Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Notes of the Twenty-ninth Meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum
held on 12 May 2011 at 2:30 p.m.
in Conference Room at Room 102, 1/F, New Wan Chai Market ,
258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

Present

Government Representatives

Dr. Y. Y. HO	Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment & Communication)	(Chairman)
Mr. S. K. WONG	Superintendent (Import/Export)1	
Dr. Violette LIN	Scientific Officer (Nutrition)	
Ms. W. C. LAW	Chief Health Inspector (Food Labelling) (Atg.)	
Mr. L. C. TSE	Chief Health Inspector (Import/Export)SD	
Mr. C. H. JONG	Chief Health Inspector (Food Safety Promotion)	
Ms. S. W. CHUNG	Superintendent (Risk Communication)	(Secretary)

Trade Representatives

Mr. TO Chun Him	AIC Merchandising (Japan) Ltd.
Ms. Caroline YUEN	American Consulate General Hong Kong
Mr. TSANG Wah Him	Calbee Four Seas Co. Ltd.
Mr. WONG Kai Man	Calbee Four Seas Co. Ltd.
Ms. Ming CHEUNG	Campbell Soup Asia Ltd.
Ms. NG Hoi Yan	China Resources Retail (Group) Co., Ltd.
Ms. Grace YEE	City Super Limited
Mr. Dennis CHAN	City Super Limited
Ms. May KAN	Coca-Cola China Ltd.
Mr. CHEUNG Chun Kit	DCH Food Mart
Mr. Freddy FONG	Foodscan Analytics Ltd.
Ms. CHAN Wai Man	Genki Sushi Hong Kong Ltd.
Mr. Allen PANG	Home of Swallows Ltd.
Ms. Frenda WONG	Hong Kong Suppliers Association
Mr. Albert TANG	Hong Kong Suppliers Association

Mr. Gary LO	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Ms. Clara TANG	International Food Safety Testing Centre Ltd.
Mr. CHOW Ting Leung	Kowloon Chamber of Commerce
Ms. Cheryl WU	Kraft Foods Ltd.
Ms. WONG Wing Jok	Lee Kam Kee International Holdings Ltd.
Ms. LAW Suk Kwan	Lee Kam Kee International Holdings Ltd.
Mr. NG Chun Yin	Marks & Spencer
Mr. Tommy LAM	Maxim's Caterers Ltd.
Mr. IP Sui Lun	McDonald’s Restaurants (HK) Ltd.
Mr. Jonathan SO	McDonald’s Restaurants (HK) Ltd.
Ms. Doris CHAN	Nestle Hong Kong Ltd.
Ms. Mabel LEUNG	Parknshop
Mr. CHAN Wing Cheong	Pat Chun Int'l Ltd.
Ms. WU Xian	Pepsico (China) Limited
Mr. Tony CHOW	Pfizer Corporation Hong Kong Ltd.
Ms. Amy FU	Pfizer Corporation Hong Kong Ltd.
Ms. Grace YU	Procter & Gamble Hong Kong Ltd.
Ms. CHAN Mei Tak	San Miguel Brewery HK Ltd.
Ms. Amy YIP	Sims Trading Ltd.
Ms. Caroline HO	Starbucks (Coffee Concepts HK Ltd.)
Mr. WONG Kam Chuen	Swire Coca-Cola HK
Mr. Victor KOK	Tai Pan Bread & Cakes Co. Ltd.
Mr. Allen HO	The Dairy Farm Group
Mr. CHENG Chung Tak	The Garden Co. Ltd.
Mr. Perry SIT	The Hong Kong Health Food Association
Ms. Wing CHEUNG	Unilever Hong Kong Limited
Mr. WONG Yiu Kau	UNY (HK) Co. Ltd.
Mr. Ivan CHAN	Vitasoy International Holdings Ltd.
Mr. Kenneth KWAN	Watami (China) Co. Ltd.
Ms. May LO	Wellcome Company Ltd.
Ms. Wendi CHAN	Wellcome Company Ltd.
Mr. Kelvin CHAN	Wellcome Company Ltd.
Mr. Tommy TONG	Wellcome Company Ltd.
Mr. Stephen CHOI	Wing Wah Food Manufactory Limited
Ms. WU Xian	Pepsico (China) Limited
Mr. Tommy HUI	港九新界海外漁業批發商商會

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all trade representatives to the meeting and introduced government representatives.

