

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Notes of the Thirty-sixth Meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum
held on 28 September 2012 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)
Dr. YEUNG Tze Kiu, Samuel	Principal Medical Officer (Risk Assessment & Communication)	
Dr. CHEN Yi Min	Agricultural Officer (Development)/ Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department	
Mr. CHEUNG Wai Kuen	Agricultural Officer (Food Chemistry)	
Mr. CHENG Wai Kit	Superintendent (Food Surveillance) ²	
Mr. WONG Sek Kei	Superintendent (Import/Export) ¹	
Ms. Janny MA	Scientific Officer (Microbiology)	
Dr. Violette LIN	Scientific Officer (Nutrition)	
Ms. Melissa LIU	Scientific Officer (Nutrition Labelling)	
Mr. HO Kwok Wai	Scientific Officer (Programme Planning) ²	
Ms. CHUNG Sau Wai	Superintendent (Risk Communication)	(Secretary)

Trade Representatives

Ms. Rita CHAN	A.S. Watson Industries
Mr. HUI Yiu Kai	A-1 Bakery Co., (HK) Ltd.
Mr. TSUI Hiu Leung	A-2 Bakery Co., (HK) Ltd.
Ms. Caroline YUEN	American Consulate General Hong Kong
Mr. Terence YUEN	Amoy Food Ltd.
Mr. TSANG Wah Him	Calbee Fourseas Co., Ltd.
Mr. WONG Kai Man	Calbee Fourseas Co., Ltd.
Mr. Alan KWOK	Campbell Soup Asia Ltd.
Mr. George WONG	Campbell Soup Asia Ltd.

Mr. Jonathan CHENG	China Dragon Inspection & Certification (HK) Ltd.
Ms. Grace LAU	China Dragon Inspection & Certification (HK) Ltd.
Mr. Dennis CHAN	City Super Ltd.
Ms. Grace YEE	City Super Ltd.
Ms. May KAN	Coca-Cola China Ltd.
Ms. Rainbow NGAI	Consulate General of the Canada
Ms. Marina NG	Consulate General of the Netherlands
Mr. UMEZU Hiroshi	Consulate-General of Japan
Ms. Yaddy AU	Danone Baby Nutrition HK Ltd.
Ms. Alice HO	Danone Baby Nutrition HK Ltd.
Ms. LEE Yan Kiu	DCH Food Mart - Yee Lim Food Processing Centre
Mr. Freddy FONG	Foodscan Analytics Ltd.
Ms. Easter YUEN	Friesland Campina (Hong Kong) Ltd.
Ms. Fiona LEUNG	Glaxo Smith Kline Ltd.
Ms. B. HO	Gourmet House Ltd.
Ms. CHENG Sui Ling	Hago Ltd.
Ms. CHOI Kit Ha	Hago Ltd.
Mr. MAN Kwok Kee	Hang Lung Trading (HK) Co.
Ms. Ada WONG	Herbalife
Mr. Allen PANG	Home of Swallows Ltd.
Mr. Sidney NG	Hong Kong Health Food Association
Mr. Martin WONG	Hong Kong Health Food Association
Mr. Peter Johnston	Hong Kong Retail Management Association
Ms. May LO	Hong Kong Retail Management Association
Ms. Corine LIU	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Mr. T. Mori	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Mr. Marco LO	Institution of Dining Art
Ms. Becky CHEUNG	International Food Safety Association
Mr. CHOW Tin Yam	Japan External Trade Organization
Mr. KOMIYA Motoaki	Japan External Trade Organization
Ms. Mona WONG	Lee Kum Kee Int'l Holdings Ltd.
Mr. Jonathan SO	McDonald's Corp. - APMEA QA
Ms. Eva POON	McDonald's Restaurants (HK) Ltd.
Ms. Amy CHU	Mead Johnson Nutrition (HK) Ltd.
Ms. Regina TAM	Mead Johnson Nutrition (HK) Ltd.
Mr. WONG Pui Sum	Natural Alliance Co., Ltd.
Ms. Doris CHAN	Nestle Hong Kong Ltd.
Mr. William KWONG	Nestle Hong Kong Ltd.

