

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Notes of the Fifty Third Meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum
held on 16 March 2016 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. HO Yuk Yin	Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment & Communication)	(Chairman)
Dr. Duncan TUNG	Senior Medical Officer (Risk Communication)	
Mr. Nicky HO	Scientific Officer (Nutrition Labelling)	
Ms. CHOW Shuk Man	Scientific Officer (Biotechnology)	
Ms. Sonia CHAN	Chief Health Inspector (Communication & Response)	
Mr. WONG Cheuk Ho	Superintendent (Risk Communication)	(Secretary)

Trade Representatives

Mr. Ivan IP	3M
Ms. LIM Lay Nak	A. S. Watson Industries
Mr. Terence YUEN	A. S. Watson Industries
Mr. LO Lok Sang	A-1 Bakery Co., (HK) Ltd.
Mr. Andrew WONG	Abbott Laboratories Ltd.
Ms. Lilian TANG	AEON Topvalu (Hong Kong) Co., Ltd.
Ms. NG Sin Kou	ALS Technichem (HK) Pty Ltd.
Ms. Caroline YUEN	American Consulate General Hong Kong
Ms. CHAN Nga Li	Amoy Food Limited
Ms. KWOK Yee Man	Angliss Hong Kong Food Service Ltd
Mr. Eric LEE	Ausino Food Holdings Limited
Ms. Frances CHEUNG	Australian Trade Commission
Mr. Frankie MOY	Bellamy's Organic
Mr. LAM Pak Wah	Best Harvest Company Limited
Ms. Joanne LI	Bureau Veritas Hong Kong Limited
Mr. Kin LEUNG	Café de Coral Holdings Ltd.
Mr. Vito WONG	Café de Coral Holdings Ltd.

Ms. Cindy YOUNG	Calbee Four Seas Co. Ltd.
Ms. Peggy CHAN	Campbell Soup Asia Ltd.
Mr. LO Tim Lun	Castco Testing Centre Ltd.
Ms. Christine CHEUNG	China Dragon Inspection & Certification (HK) Ltd
Mr. Chi WONG	China Inspection Co. Ltd
Mr. Jack TSE	China Resources Ng Fung International Distribution Co., Ltd.
Ms. Grace YEE	City Super Limited
Ms. YEUNG Shu Ying	CMA Industrial Development Foundation Ltd
Ms. May KAN	Coca-Cola China Ltd.
Ms. Yedda CHOU	Coca-Cola Taiwan Ltd.
Ms. Maria LAI	Comvita HK Ltd.
Mr. Houston WONG	Consulate General of Canada
Mr. CHAN Wing Kai	Consulate General of Switzerland
Ms. Jessica YUNG	Consulate General of the Republic of Korea
Mr. Ben LU	Consulate General of the State of Kuwait H K S.A.R.
Ms. YIU Tsz Yau	Dah Chong Hong
Ms. Sandy TSE	Danone Nutricia Early Life Nutrition (Hong Kong) Limited
Mr. Henry CHENG	Fonterra Brands (Hong Kong) Ltd.
Mr. Freddy FONG	Foodscan Analytics Ltd
Ms. Doris CHAN	FrieslandCampina(Hong Kong) Limited
Ms. Noel HO	Garden Heart Food Ltd.
Ms. Yvonne CHAN	General Mills Hong Kong Ltd.
Mr. Nam TO	Global Wellness Logistics Ltd.
Ms. Wing LAU	Godiva Chocolatier (Asia) Ltd
Ms. Poyce CHENG	Hago Limited
Ms. Chloe KWAN	Hantin Food Co., Ltd.
Ms. Rita CHAN	HAVI Freight Management Ltd.
Mr. CHEUNG Chun Ho	Herbalife Asia Pacific Limited
Ms. Lisa TANG	Hong Kong Ham Holdings Ltd.
Ms. Peggie YAU	Hong Kong Health Food Association
Mr. Gary LO	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Mr. Ronald CHOW	HUNG FOOK TONG
Ms. Annie CHAN	Hutchison China Meditech Ltd.
Ms. Leona HO	IKEA
Mr. Marco LO	Institution of Dining Art
Ms. Katherine LEUNG	International Food Safety Testing Centre Ltd.
Ms. WAN Lok Man	Intertek Testing Services Hong Kong
Ms. AU Wing Sum	Island Shangri-la Hotel
Ms. MOU Yee Man	Itochu Hong Kong Ltd.