Confirmation of the Notes of Last Meeting

2. The notes of last meeting were confirmed without amendments.

Agenda Item 1

Matters Arising from Notes of Last Meeting

Progress of Working Group on Nutrition Labelling

Small Volume Exemption Application

3. Ms. W. C. LAW reported that, as at 6 May 2011, about 37,000 applications for Small Volume Exemption were received. Among these applications, about 34,000 had been approved and about 2,000 rejected. There were 800 applications withdrawn. Applications pending processing were 400.

4. The Chairman advised that the Working Group (WG) on Nutrition Labelling (NL) had not held any meeting since the last meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum. It was planned to hold the next meeting on 15 June 2011. Once the date of the next meeting was

confirmed, members of the WG on NL would be notified of this.

Agenda Item 2

Examination of Radiation Level in Food Imported from Japan

5. Mr. S. K. WONG introduced to the meeting risk management action taken in Hong Kong in the aftermath of Japan nuclear incident arising from the damaged nuclear power plants in Fukushima that occurred after the earthquake on 11 March 2011. It was believed that radioactive substances had been released from the damaged nuclear power plants based on radioactivity detected from air, soil and water around the plants. Immediately after a nuclear incident, fresh food produce was likely to be contaminated with radioactive substances. In this connection, Centre for Food Safety (CFS) had stepped up surveillance of fresh produce imported from Japan since 12 March 2011.

6. Mr. S. K. WONG advised that food items tested under the stepped up surveillance programme covered vegetables and fruits, milk and milk powder, frozen confection, meat and aquatic products, including live aquatic animals. Currently, it was extended to other food items. He pointed out that poultry and poultry eggs did not come under the stepped up surveillance programme as import had been suspended from Japan since 2010 due to avian influenza outbreak. The surveillance at import level was set up at the airport and seaports. The steps in the surveillance were as follows:

a) At the airport – Check the prefectures and production dates, screen every consignment by handheld survey meter for surface contamination and take samples for screening using the Contamination Monitoring System. Any sample tested

above a threshold would be sent to Government Laboratory (GL) for detailed analysis.

b) At seaports – Surveillance methodology was the same as that for produce arriving by air. CFS kept track of chilled and frozen meat, milk and frozen confection imported via the sea route as they required licence / health certificate for importation. Customs and Excise Department (C&ED) also screened cargo manifests and notified CFS of food consignments for other food items.

7. Mr. S. K. WONG continued that, between the period of 12 March 2011 and noon on 11 May 2011, a total of 7,095 samples of food items imported from Japan were tested. Only three samples of spinach, white radish and turnip imported from Chiba prefecture were found to be unsatisfactory. The values of all three samples were above the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) guideline levels. All remaining samples tested came out with satisfactory results. He explained the guideline levels set by Codex on radioactive substances.

8. Mr. S. K. WONG said that prohibition order was announced on 23 March 2011 and came into force at noon on 24 March 2011. The order prohibited importing into Hong Kong and supplying within Hong Kong of food harvested, manufactured, processed or packed on or after 11 March 2011 from five prefectures in Japan, namely Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, and Chiba. Prohibited food items included all fruits and vegetables as well as all milk, milk beverages and dried milk. The order also covered 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 did not exceed the guideline levels laid down by Codex.

9. Mr. S. K. WONG pointed out that there was enhanced surveillance for radioactive contamination of Japanese food at retail level where a high proportion of samples would be taken from Japanese food at retail level. The enhanced surveillance on Japanese food sold at retail level started on 23 March 2011. He said that CFS had communicated with all stakeholders on this issue, including close communication with Japan Consulate General and would continue in this respect, including meetings with food traders and caterers. CFS would also communicate with the International Food Safety Authorities Network, World Health Organization and work closely with other relevant departments, such as Department of Health (DH), C&ED, Security Bureau, etc. From time to time, there was public announcement in forms of daily joint press briefings with other government departments or press releases, such as the press release issued a day prior to issuing the import prohibition order on 24 March 2011. Besides, surveillance results had been uploaded onto the CFS website since 16 March 2011. He assured the meeting that CFS would continue with the present risk management measures and would monitor closely the development of the incident in Japan. CFS would consider including additional prefectures for import prohibition, when necessary. For the time being, there was no such a need.