Ms. Haymann LAU	New Zealand Consulate General
Mr. Marcus Glucina	New Zealand Focus - Smileygrowth
Mr. Rayson NG	New Zealand Focus - Smileygrowth
Ms. Debbie AU	New Zealand Trade and Enterprise
Mr. Herbert LEE	Nissin Foods Co., Ltd.
Ms. Mandy CHAN	Orient Europharma Co., Ltd.
Ms. Yuki KONG	Orient Europharma Co., Ltd.
Ms. German CHEUNG	Pappagallo Pacific Ltd.
Ms. Yuki WONG	Pappagallo Pacific Ltd.
Ms. Cactus LAI	ParknShop
Ms. Kennie SIU	Starbucks Coffee Asia Pacific Ltd
Ms. Jenny KIONG	Sun Yik Food Ltd.
Mr. Douglas CHENG	The Garden Co., Ltd.
Ms. Tess WONG	The Garden Co., Ltd.
Ms. Abby WONG	Tingyi-Asahi Beverages Holding Co., Ltd.
Mr. Attlee LAU	URC Hong Kong Co., Ltd.
Ms. Christina YIP	Vitasoy International Holdings Ltd.
Mr. TONG Yuen Shun	Winner Food Products Ltd.
Mr. CHUNG Ngai Man	Wisdom Dairy (HK) Holdings Ltd.
Mr. WONG Chi Wai	Wisdom Dairy (HK) Holdings Ltd.
Mr. Tony CHOW	Wyeth(Hong Kong) Holding Co., Ltd.
Ms. Amy FU	Wyeth(Hong Kong) Holding Co., Ltd.
Ms. Veronica SZE	Wyeth(Hong Kong) Holding Co., Ltd.
Ms. Jo LAM	Yue Hwa Chinese Products

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all trade representatives and consulate delegates 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

The implementation of Accredited Farm Scheme in Mainland China

3. Dr. CHEN Yi Min introduced to the meeting the implementation of Accredited Farm Scheme (AFS) in the Mainland. The AFS was run jointly by Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Vegetable Marketing Organization (VMO) and Federation of Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Society. Vegetables grown in farms accredited under this scheme were supplied to Hong Kong. He went through the characteristics of this scheme, its operation and the on-farm support provided by AFCD to these farms. He pointed out that all vegetables supplied to Hong Kong from these farms must be distributed to VMO for accreditation to control quality. There were about 200 retailers in Hong Kong selling these accredited vegetables, who might also sell non-accredited ones. “Good Farmers” logo was assigned to these 200 retailers. The AFS was first established at farms in Guangdong Province in 1995. It was extended to Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region in 2011, where the soil and climate were very suitable for growing tasteful vegetables. There were now 291 accredited farms under the scheme. Of these, 254 were in Hong Kong, 29 in Guangdong and 8 in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

4. In reply to enquiry from the Chairman, Dr. CHEN Yi Min advised that the levels of accredited farms in the Mainland were comparable to those in Hong Kong as the former were invested and run by experienced farmers in Hong Kong who possessed the know-how and techniques in growing vegetables.

5. In reply to enquiry from a trade representative, Dr. CHEN Yi Min advised that there were no data about the cost of producing accredited vegetables over non-accredited ones for

sale in Hong Kong. The cost could be doubled but this could be reduced with a larger scale of production. The accredited farm at Dongguan that Green Peace reported in the media in early 2012 was not really bad. The accreditation to this farm was still valid. Accreditation to farms under the AFS might be withdrawn due to irregularity in the operation of these farms, such as the use of prohibited pesticide. However, withdrawal of accreditation was rare as the AFS was intended to resolve problems encountered by these farms. Accredited farms might opt out of the scheme voluntarily if they were not able to comply with the conditions underlying the accreditation.