Mr. WONG Fuk Sheung	L D F (Food) Ltd.
Ms. Alice WONG	Lee Kum Kee International Holdings Ltd.
Mr. LEE Yuk Fung	LF Asia (Hong Kong) Limited
Ms. CHAN Ying Chi	Mandarin International Ltd.
Ms. Faye LEUNG	Mannings
Mr. Stephen LAM	Mannings
Ms. Gloria YUEN	Marks and Spencer (Asia Pacific) Ltd.
Ms. Kathy KOK	MATRADE Hong Kong
Mr. CHUNG Ka Kit	Maxim's Caterers Ltd.
Ms. WAN Yuen Ting	Maxim's Caterers Ltd. (Food Factory-Branded Products)
Ms. Juliana CHAN	Maxim's Food Factory
Ms. Grace MOK	Mcdonald's
Ms. Amy CHU	Mead Johnson Nutrition (Hong Kong) Ltd.
Ms. WONG Lai Suen	Michael Wah Hing Co. Ltd.
Mr. WONG Pui Sum	Natural Alliance Co., Ltd.
Ms. LEUNG Kit Yan	Nestle Hong Kong Ltd.
Ms. Haymann LAU	New Zealand Consulate-General
Ms. Vien POON	New Zealand Focus
Mr. LAU Wing Lun	Nine to Five Limited
Mr. Herbert LEE	Nissin Foods Co., Ltd.
Ms. Jasmine IP	Nu Life International (Asia) Ltd.
Ms. Doris LO	Nu Skin Enterprises Hong Kong, LLC
Ms. Wendy FUNG	Nutrifarm Food Trading Co., Ltd.
Ms. German CHEUNG	Pappagallo Pacific Limited
Mr. Peter Johnston	PARKnSHOP (HK) Limited
Ms. Cactus LAI	PARKnSHOP (HK) Limited
Ms. May LO	Pizza Express (HK) Ltd.
Ms. Launita CHAN	Polybrands International Ltd
Ms. Emily KAN	Prizemart Limited
Mr. Lewis HAU	Saraya (Hong Kong Sales) Co., Ltd.
Ms. Candy SZETO	Satay King Co. Ltd
Ms. Susana Munoz	Secretariat of Economy of Mexico
Ms. Suki YAU	SGS Hong Kong Limited
Mr. Nick LEUNG	Snow Brand HK Co., Ltd.
Ms. Antonia Martinez Ferreras	Spanish Trade Commission
Mr. WONG Kam Chuen	Swire Coca-Cola HK Ltd
Mr. LAI Shing Hin	The Association for Hong Kong Catering Services Management Ltd.
Mr. Alfred NG	The Dairy Farm Company Limited

Ms. Anna LEUNG	The Dairy Farm Group
Ms. LEUNG Suet Ying	The Dairy Farm Group
Mr. LING Tsun Kit	The Garden Company Limited
Ms. Vivian LAM	The Hong Kong Standards and Testing Centre Ltd.
Ms. Kammy YEUNG	The Hong Kong Standards and Testing Centre Ltd.
Ms. Abby WONG	Tingyi-Asahi Beverages Holding Co., Ltd.
Ms. Joanna LAM	Trade Commission of Belgium
Ms. Po CHU	Truth & Faith International Ltd.
Ms. Wing CHEUNG	Unilever Hong Kong Limited
Ms. Winnie KWOK	Vitasoy International Holdings Ltd.
Mr. LAM Tsz Mau	Winner Food Products Ltd.
Ms. Amy FU	Wyeth (Hong Kong) Holding Co. Ltd

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all trade representatives to the 53rd meeting and introduced government representatives to the meeting.