10. Trade representatives noticed the efforts of CFS in risk management actions that had been taken on food imported from Japan and in communicating the situation to the public. They looked forward to seeing the continuation of these efforts and the momentum in this respect would be maintained to rebuild the confidence of the public on food imported from Japan. They sought advice on what stage were the three samples with unsatisfactory results first detected with radioactive substances, whether packaging materials would come under

the surveillance of CFS, the model of handheld detectors in use for the surveillance, whether all food items from Japan, including those imported under parallel imports, were covered by the surveillance and whether there was a long term plan of surveillance with Government for food imported from Japan in view of a relatively long aging period of radioactive substances.

11. The Chairman advised that there were two aspects in the incident: food safety and consumer confidence. Judging from the satisfactory results of the majority of tested samples, it was basically not a risk with food in Hong Kong imported from Japan, under current restriction, being contaminated by radioactive substances. With the surveillance programme and monitoring mechanism in place, the risk of food imported from Japan to Hong Kong being exposed to contamination of radioactive substances was very low. The situation should become even better as time went by. He noted that DH had already ceased to carry out surveillance on radioactivity for travellers from Japan. Regarding consumer confidence on food from Japan, this could be rebuilt gradually upon the public seeing the efforts of Government and the satisfactory results.

12. The Chairman continued that CFS was only responsible for surveillance of food and the surveillance of packaging materials was under the purview of C&ED. He opined that food items in prepackaged food could hardly be contaminated as it should not be able for radioactive substances to penetrate through packaging materials into food items of prepackaged food products. On the model of handheld detector used for surveillance, he said that there was no information on hand but he assured that such detectors were sufficient for the initial screening of radioactivity before detailed analysis would be carried out by GL. Only the testing results of GL would be considered for law enforcement purpose. On the duration of the surveillance programme, he remarked that that would last for a long period of

time and an enhanced surveillance plan would be considered in the long run.

13. Regarding at what stage the three samples were in when they were first detected with radioactive substances, Mr. S. K. WONG replied that they were detected with a problem at the second stage when a sample was drawn from each produce. On whether all food items from Japan were covered by the surveillance, Mr. S. K. WONG advised that food items imported to Hong Kong from Japan under parallel imports did come under the surveillance of CFS when it was known that Japan was their country of origin.

Agenda Item 3

Amendment to Cap. 132AF in respect of Dried Milk, Condensed Milk and Reconstituted Milk

14. Mr. L. C. TSE briefed the meeting on the amendment to the Harmful Substances in Food Regulations (HSFR), Cap. 132AF, so that the restriction of prohibited substances in Schedule 2 would be extended to cover dried milk, condensed milk and reconstituted milk. He said that in view of the occurrence of food incidents involving infant formulas in recent years, such as the detection of melamine in 2008 and the suspected presence of estrogen in 2010, there was concern with Government about the spillover of problematic infant formulas into Hong Kong and whether the current local regulatory regime had provided sufficient control over such food item. Currently, the safety of infant formulas was regulated by section 54 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), which stipulates that all food for sale must be fit for human consumption. As food includes infant formulas, its safety could be regulated through section 54 and prosecution action might be taken in cases where the infant formula was found to be unfit for human consumption.

15. Mr. L. C. TSE continued that in order to address the public concern over the suspected presence of estrogens in some infant formulas manufactured in the Mainland which led to suspected cases of precocious puberty in some children in the Mainland last August, review had been conducted to examine whether there was any specific statutory control governing the presence of hormones of exogenous origin in milk powder. After the review, it was considered that the Food Safety Ordinance (FSO), Cap. 612, which was a new legislation enacted on 30 March 2011 and would come into force on 1 August 2011, could enhance the traceability in case of a food incident involving infant formula in Hong Kong. The introduction of a new import control on this food item was considered not necessary.