6. A trade representative asked whether the AFS would be extended to cover vegetable processing factories and food processing factories in the Mainland that supplied vegetables and food respectively to Hong Kong. Dr. CHEN Yi Min advised that the role of AFCD was to provide assistance to farmers. Extending the role of AFCD to cover enterprises might not be appropriate and might exceed the capacity of AFCD. The Chairman advised that Centre for Food Safety (CFS) had started several years ago the inspection of vegetable and food processing factories in the Mainland that supplied vegetables and food to Hong Kong under an established mechanism with the Mainland authority. More information on the inspection system for vegetable and food processing factories in this respect might be provided at the next meeting.

Agenda Item 2

Report of the “Study on Sodium Content in Local Foods”

7. Dr. Violette LIN briefed the meeting on the report of “Study on Sodium Content in Local Foods”. Sodium was essential for normal functioning of the body but excessive intake of this or salt and salty foods might be detrimental to health and would increase the

risk to coronary heart disease and stroke or stomach cancer respectively. There was recommendation from World Health Organisation (WHO) to limit the daily intake of sodium but no international consensus was reached on the definition for high and low sodium food. WHO noticed that, in Western diet, 75% of sodium was taken from salt in processed foods. In Asian countries, salt was added during cooking and at table. For traditional Chinese diet, over 70% of sodium came from salt added while cooking whereas the remainder was from soy sauce and salted vegetables. The major dietary source of sodium with Hong Kong citizens was from salt, condiments and sauces.

8. Dr. Violette LIN advised that, in July 2012, WHO issued a set of indicators and voluntary global targets for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases, with the target of relative reduction in mean population intake of salt by 30% or achieving a target of taking in salt less than 5g per day. The target would be achieved through the implementation of salt reduction intervention, such as reducing salt content in processed foods through product reformulation, and through the reduction of sodium content of foods gradually, with or without using alternatives, allowing consumers' salty taste perception to be modified over time. CFS had set up a working group to develop a set of "Trade Guidelines on Reducing Sodium in Foods" to help traders to produce and promote healthy and safe food products with lower sodium or salt content. This set of guidelines was now available from CFS website for reference.

9. Dr. Violette LIN continued that the objective of the study was to assess the sodium content in some popular local foods, of both non-prepackaged and prepackaged, so as to arouse the awareness of the public and food traders about salt and sodium content when consuming and preparing food. The findings of the study could provide some baseline data on the current situation of sodium content in a variety of foods likely high in sodium. It

also provided a benchmark for trade to adopt when reformulating foods in different food categories to a lower sodium content version. She presented the categories of prepackaged and non-prepackaged food groups covered in the study, the sampling process, the methods of chemical analysis and data analysis, the findings and limitations of the study. It was concluded from the study that sodium content of many food items was rather high, suggesting that there was much room for improvement and reformulation was feasible for many foods. Food traders were encouraged to adopt suggestions in the “Trade Guidelines on Reducing Sodium in Foods” with a view to supporting WHO’s policy on reducing sodium intake, and to consider providing consumers with more choices of lower sodium, healthier counterparts within the same food group.

10. Dr. Violette LIN advised consumers of the following:

- a) To read nutrition labels and choose foods that contained lower sodium content;
- b) To change the dietary habit to minimise adding salt or sodium-containing seasonings to food
- c) To consume less preserved salted vegetables or salty appetizers; and
- d) To rinse and/or soak them in water before using them in recipes or before consumption to cut down on sodium intake.

She advised trade of the following:

- a) To develop affordable quality food products with low sodium content;
- b) To use the local data collected in the study and the overseas sodium reduction targets as reference when formulating foods with lower sodium;
- c) To establish a database of the company products so as to monitor the sodium levels

of foods and use portable salt meters to gauge the amount of salt in non-prepackaged food products such as soups, sauces and condiments; and

- d) To rinse or soak salted vegetables in water to reduce some sodium content before using them in food preparation.