Confirmation of the Notes of Last Meeting

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

Agenda Item 1

Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling)(Amendment)(No. 2) Regulation 2014 – Follow-up Formula and Prepackaged Foods for Infants and Young Children

3. Mr. Nicky HO informed the meeting that the Legislative Council had completed its vetting of the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulation 2014 in October 2014. The Regulation comprised requirements on nutritional composition

of infant formulae and nutrition labelling of infant formulae, follow-up formulae and prepackaged food for infants and young children. The nutritional composition and nutritional labelling requirements for infant formulae stipulated in the Amendment Regulation came into force on 13 December 2015 after a grace period of 18 months. The nutritional labelling requirements for follow-up formulae and prepackaged foods for infants and young children stipulated in the Amendment Regulation would come into operation on 13 June 2016 after a grace period of 24 months. Mr. Nicky HO elaborated on the requirements on nutrition labelling of follow-up formulae and prepackaged foods for infants and young children. Follow-up formulae had to label the energy value and content of 25 nutrients. Prepackaged foods for infants and young children had to label the energy value, the contents of protein, total fat, carbohydrates and sodium, and the contents of vitamin A and vitamin D if they were added to the food. Exemption from the requirements of nutritional composition and nutrition labelling would be granted for formula for special medical purposes for infants and young children marked or labelled with required information. Exemption from the requirements of nutrition labelling would be granted for products with container surface area less than a designated figure. Technical Guidance Notes and Method Guidance Notes on the subject had been issued in January 2015 for traders' reference. The information was also available on the website of the Centre for Food Safety (CFS).

Agenda Item 2

Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulation – Nutrition Labelling and Labelling of Prepackaged Food

4. Mr. Nicky HO briefed the meeting of the nutrition labelling scheme which was applicable to general prepackaged foods. The scheme covered nutrition label and nutrition claims. Nutrition label had to include information on energy and seven core nutrients (1+7)

(i.e. protein, carbohydrates, total fat, saturated fatty acids, trans fatty acids, sodium, sugars). For other nutrients, declaration was voluntary. The amount of the required nutrients could be expressed in per 100 gram, per package or per serving. Nutrition claims included nutrient content claims, nutrient comparative claims and nutrient function claims, and food labels and advertisements were subject to control. Exemption from the requirements of nutrition labelling would be granted for some food items if there was practical difficulty for the trade (e.g., prepackaged food packed in a container which has a total surface area of less than 100 cm²), if the food did not contain energy and core nutrients, if the food was fresh in nature without any addition of ingredient (e.g. fresh fruits, vegetables, meat and fish), and also for prepackaged food with small sales volume. Technical Guidance Notes and Method Guidance Notes on the subject were available on the website of the CFS for traders' reference.

5. Ms. Sonia CHAN informed the meeting of the current regulation on the labelling of prepackaged food. According to the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations, Cap. 132W, all prepackaged food had to be labelled with appropriate food labelling. The definition of prepackaged food was introduced. Food labelling included general labelling and nutrition labelling. General labelling would list out the following information: name of the food; list of ingredients; indication of durability; statement of special conditions for storage or instructions for use; name and address of manufacturer or packer; count, weight or volume. Starting from 1 October 2014, CFS had tightened up its enforcement by doing away with the explanation period, as well as the practice of issuing warning letters and allowing time for rectifying any irregularities. If any non-compliance with the requirements was identified by CFS, including failure to provide labels meeting the legibility requirements, CFS would initiate prosecution immediately without allowing any time for rectification. Since then up to 7 March 2016, 54 prepackaged food products were found not complying with the nutrition labelling scheme, of which 33 and 21 were identified