16. Mr. L. C. TSE said that other relevant legislation on food standards was also reviewed, which included Colouring Matter in Food Regulations (Cap. 132H), Sweeteners in Food Regulations (Cap. 132U), Food Adulteration (Metallic Contamination) Regulations (Cap. 132V), HSFR (Cap. 132AF), Mineral Oil in Food Regulations (Cap. 132AR) and Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD). After the review, it was concluded that, except for the HSFR, Cap. 132AF, no amendment to other legislations was necessary as there was sufficient food safety control on food and the broad definition of food already covers dried milk, condensed milk and reconstituted milk. He explained the existing content of and the proposed amendments to HSFR, Cap. 132AF, in details. Should the proposed amendments be passed by Legislative Council (LegCo), the three exogenous estrogens on Schedule 2 in HSFR, Cap. 132AF would be prohibited in infant formula, condensed milk and reconstituted milk. The potential problem highlighted by the suspected contaminated infant formula in the Mainland in August 2010 could then be tackled. Regarding the timetable for amending the legislation, Mr. L. C. TSE advised that the Food Safety and Environmental

Hygiene Panel of the LegCo would be consulted on 14 June 2011 tentatively. It was aimed at tabling the amendment regulation at LegCo by end of 2011. He welcomed trade representatives to let him know of any questions on the proposed amendments.

17. The Chairman remarked that the proposed amendments to HSFR, Cap. 132AF were technical oriented in relation to definitions on milk so as to cover such food items that did not fall under the definitions of milk. The content of these amendments was a relatively minor one. He suggested trade representatives to take note of the timetable for the legislative amendments. In reply to enquiries from trade representatives, Mr. L. C. TSE advised that there were no major problems with samples of milk powder tested in past years for the prohibited hormones in Schedule 2 of the HSFR, Cap. 132AF but it would be desirable to propose the amendments for proper regulatory purpose in the long run.

Agenda Item 4

Trade Guidelines for Reducing Salt in Food

18. Dr. Violette LIN introduced to the meeting the WG on Developing Trade Guidelines on Reducing Sodium in Foods. "Salt" or "sodium" presented naturally in foods and drinking water. In western diets, over 75% of the source of sodium came from processed foods**.** In Asian countries, study suggested that salt was added during cooking and at table. In traditional Chinese diet, around 70% of sodium came from cooking salt whereas others were from oyster sauce, soy sauce, salted vegetables, etc. Sodium was necessary in the regulation of osmolarity and an acid-base balance. The daily requirement of sodium for adults was around 500 mg. Excessive intake of sodium might lead to high blood pressure (BP).

19. Dr. Violette LIN advised that the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended the daily intake of salt should be lower than 5 g salt or equivalent to lower than 2,000 mg sodium. In the Hong Kong Population Health Survey 2003/2004, it was found that about 27% of adults aged 15 and above were suffering from high BP or hypertension. According to statistics of the WHO, hypertension was responsible for 13% of death globally. There was a dose response and a direct relationship between salt intake and BP: Higher BP with more intakes of salt. It was noticed that there was additional benefit to a healthy diet if salt was reduced. This referred to a document published recently by WHO advising that reducing salt intake from 10 g to 5 g/day would reduce the rate of stroke by 23% and that of cardiovascular disease by 17%. In 2007, the World Cancer Research Fund advised that it was a probable cause of cancers, especially stomach cancer, with the intake of salt / salt-preserved foods.

20. Dr. Violette LIN continued that sodium performed an important role in food. On taste and flavour, sodium enhanced sweetness, mask metallic tastes, etc. On preservation and other property, it reduced water activity, prevented microbial growth, extended product shelf life, aided in the fermentation of preserved foods and improved product texture. She advised that, internationally, many countries were reducing sodium in food and adopted a tripartite collaboration in the issue among Government, trade and consumers. Strategies of the WHO promoted in the issue included public awareness campaigns, regulation, food labelling, benchmarking of food categories, food reformulation, etc.

21. Dr. Violette LIN reported that the WG on Developing Trade Guideline on Reducing Sodium in Foods had held its first meeting in March 2011. The terms of reference of the

WG, which was formed with representatives from trade, academia, dietitians / nutritionists, physicians and Government officials, were as follows:

a) To review the local and international movement on sodium reduction in foods;
b) To develop a set of trade guideline to reduce dietary sodium intake;
c) To recommend on the consultation exercise with stakeholders; and
d) To propose and advise on the publicity activities concerned.