11. Noting that there were no views at the meeting on the report, the Chairman advised that the report was announced to the public by mean of press release while the meeting was in progress. He suggested that the trade should adopt advice offered in the report.

Agenda Item 3

Import Control of Milk

12. Mr. WONG Sek Kei briefed the meeting on the current mode of import control of milk. According to the Milk Regulation (Cap. 132AQ), cow's milk, cream, milk beverage, etc. came under the import control. However, the control did not include separated milk, dried milk or condensed milk. Application for importation of milk and milk beverage required the submission of information on the source of manufacture, the manufacturing plant and the product. The product was subject to inspection and satisfactory testing results of the first six consignments. He introduced to the meeting the steps and procedures of application for importation of milk or milk beverage to Hong Kong. Apart from the basic information, the following in details were also required in the application:

- a) plant assessment;
- b) the health certificate issued by the authority of place of origin;
- c) the product assessment;
- d) heat-treatment of milk/milk beverage;

- e) methods of heat-treatment by pasteurization;
- f) methods of heat-treatment by sterilization;
- g) composition of milk itself; and
- h) supporting documents.

He added that after the milk product was approved for sale in the market, the first three consignments would be subject to inspection plus hold and test before releasing the product to the market. The next three consignments would then be subject to inspection plus sampling test and they might be released to the market before there was test result. Under the food surveillance programme, food samples were taken from milk products at import, wholesale and retail levels thereafter.

13. A trade representative noted that there was inconsistency between definition of milk in the nutrition labelling regulation and the Milk Regulation. He asked whether the definition in the latter would be revised for consistency. Mr. WONG Sek Kei replied that the Milk Regulation was being reviewed with a view to keeping it up-to-date with international development. The trade representative also noted that it was impossible to buy pasteurised cream in Hong Kong due to its very short lifespan. When pasteurised cream had to be kept at warehouse for inspection, its lifespan for safe consumption would have expired when it reached the market. He asked whether the food surveillance programme would be adjusted with a view to offering more choices for consumers in Hong Kong. Mr. WONG Sek Kei replied that the problem was understandable and the food surveillance programme would be reviewed in future to see if there was a need to inspect every consignment of milk product.

Agenda Item 4

Iodine Content in Infant Formula

14. Ms. Melissa LIU briefed the meeting on the incident of low iodine content in infant formula and follow-up actions on this incident. According to Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), infant formula was defined as a breast-milk substitute specially manufactured to satisfy, by itself, the nutritional requirements of infants during the early months of life up to the introduction of appropriate complementary feeding. In Hong Kong, it usually referred to formula products for infants from birth to six months where there were about 40 brands with about 60 products in the local retail market. The focus in this incident was on iodine, which was an essential nutrient used for the synthesis of thyroid hormones by the thyroid gland. Diet was the major source of iodine intake for humans. Marine fish and marine algae were naturally relatively high in iodine. Iodine was also present in milk and in small amount in local tap water, while it was not detected in bottled distilled water. For formula-fed infants, infant formula was their only food source of dietary iodine before the introduction of complementary food, i.e. normally at around 6 months.

15. Ms. Melissa LIU advised that the survey behind the incident started in May 2012. This was embarked on a two-year survey on nutritional composition of infant formulae available in the local market, taking the “Codex Standard for Infant Formula and Formulas for Special Medical Purposes Intended for Infants” as the testing benchmark. The Codex standard prescribed levels of energy plus 33 essential nutrients. She presented details and findings of the survey, which had taken reference of instructions that were provided by manufacturers on label, and had taken into account of iodine content in tap water. Subsequent to risk assessment on preliminary result obtained in late July 2012, further testings plus more comprehensive risk assessment as well as consultation with medical professionals specialised in pathology, endocrinology & paediatrics were undergone, after which the Government adopted a prudent course of action and announced the test results on 8 August 2012. This

was attributed to that inadequate iodine might affect thyroid functioning and cause potential impact on brain development. The initial findings of the survey came out six products not meeting Codex standard with two of them posing health concern.