by visual checking not complying with the statutory requirements of the Nutrition Labelling Scheme and by chemical analysis for discrepancy between the nutrient content and the declared value on the nutrition label respectively. The trade was advised to understand the definition of prepackaged foods, include nutrition information of energy and seven specific nutrients in nutrition labels of prepackaged foods in the prescribed format, and aware of the regulation defining the standard conditions for nutrition claims to be made on the labels. The nutrition information of foods could be obtained by either direct chemical analysis of food samples or indirect nutrient analysis based on calculation. The trade would be held responsible for the accuracy of information provided on food labels. Manufacturers, importers, vendors, or any relevant parties were recommended to engage laboratory testing to verify their own nutrition label declarations. As nutrient composition of foods might be different due to variations in seasons, processing practices and ingredient sources, the CFS had developed tolerance levels for deviation in different batches of products. Nevertheless, food traders had to step up quality control of the product if the deviation was very large. Any person who sold prepackaged food without nutrition labelling would be liable to a maximum fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for 6 months. Relevant information on the subject was available on the website of the CFS.

6. The Chairman remarked that as there were quite a number of cases of non-compliance, he welcomed feedbacks from the trade on any difficulties encountered and whether they had implemented any quality control measures to ensure the accuracy of the nutrition labels.

7. One trade representative enquired whether labelling was required for festive food items (such as carrot cakes and rice dumplings) sold at food premises. Mr. Nicky HO replied that as long as the festive foods concerned were prepackaged items, they would fall under the requirements of the Regulation. Application for exemption from nutrition labelling could be

made for prepackaged foods with small sales volume (i.e. below 30,000 pieces per year). The Chairman supplemented that for rice dumplings which were not prepackaged, labelling would not be required. The trade representative further remarked that the high cost of performing chemical analysis posed a great burden on the small food premises. The Chairman remarked that the trade could consider the alternative of obtaining nutrition information of food by indirect nutrient analysis. Information on that was available on the CFS website and workshops had been organized for the trade. Further workshops could be organized if demanded.

8. In response to the remark of a trade representative that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) should not prosecute a retailer based on just one sample taken which was not in line with overseas practice of taking 10-20 samples for testing before prosecution, the Chairman replied that presently FEHD would take 12 individually prepackaged consumer units of the product as sample before determining prosecution and would take less if the practical situation at retail outlets did not warrant the taking of 12 units, provided that a fair sample of the bulk of the food in question was taken. In addition, a tolerance level of some 20% had been developed to allow for deviation in different batches of products.

9. One trade representative enquired whether the sample unit referred to a serving size unit or a retail pack unit. He also enquired that in performing chemical analysis, whether the 12 units would be pooled up as one data, or there would be 12 different data. Mr. Nicky HO replied that under the current sampling plan, 12 prepackaged consumer units would be taken randomly from the same food lot in question and then combined to make a composite sample for analysis. The trade representative further remarked that some prepackaged foods, like Chinese preserved meat, would have great deviation in nutrient content in each package and he recommended that more samples should be taken for analysis.

10. In response to the enquiry of another trade representative, the Chairman remarked that usually the first sample taken upon checking of a retail outlet would only be a random sample and would be used for press release if found failing the test. The official sample to be taken afterwards for the purpose of prosecution would consist of 12 consumer units as practicable or minimum amount of sample that was required to run the testing. The trade representative remarked that issuing press release based on only one sample would be unfair and might cause unnecessary public panic as the result might be due to product deviation and suggested issuing press release only upon receipt of unsatisfactory result of formal sampling. The Chairman thanked for the views.