22. Dr. Violette LIN remarked that there were several significant topics raised at the first meeting of the WG and these were summed up as follows:

a) Not only there should be efforts in reducing sodium / salt in non-prepackaged foods, such as restaurant, canteen, home, etc., there should also be efforts in reducing such in prepackaged foods;
b) The concerns of trade and those of consumer for food products lower in salt or sodium were linked closely: where there was demand from consumers, there was supply; where there was good marketing strategy, there were consumers;
c) Trade to promote dishes / foods with low salt / sodium by means of voluntary "labelling" of nutrient information in dishes / non-prepackaged foods;
d) The advice of feasible food reformulation strategies, such as reducing salt / sodium to the minimum little by little, replacing sodium in salt with alternatives, resizing package, etc.;
e) Trade to employ food / nutrition experts in carrying research and development, for manufacturing healthier foods, monitoring the supply of healthier foods supply, promoting healthier foods, etc. at restaurants / supermarkets / workplaces / schools;

and

f) Offering training / re-training courses to cooks / chefs on the importance of healthy cooking.

23. Dr. Violette LIN advised that the WG would hold its next meeting in June or July 2011 to discuss the draft trade guidelines. After July 2011, the draft trade guidelines would be uploaded to the internet for trade to comment. The finalized guidelines would be published before December 2012. She added that another WG on Reducing Sugars / Fat in Foods was being formed and trade representatives would be informed when it held meeting.

24. The Chairman advised that it was a global trend in reducing salt, sugar and fat in food. There were regional strategies being formulated by the WHO in this respect. Trade might like to note the trend and source of food with low content of such nutrients. The WG group formed on developing trade guidelines on reducing sodium in foods was simply one of its kinds. He cordially invited interested trade representatives to join these working groups to prepare the guidelines.

25. A trade representative suggested that Government should take the lead in educating the public on the matter in telling how much was 5 g of salt, such as on NL as there were limited contributions from trade in the matter. Another trade representative sought advice on the nutrition label for potassium chloride under the local legislation if it was to replace sodium chloride, whether it would be sufficient to simply declare "sea salt" on the list of ingredients when "sea salt" might contain a compound of various minerals, whether it was required to list out all ingredients in the compound of "sea salt" after "sea salt" in brackets and whether there was any functional name for potassium chloride.

26. The Chairman considered that the food trade was able to assist in the matter through cooking with low salt, sugar and fat and the retail trade in sourcing appropriate prepackaged food items. On educating the public, the new media campaign on NL in June 2011 would publicise on low salt, sugar and fat and the relevant information. On declaring the list of ingredient for potassium chloride, Ms. W. C. LAW replied that according to the definition in Cap. 132W, ingredient means any substance, including any additive and any constituent of a compound ingredient, which is used in the manufacture or preparation of a food and which is still present in the finished product, even if in altered form. The chemical of a compound added in food should be declared on the list of ingredient. The Chairman remarked that it was mandatory under the NL legislation to declare sodium but not for potassium on the nutrition label. Under normal circumstances, it was adequate to declare "salt" on the nutrition label without its chemical name as this was generally understood by the public as equivalent to sodium, the chemical element in salt. There were other miscellaneous minerals in salt but it was not required to list these out. Dr. Violette LIN supplemented that the WG on Developing Trade Guideline on Reducing Sodium in Foods found it acceptable for potassium chloride as a replacement but there was no discussion on the method of declaring this. The Chairman suggested that the WG should consider including the method of declaring potassium chloride on nutrition label in the trade guidelines.

27. A trade representative was glad to know that there would be promotion on reducing salt, sugar and fat in food. She suggested that, if it was the intention of CFS to promote healthy food, more room should be allowed under the NL Scheme for trade to introduce prepackaged food items of low salt, sugar and fat to consumers. Another trade representative opined that the percentage required for reduction in salt in order to declare "low" on a food product was

too high and this should be lowered down to facilitate informing consumers that the food product had been reduced in salt and was healthier. She sought advice on the means that might assist in overcoming this obstacle.

28. The Chairman replied that the reduction in salt, sugar and fat was a separate issue from the requirements of declaring nutrients on nutrition label. He pointed out that reduction in salt and sugar might not necessarily be able to meet the standards of "low" salt and sugar. There were actions in Great Britain to reduce salt and sugar in food and trade might consider that factor when sourcing products. Ms. W. C. LAW remarked that nutrition claims included nutrient content claim, nutrient comparative claim and nutrition function claim, which were now under control of the existing labelling legislation. Besides, all labelling information including nutrition information marked on the food label should not falsely describe, be factual and with proof to backup and there was nothing that in contravention of the law.