16. Ms. Melissa LIU continued that follow-up measures had been implemented with both CFS and Department of Health (DH). Further testings were conducted that, as at 27 September 2012, a total of 63 products were tested on iodine content. Among these, 11 products did not meet the Codex standard, of which seven products were found posing health concern. CFS would continue to keep in view infant formulae available in the market and would conduct tests when untested products are found. Results of testings would be announced as soon as possible after completion. CFS would continue testing the nutritional composition in infant and follow-up formulae available in the local market, aiming at completing tests on the remaining 32 nutrients plus energy in infant formula by end of 2012, and completing tests on follow-up formulae in the first half 2013. Results of all these testings would be released in phases with appropriate follow-up actions taken promptly, if findings indicated potential health concern for infants. Government would expedite the formulation of regulatory framework on formulae and food for infants and young children.

17. A trade representative sought advice on the actions that were required from trade on micronutrients and claims for infant formula. Ms. Melissa LIU advised that there was no specific legislation in Hong Kong regulating nutritional composition and claims of infant formula, but in general it was required that infant formula must be suitable for human consumption and the information provided must be factual and not misleading. In case of products, after testing and risk assessment, being found posing health concern, parents would be advised accordingly and traders would be informed not to sell these products. Before there was specific legislation in Hong Kong to regulate the composition and labelling of

infant formula, trade was encouraged to take Codex standard as reference for the production of infant formula. The Chairman supplemented that DH was drawing up a code of practice on infant formula for reference of trade. Until the availability of the code of practice, trade should take the Codex standard for reference and observe the Codex standard as far as possible for all other foods where there was no standard in Hong Kong to observe. Although non-compliance of the Codex standard might not be a problem from enforcement point of view, it could not tell whether this might cause the product an adverse image among consumers.

18. A trade representative sought advice on the coverage of the tests on follow-up formulae in the first half of 2013 and whether the tests would be carried out in phases. Mr. CHENG Wai Kit advised that, upon completion of tests on infant formulae for infants from birth to six months, the survey would then turn to infant formulae for infants of six months to 36 months in the first half of 2013. The Chairman advised that the tests would be carried out in phases in view of constraints in the capacity of Government Laboratory (GL).

19. Trade representatives suggested that CFS should arrange closer communication with trade on the coming tests, such as informing trade before announcing the testing results, in particular of a large scale survey, and when there were subsequent testing results on products that would not pose health concern. The Chairman found it a complicated issue for informing trade in advance of announcement of testing results for products that would not pose health concern, but trade would certainly be informed in advance for products that would pose health concern to facilitate traders arranging withdrawal of products from the market. Mr. CHENG Wai Kit supplemented that trade would be informed of testing results in the routine food surveillance programme for products that did not pose health concern. The Chairman undertook to consider the need of closer communication with trade and the

public in the future announcement of testing results for food products on a case by case basis.

20. A trade representative sought advice on the need of the survey to cover formula for infants from six months to 36 months as these infants did not rely solely on infant formula as their main source of nutrients. The Chairman advised that, from the risk assessment point of view, the content of testing for infant formula for infants from six to 36 months would be different from that for infants from birth to six months.

21. A trade representative sought advice on whether there was plan with Government to carry out testing for foods targeted at infants, other than infant formula. The Chairman advised that there was no such plan in the meantime as there was no Codex standard for testing these foods against. This notwithstanding, there was a joint study with Consumer Council on foods targeted at infants published in April 2012. Traders might refer to that for reference.