Agenda Item 3

Labelling of Genetically Modified Food

11. Ms. CHOW Shuk Man briefed the meeting of the labelling of genetically modified (GM) food. GM food referred to any food or food ingredient that was, or was derived from, an organism in which the genetic material had been modified using modern biotechnology. GM foods currently available on the international market had passed safety assessments conducted by respective food safety authorities. Nevertheless, labelling of GM food could allow consumers to make an informed choice. Codex (2011) stated that governments were free to decide on whether to label foods derived from modern biotechnology, including foods containing GM organisms. Many overseas countries had introduced their own GM food labelling requirements, including voluntary labelling, mandatory labelling of all products/designated products. In Hong Kong, the Guidelines on Voluntary Labelling of GM Food (Guidelines) was issued in 2006 to enhance consumers' knowledge and right to make an informed choice of GM food, and to support the local trade's initiative in setting up a voluntary labelling system for GM food. The Guidelines were applicable to prepackaged

food that contained food or food ingredients known to have a GM counterpart. The practices recommended by the Guidelines included: positive GM food labelling for food items with 5% or more GM materials in their respective ingredients; additional declaration on label when significant modifications have taken place; and exemption for certain products. The means and conditions for negative labelling were also provided. Previous studies showed that some samples were found containing more than 5% GM material but with no GM food label and there was room for improvement. The trade was advised to follow the Guidelines to make truthful and informative labels in a consumer-friendly manner, provide positive GM food labelling for food items with 5% or more GM materials in their respective ingredient(s) or with significant modifications, and to support negative labelling with documentation.

12. In response to an enquiry from a trade representative, the Chairman remarked that the Guidelines had not specified any particular testing method for the products. Ms. CHOW Shuk Man informed that a list of accredited laboratories in Hong Kong that could perform the concerned testing could be found on the HOKLAS website. The Chairman added that currently the GM food labelling requirement was voluntary and not specifically regulated. Nevertheless the trade had to ensure that the labels were correct.

13. One trade representative enquired that for negative GM labelling of organic food, whether the certification from the supplier would be acceptable as supporting document. Ms. CHOW Shuk Man replied that certification by an accredited certifying body, or the provision of an Identity Preservation Certificate, would be acceptable.

14. One trade representative remarked that GM food products were freely traded worldwide and included as ingredients or sub-ingredients of foods. Imposing GM food labelling would

create great difficulties for suppliers particularly North American suppliers as the GM food contents were already mixed in the supply chain for which they did not know. For Hong Kong the problem would even be greater as most food products were packed outside Hong Kong but we did the labelling. Hong Kong had already had mandatory legislation requiring that all GM foods sold in the market were safe and had no adverse effects to public health. As long as the trade complied with that legislation there would not be any problem of food safety. Under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, Cap. 132, the Government had the authority to introduce food labelling regulations on grounds of public health. If not for public health reasons, the Government would not be entitled to introduce mandatory GM food labelling through legislation. He appealed the Government to maintain the current voluntary labelling scheme but not to introduce mandatory labelling for maintaining fair trade. That was also desirable from the consumer choice point of view. The Chairman responded that whether the subject of mandatory labelling would be taken up further would depend on the views of our legislators and policy bureau on the effectiveness of the voluntary labelling scheme. The Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, Cap. 132 provided the Government with the authority to make regulations to regulate, the labelling of GM food. In response to the enquiry from the trade representative, Ms. CHOW Shuk Man replied that the 49 corn-based samples taken in the 2013 study were taken from the local market without specifically targeting any country of origin. The five samples that were found to contain more than 5% GM materials but with no GM food labels were products of North America.

[Post-meeting note: Under Cap 132, Section 55 (1) states that The appropriate authority may, as far as appears to him to be necessary or expedient in the interests of public health, or otherwise for the protection of the public, make regulations for any of the following purposes -(d) for imposing requirements as to, and otherwise regulating, the labelling,of food intended for sale for human consumption.....]

15. Another trade representative remarked that since most of Hong Kong's food products relied on imports and that there was no health concern for GM food, the legislators and policy bureau should be informed of the situation and re-address their attention to other issues. The Chairman remarked that in addition to overseeing the current situation, we might need to look into the future where circumstances might change. The Government had suggested previously to introduce a pre-market safety assessment scheme.