Agenda Item 5

Risk Assessment Report on Dietary Iodine Intake in Hong Kong Adults

29. Dr. Violette LIN introduced to the meeting the Risk Assessment (RA) Report on Dietary Iodine Intake in Hong Kong Adults. Iodine was essential to human body as a micronutrient. In human body, its thyroid gland trapped 50 to 75 μg/day in order to maintain an adequate supply of thyroid hormones. In assessing the iodine status, it required the integration of dietary iodine intake, biochemical data and clinical symptoms. Inadequate intake of iodine of less than 50 μg/day might cause goitre to develop. This was known as Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDD) as the WHO had named it. The symptoms of IDD in different ages and safety reference were shown. She pointed out that IDD would

impair the mental function and delay the physical development of child and adolescent. On the other hand, excessive intake might cause adverse effects to the thyroid gland. The major dietary sources of iodine were seawater fish / shellfish / seaweeds, iodised salt, drinking water, especially for places with high iodine content in water. The loss of iodine ranged from 3% to 67% during cooking and food processing.

30. Dr. Violette LIN continued that, according to the WHO, 31% of the world population: were insufficient with iodine intake. Hence, iodine deficiency was a worldwide known public health problem and elimination of IDD was accorded the highest priority. According to a WHO report 70% household of the world population was able to access to iodised salt. A survey of the International Council for the Control of IDD found that 170 countries were taking out campaign on Universal Salt Iodisation, i.e. iodisation of all food for human and animal consumption by the use of iodised salt. For the iodine status in Hong Kong, there was limited information for the time being. In 2003, the Hong Kong IDD Expert Panel Group published the Consensus Summary Statement advising that iodine deficiency among expectant mothers was likely to exist and urged the continuous surveillance of iodine status locally. There were studies on iodine content in foods. One was in 1998 conducted jointly by the Consumer Council and the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Another one was in 2005 by Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.

31. Dr. Violette LIN said that the objectives of the RA study were to examine the iodine levels in selected foods in Hong Kong and to estimate the dietary iodine intake in adults. The study covered 92 food items, each with three samples. The analysis of iodine in foods was carried out to the edible parts by the Food Research Laboratory as they were sold and before cooking. This applied to those that were ready to eat without the need of cooking.

In the assessment of intake of iodine, the consumption data took reference to the Hong Kong Population-based Food Consumption Survey 2005-2007. She briefed the meeting on findings of the study and advised that the conclusions drawn from the study were that iodine was present in many of the foods available locally but the content varied greatly within / among food groups. There were rich sources of iodine from seaweeds, iodised salt, seafood, milk / milk products, egg / egg products, etc. About 93% of adults in Hong Kong took in iodine less than the 150 μg/day recommended by the Chinese Nutrition Society. However, the data applied to only iodine taken in from food. It was necessary to combine clinical symptoms and biochemical indicators in order to comprehensively assess the iodine status of local population.

32. Dr. Violette LIN advised that consumers should eat a variety of high-iodine foods, such as seaweeds, seafood, egg / egg products, milk / milk products, as part of a healthy balanced diet to ensure the intake of sufficient iodine. They should follow WHO's recommendations of taking less than 5 g salt/day and try to replace non-iodised salt with iodised salt. She also advised that, in order to retain the maximum amount of iodine in foods, consumers should steam or stir-fry foods with little oil, cook crustaceans such as shrimps intact, and add iodised salt just before serving the food. For pregnant women, women preparing for pregnancy and lactating mothers, they should seek advice from health professionals on the need of iodine supplements, when necessary, in addition to taking in food with high iodine content and using iodised salt.

33. Dr. Violette LIN advised that trade should avail more choices of iodised salt for the public to choose and provide clear instructions on its usage to minimize the loss of iodine, such as adding iodised salt just before serving the food, if possible. When iodising salt,

trade should follow WHO recommendations of adding 20 to 40 mg iodine per kg of salt and declare on the label that the salt was iodine-fortified and the amount of iodine added.

34. The Chairman said that it was not recommended to take in more than 5 g of salt each day but it was recommended to take in 150 μg/day of iodine. However, it was not recommended to take in iodine exceeding 1,000 μg/day. He pointed out that the current evidence collected from the RA study was not comprehensive. It was confined to iodine taken from meals. Further studies, such as examination of the urine of pregnant women, were required to obtain the full picture since the focus of the problem was on iodine status of pregnant women and new born baby. Universal iodisation of salt was not a local policy. Meanwhile, the Government urged the trade to offer consumers the choice of salt added with iodine.