22. Trade representatives sought advice on whether the Codex standard would be incorporated onto the law of Hong Kong to become the legal standard in Hong Kong for infant formulas and whether there was consultation with trade on the regulatory framework for infant formula. The Chairman advised that the legislative process on regulating infant formula would be expedited. At the onset, it was intended to issue a code of practice for observance of trade. After the occurrence of the iodine incident, the Secretary for Food and Health found a pressing need to regulate infant formula, which regulatory framework would be built on the code of practice. It was expected that the legislative process would be a fast one and public consultation was forthcoming on the regulatory framework.

23. A trade representative sought advice on whether beverage, which was not called infant

formula, but was targeted at infants from one to three years old, would come under the survey. The Chairman advised that if the beverage came under the definition of infant and follow-up formula, it would be included in the survey; otherwise it would not be included and there was no plan to test such beverage. The definition for formula for infants of one to three years old took the same as that in the Codex.

24. Trade representatives sought advice on the coverage of the code of practice and whether standards other than the Codex would be accepted and taken reference of when preparing the code of practice. The Chairman advised that the code of practice would cover all foods for infants under 36 months old. It took reference of the Code for Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes issued by WHO. Non-compliance of the Codex would not be a problem unless the non-compliance would pose health concern. DH should have taken reference of standards other than those in the Codex.

25. A trade representative sought advice on the testing method for nutrients in infant formula. The Chairman advised that the testing method would follow that in the Codex. However, it was premature at the moment to discuss the testing method. When there were details of the regulatory framework proposed for infant formula, GL would organize technical meetings with trade to exchange views on the testing method.

Agenda Item 5

Provide Appropriate Instructions for Use in Powdered Infant Formula

26. Ms. Janny MA advised the meeting of providing appropriate instructions for use in powdered infant formula. Infant formula in this context included powdered infant formula, follow-up formula and other related formula for infants no more than 12 months. Powered

infant formula was not a sterile product and might be contaminated with pathogens that could cause serious illness. Correct preparation and handling reduced the risk of illness. The CFS noted there were different instructions for use given in various powdered infant formula available in the local market. She briefed the meeting on the Safe Preparation, Storage and Handling of Powdered Infant Formula – Guidelines issued by WHO in 2007, especially powdered infant formula should be prepared with water that was no cooler than 70°C in order to kill microorganisms, including *Cronobacter sakazakii*. She reminded the trade that all food products, including powdered infant formula, for sale in Hong Kong should comply with local regulations, i.e. labelling requirements on providing appropriate instructions for use, and advised to refer to the recommendations given in the WHO guidelines to provide appropriate instructions for powdered infant formula.

27. The Chairman noted that most electric kettles available in the local market could not be kept warm at 70°C. He advised that the trade might provide opinion to electric kettle manufacturers to revise their specification so as to facilitate the public to reconstitute powdered infant formula at 70°C as suggested. He also recommended that baby sitters should be reminded the temperature requirement for preparing powdered infant formula as suggested by WHO. It was hoped that DH would include the temperature requirement onto the coming code of practice for marketing of infant formula. In reply to an enquiry from a trade representative, the Chairman advised that even though it was not a legal requirement, the trade was expected to follow WHO's recommendation and provide corresponding instruction for consumer to reconstitute powdered infant formula at 70°C. Trade was also expected to observe the coming code of practice to be issued by DH.

Agenda Item 6

A Brief of the 35th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

28. Ms. Janny MA briefed the meeting the decisions related to trade made at the 35th session of the Codex that was held from 2 to 7 July 2012 at Rome, Italy. In this session, Codex adopted, revoked or discontinued 45 standards/draft standards and related texts. At the same time, it approved 13 pieces of new work. Trade might refer to the full report that had been uploaded to the Codex website. Topics discussed in the session related to trade included food additives, contaminants in foods, pesticides residues, residues of veterinary drugs in food, food hygiene and food labeling, etc.