Agenda Item 4

Food Safety Problems of Local Food Manufacturers – Measures to Reduce the Risk of Contamination of *Listeria monocytogenes* in Ready-To-Eat (RTE) Food

16. Dr. Duncan TUNG briefed the meeting of the food safety problems for the past three years concerning products manufactured locally which were detected with irregularities and not complying with the Hong Kong regulatory standards. There were a total of 20 major food incidents involving local food manufacturers from 2013 – 2015, which could be broadly categorised into 4 groups: (i) Exceeding level of *Bacillus cereus* in prepacked drinks / soup (3 incidents involving bottled soya bean milk and Chinese style soup); (ii) Exceeding level of total bacterial count and / or coliform count in frozen confections (11 incidents involving ice-cream, soft ice-cream and sorbet); (iii) Exceeding level of total bacterial count in fresh milk / milk drink (3 incidents); (iv) Exceeding level of *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat food (3 incidents involving smoked salmon and Sushi rice sample). Advice was given to the trade on how to control *Bacillus cereus* and *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination, and on good hygienic practices on the production of frozen confections and milk / milk drinks. In general, the trade should ensure that all food for sale comply with the legal requirements. They should observe basic hygiene requirements and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) in

food processing to assure that the food products do not pose risk to the public. Local food manufacturers were recommended to implement the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) system to control food safety problems. Further information on the topic was available on the CFS website.

17. Dr. Duncan TUNG further briefed the meeting about the publicity and education programmes undertaken this year to make the public and concerned parties becoming more aware of the risk of contamination of *Listeria monocytogenes* in ready-to-eat food. There was publicity on the CFS website and Facebook pages. The attention of medical practitioners and staff in elderly homes were drawn to the matter. Pregnant women in hospitals were also informed to avoid eating high-risk foods like smoked salmon and soft cheese.

18. One trade representative pointed out that currently the standard for pasteurized milk was below 30,000 bacteria per millilitre. Based on the fast growth rate of bacteria it would be entirely impossible for this criteria to be met by any locally pasteurized milk kept at 4°C even at half of the shelf life of 7-8 days. In the last couple of days of shelf life there would be millions of bacteria already. The Government should take a look at the concerned regulation to see whether it was interpreted correctly. It was very difficult for the trade to comply with the regulation for which the standard was impossible to achieve. The Chairman agreed to look into the matter. The trade representative also pointed out that most manufacturers of prepackaged food products would test their products for *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination shortly after the manufacturing process and the result would usually be good. However, at or near the end of the shelf life the presence of the bacteria would be more common. He appealed to the manufacturers of vulnerable food items to monitor the presence of the bacteria also at the end of shelf life as it would be the time when most

consumers consume the products. The Chairman shared agreement with that idea and remarked that the presence of *Listeria monocytogenes* contamination had been on the increase in both locally manufactured and imported foods in recent years.

Agenda Item 5

Update on the Salt and Sugar Reduction Initiatives

19. Dr. Duncan TUNG updated the meeting of the initiatives taken up in promoting salt and sugar reduction in Hong Kong. The Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food (CRSS) was set up in March 2015. Its responsibility was to make recommendations to the Secretary for Food and Health on the formulation of policy directions and work plans to reduce intake of salt and sugar by the public and salt and sugar in food. Three working groups had been set up under CRSS in late 2015, namely Working Group on Lowering Content of Salt and Sugar in Food, Working Group on Reducing the Dietary Intakes of Salt and Sugar, and Working Group on Publicity and Education. The working groups were responsible for gauging the views of relevant stakeholders, including food manufacturers and the catering industry, and conducting focused discussions and proposing measures for salt and sugar reduction suitable for Hong Kong in the three aspects. Based on the work progress of the three working groups, the third meeting of the CRSS had been held in January 2016 to discuss the way forward. As regards the programmes to be organized, the World Health Day 2016 focusing on beating diabetes would be held on 7 April 2016. Department of Health would organize a press conference on that day in which CFS would discuss on the association of sugar intake with obesity and diabetes, and the new measures initiated under the “Hong Kong’s Action on Salt and Sugar Reduction”. The Food Safety Day 2016 would be held on 30 June 2016. It was an annual signature event of the CFS to promote food safety and healthy eating messages to the food trade and the public. The theme of the event was “Hong Kong’s Action on Salt and Sugar Reduction: Healthy Cooking Starts Small”. Programmes

on that day included a signing ceremony for the participants of the “Food Safety Charter” and “Reduce Salt, Sugar, Oil. We Do!” programmes, and also a “Junior Chefs’ Culinary Ideas of Salt and Sugar Reduction Competition Final Round & Award Presentation Ceremony”.