35. The Chairman continued that, as in previous studies, there was advice to the public and trade on the issue. A recent research in local market suggested that among the over hundred something brands of salt for sale in the local market, some 10% plus were added with iodine. The prices of salt added with iodine varied but they were generally more expensive than normal salt. He was of the view that the production cost for salt added with iodine should not be very high, taking reference of the situation over the border in the Mainland. He hoped that salt added with iodine should be easily available at shops for the public to choose from and these products would be clearly labelled. According to the legislation, it was required to declare on the product when iodine was added to salt but not the quantity that was added. However, he suggested the quantity of iodine added to salt should also be labelled as well. The information would facilitate the public estimate their daily intake of iodine and would also useful to medical practitioners during consultation. He said that the study

would be published in June/July 2011.

36. A trade representative sought advice on whether salt added with iodine should be provided with nutrition label. The Chairman replied that, according to legislation, it was required to include the information on the nutrition label for such salt. Dr. Violette LIN suggested that the quantity of iodine that was added to salt might be added as a new item on the existing nutrition label or declared it as a factual statement (e.g. in unit of "per 100 g" or "per serving"). Another trade representative sought advice on whether sea salt would contain more iodine than refined salt. Dr. Violette LIN replied that coarse sea salt might contain higher iodine than refined non-iodised salt but its level would not be as high as iodised salt. Besides, a trade representative sought advice on the form of iodine added to salt. Dr. Violette LIN replied that WHO had recommended potassium iodide, i.e. KI or potassium iodate, i.e. KIO_3.

Agenda Item 6

Regional Symposium "From Food Incidents to Crisis Management"

37. Mr. C. H. JONG informed the meeting that the Regional Symposium featuring the theme "From Food Incidents to Crisis Management" would be held on 1 June 2011 (Full Day) and 2 June 2011 (a.m.) at Hotel Nikko Hong Kong. By June 2011, CFS would have been established for five years since its establishment on 2 May 2006. Since the establishment, CFS had adopted a food safety risk analysis framework promulgated by international food safety authorities to enhance food regulatory functions for both local and imported food. With the sustained efforts, CFS was designated as the WHO Collaborating Centre for Risk Analysis of Chemicals in Food in October 2010. To commemorate this landmark development and the fifth anniversary of the establishment of CFS, the Regional Symposium

was therefore organized.

38. Mr. C. H. JONG continued that objectives of the Regional Symposium were to provide a platform for local, Mainland and overseas experts to share their experiences and to update the development of various food safety issues, to foster partnership and collaboration, to provide an opportunity for communicating with the trade. He introduced the many speakers who would speak at the symposium and invited trade representatives to enrol to the event, which was free of charge. The Chairman noticed that Mr. Allen HO, Food Safety and Quality Assurance Director, Dairy Farm Group, who was one of trade representatives at the meeting, would speak on "Traders' Responses to Food Incidents" to share the experience of trade in handling food incidents. He cordially invited trade representatives and their colleagues to enrol to the event and looked forward to seeing all at the event.

Agenda Item 7

Any Other Business

Food Safety Ordinance

39. A trade representative sought advice on whether traders were required to keep record under the FSO for food items distributed to automatic vending machines for sale to customers. Mr. L. C. TSE advised that food distributed to automatic vending machines for sale was regarded as internal distribution. Although such internal distribution records were not mandatory required under the law, it was encouraged to keep them in order to facilitate the traders to trace the problematic food in case of food incidents,.

40. A trade representative sought advice on whether the hotline and email on FSO had been

set up for enquiries purpose. Mr. L. C. TSE advised that the FSO would only come into force on 1 August 2011. The hotline and email for enquiry purpose were not yet in operation. Anyway, the publicity on FSO would start in mid-June 2011 and by that time, the hotline and other contacts in relation to FSO would be widely publicized in order to assist food traders to obtain relevant details of the FSO through different means.

41. A trade representative sought advice on whether registration under FSO was required if a food trader had already been registered under the voluntary registration scheme. Mr. L. C. TSE advised that registration under FSO would still be required after the legislation came into force even a trader had already been registered under the voluntary registration scheme. Anyway, facilitation measures would be introduced for this group of food traders.

Date of Next Meeting

42. Trade representatives would be notified of the date of next meeting.

43. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.