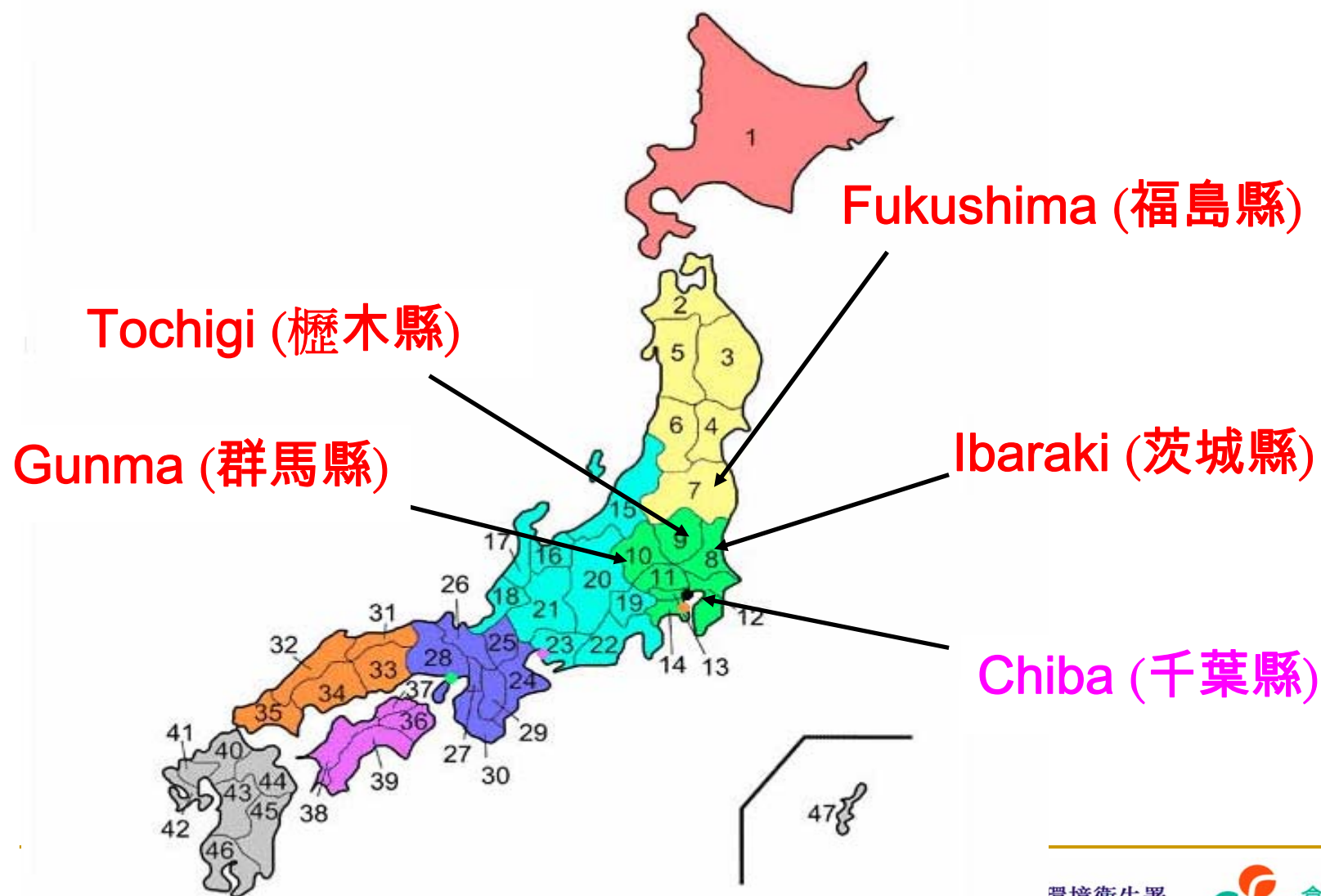
- As at noon 11 May, a total of 7 095 samples had been tested
- Three samples imported from Chiba prefecture were found to be unsatisfactory for I-131 *spinach* (1000 Bq/kg), *white radish* (260 Bq/kg) and *turnip* (800 Bq/kg)
- The values for all 3 samples were above the CODEX standard (100 Bq/kg)
- Remaining samples have satisfactory results

## Prohibition of imports

- Prohibition order announced on 23 March and came into force at noon 24 March
- Prohibited importing 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, 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 to HK



## Enhanced surveillance for radioactive contamination of Japanese food at retail level

- Routine radiological surveillance was continued but a high proportion of samples will be taken from Japanese food at retail level
- Enhanced surveillance on source of Japanese food sold at retail level started on 23 March 2011

## Communication with other parties

- Close communication with Japan Consulate General
- Meetings with food traders and caterers
- Communication with the INFOSAN (the International Food Safety Authorities Network, WHO)
- Communicated and worked closely with other relevant departments – Department of Health, Custom & Excise Department, Security Bureau.

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## Public announcement

- Daily joint press briefings with other government departments or press releases
- A press release was issued on 23 March before import prohibition order issued on 24 March
- Surveillance results were uploaded onto the website since 16 March

# 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

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)

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# Future Action to be taken by CFS

- Continue with present risk management
- Consider including additional prefectures for import prohibition depending on results from local surveillance, Japanese authorities and other countries

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# *Thank You*