20. The Chairman encouraged that the trade’s active participation and said that it was indispensable for successful implementation of the salt and sugar reduction initiative.

Any Other Business

Control of Food Imported from Japan

21. Ms. Sonia CHAN briefed the meeting of the control of food imported from Japan. Following the earthquake and tsunami that damaged the Fukushima Daini Nuclear Power Plant in Japan on 11 March 2011, certain agricultural foods in a number of prefectures had been contaminated by radioactive substances at levels hazardous to human health. Since 12 March 2011, the CFS had stepped up surveillance on radiation level of imported food from Japan. The Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene had issued an Order (effective from 24 March 2011) under Section 78B of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, Cap. 132 to prohibit certain food items to be imported into Hong Kong or supplied within Hong Kong from the five most affected prefectures of Japan. The prohibited items were vegetables, fruits, milk, milk beverages and milk powder. The following items were also prohibited unless accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent authority of Japan: chilled or frozen game, meat, poultry; poultry eggs; all live, chilled or frozen aquatic products. Contravention of the Order was an offence and would be liable on conviction to a fine of HK\$100,000 and imprisonment for 12 months. Traders were also required to report the arrival of food imported from Japan for radiological inspection. Since the radioactive isotope Caesium-137 has a half-life of several decades, the risk had not been cleared and the Order was still in force. To ensure the safety of imported food from Japan, CFS would

continue to monitor closely the situation in Japan and the radiation testing results of food samples and formulate surveillance programme according to risk assessment.

22. In response to an enquiry from a trade representative, the Chairman remarked that there was no timetable for revocation of the Order. Nevertheless, CFS would constantly review the situation and monitor the international developments in this aspect.

Seminar on Food Safety

23. The Chairman informed the meeting that a seminar on food safety would be organized on 19 May 2016. Experts from the Expert Committee on Food Safety would be invited as speakers.

[Post-meeting note: The format of the seminar has been changed and will no longer open to members of the trade.]

Enquiry on Testing Methods

24. One trade representative remarked that with regard to the Microbiological Guidelines for Food, the analytical method used for Total Plate Count (TPC) was the Health Protection Agency National Standard Method F11 used by the Mainland. Since his company was using the HOKLAS method and the Bacteriological Analytical Manual under the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), it was very difficult to compare the results obtained. He enquired whether the details of the method used by the Government could be available to the trade and laboratories so that they could have a look to see if they could adopt the same method under HOKLAS accreditation. That would make the TPC results more comparable. The Chairman said that he would relate the message to the Public Health Laboratory of Department of Health as they were supporting that kind of testing.

[Post-meeting note: The “Microbiological Guidelines for Food” was published by the Centre

for Food Safety, FEHD. Microbiological criteria are based on the local “Microbiological Guidelines for Ready-to-eat Food (May 2007 Revised)” and are revised with reference to the “Guidelines for Assessing the Microbiological Safety of Ready-to-Eat Foods Placed on the Market” published by the Health Protection Agency in the United Kingdom in November 2009 and the advice from the Ad Hoc Working Group on Microbiological Safety of Food 2011 after taking local situation into consideration. The Department of Health has posted on their website a list of test methods that can relate to the method code in their test reports. That was not intended for reference of the trade as test methods were not prescribed in most of their local regulations and guidelines, and the trade was free to choose a method within their capabilities to meet the requirements.]

Date of Next Meeting

25. The next meeting would be held by end of May / early June 2016. The date of the meeting was to be determined.

26. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:12 p.m.