29. In reply to an enquiry from a trade representative, the Chairman advised that the Codex standards would be adopted in Hong Kong as far as possible but it depended on the priorities of amending the related legislation. When opportunity arose, the local legislation would be amended accordingly. For instance, the latest Codex standards for pesticide residues would be incorporated into the local regulation before it came into effect on 1 August 2014. The latest Codex standards for veterinary drug residues would also be incorporated into the proposed framework for consideration. For others, the trade should note that some new Codex standards were more stringent than the local ones.

30. A trade representative sought advice on the CFS's position regarding the use of magnesium stearate, a food additive that was commonly used in the production of health food supplement as he understood that Codex had removed the INS No. of the additive and replaced by a temporary one. Ms. Janny MA recalled that she was not aware there was discussion of the concerned additive conducted in the Commission which she had attended. However, she advised that any food additive with INS No. did not necessarily mean it was safe and vice versa. The CFS would take into account the safety assessment conducted by Joint United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation/WHO Expert Committee on Food

Additives (JECFA) as well as other national authorities to see if the food additive was safe and the trade should ensure the food for sale complying with local regulations and fit for human consumption. The Chairman, in view of the technicality required for the advice, undertook to invite a staff member of CFS to discuss this issue at the next meeting.

[Post-meeting Note: In the 34th session of the Codex in 2011, the technological purpose for INS 470, i.e. salts of fatty acids, with base aluminium, ammonium, calcium, magnesium, potassium, sodium, was removed, whereas the INS No. 470(iii), i.e. magnesium stearate, together with its technological purpose, i.e. anti-caking agent, binder and emulsifier, was added. JECFA evaluated the safety of magnesium stearate in 1985, but no ADI could be allocated to it. Nevertheless, magnesium stearate is a permitted food additive in specified foods in a number of countries/regions such as the European Union, the United States of America, Australia and New Zealand, and the Mainland.]

Agenda Item 7

Regional Symposium: “Food Claims: Truth and Myth”

31. Mr. HO Kwok Wai updated the meeting on the progress of the Regional Symposium “Food Claims: Truth and Myth” that would be held at end of October 2012. The Regional Symposium was organized as an obligation of CFS, being one of the WHO Collaboration Centres of Chemical Risk Analysis in Food, to contribute to the public health especially in food safety at the regional level. This regional event could promote good practices, technical transfer, consensus building and networking among regional partners with four objectives. These are to network and share experience among local, the Mainland and overseas experts, to update the development of nutrition and health claims, including research directions in scientific discovery and approaches to substantiation of such claims, to

provide a platform for communicating with academia, trade, consumers, and public health to understand the interest and concerns of various parties and to foster inter-sectoral partnership and collaborations.

32. Mr. HO Kwok Wai advised that the Regional Symposium would be held on 29 and 30 October 2012 at Grand Ballroom, 2/F, Hotel Nikko Hongkong, 72 Mody Road, Tsimshatsui, Kowloon, Hong Kong. He introduced the seven keynote overseas speakers and advised that there would be presentation of four papers during the Regional Symposium and a workshop on 31 October 2012 to discuss the principles and issues surrounding scientific substantiation of nutrition and health claims from consumer, trade and regulatory perspectives and to discuss the application of theories and practices related to evidence-based practice on scientific evaluation of nutrition and health claims. The workshop was targeted at regulatory officials, members of the food trade, public health professionals, academics, nutritionists and consumers. Online registration to join the Regional Symposium was opened until 30 September 2012. The Chairman noted that the workshop was very well received. It might not be able to offer all a place at this workshop.

Any Other Business

Trade Guidelines on Preparation of Legible Food Label

33. In reply to enquiry from a trade representative, the Chairman advised that the Trade Guidelines on Preparation of Legible Food Label were a piece of reference for trade in preparing legible label. Observance of this reference material was voluntarily. Non-compliance would refer to the current legislation for enforcement actions. Nevertheless, surveillance would be considered to monitor the observance of these guidelines.

Date of Next Meeting

34. The next meeting would be held in early or mid-November 2012.

[Post-meeting Note: The next meeting will be held on 7 November 2012.]

35. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:40 p.m.