

Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Notes of the Sixty First Meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum
held on 21 December 2017 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. Samuel YEUNG	Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment & Communication)	(Chairman)
Dr. Henry NG	Principal Medical Officer (Risk Assessment & Communication)	
Ms. Joey KWOK	Scientific Officer (Total Diet Study)	
Mr. James YEUNG	Chief Project Manager (Corporate and System Management)1	
Mr. Edmond NG	Chief Health Inspector (Corporate and System Management)2	
Ms. CHAN So Kiu	Chief Health Inspector (Import/Export)4	
Ms. LEUNG Mee Sze	Senior Health Inspector (Import/Export) Compliance and Investigation2	
Mr. LAI Wing Chi	Superintendent (Risk Communication)	(Secretary)

Trade Representatives

Mr. KWAN Siu Hin	A-1 Bakery Co., (HK) Ltd
Ms. Lilian TANG	Aeon Topvalu (Hong Kong) Co., Limited
Mr. YUEN Ho Pan	ALS Technichem (HK) Pty Ltd
Mr. Wilson TANG	Australian Trade and Investment Commission
Mr. Timmy LAU	Australian Trade and Investment Commission
Mr. LAM Pak Wah	Best Harvest Company Limited
Ms. Peggie YAU	Brand's Suntory (Hong Kong) Limited
Ms. Grace YEE	Café de Coral Holdings Limited
Mr. Benedict TSUI	Central Kitchen One
Ms. KWAN Wing Ki	China Dragon Inspection & Certification (HK) Ltd
Mr. Chi WONG	China Inspection Co. Ltd
Ms. CHO Ka Yuk	City Super Ltd

Ms. HO Wing YI	City Super Ltd
Ms. Elaine WONG	CMA Testing and Certification Laboratories
Ms. May KAN	Coca-Cola China Ltd
Ms. Sarah IP	Consulate General of Canada
Ms. Susana Munoz	Consulate General of Mexico in HK and Macao SAR
Dr. Johnny HON	Consulate of Grenada in Hong Kong
Ms. LEUNG Kwan Yee	DCH Food Marts
Ms. Kacila LEUNG	Envior Labs Limited
Mr. Freddy FONG	Foodscan Analytics Ltd
Ms. Noel HO	Garden Heart Food Ltd
Ms. Yvonne CHAN	General Mills Hong Kong Ltd
Ms. Amanda WONG	Glee Foods Industries Ltd
Mr. Stephen CHOI	Griffith Foods (China) Co., Ltd
Mr. Anson POON	GS1 HK
Ms. Ada WONG	Herbalife
Mr. Peter Johnston	Hong Kong Retail Management Association
Ms. Candy CHAN	Hong Kong Small and Medium Enterprises Association
Ms. Frenda WONG	Hong Kong Suppliers Association Ltd
Ms. Katrina NG	Hutchison China Meditech Ltd
Mr. LEUNG Wai Kit	Institution of Dining Art
Ms. Angela WONG	International Food Safety Association
Ms. Yolanda CHOW	International Food Safety Association
Ms. Katherine LEUNG	International Food Safety Testing Centre Limited
Mr. FUNG Kam Lun	Interkek Testing Services Hong Kong Ltd
Ms. AU Wing Sum	Island Shangri-la
Mr. TANAKA HIROYUKI	Japan External Trade Organization
Mr. CHOW Tin Yam	Japan External Trade Organization
Ms. Alice WONG	Lee Kum Kee International Holdings Ltd
Mr. Kenneth KWAN	LH Group
Ms. Cherry TONG	LH Group
Ms. Caroline HO	Maxim's Caterers Ltd.
Mr. Joseph MA	Nestle Hong Kong Ltd
Mr. Herbert LEE	Nissin Foods (HK) Management Co., Ltd
Ms. German CHEUNG	Pappagallo Pacific Ltd
Ms. Catherine KONG	Parknshop (HK) Limited
Ms. Pauline NG	Plaza Premium Lounge Management Limited
Mr. John CHAN	Prizemart
Mr. Kenneth LAM	Prominent International (Env) Ltd
Ms. Christine LEE	Satay King (Holdings) Co., Ltd

Ms. Amy YIP	Sims Trading Co., Ltd
Mr. CHAN Kai Leung	Super Star Group
Ms. LEUNG Ka Yan	Swire Coca-Cola HK Ltd
Mr. Victor KOK	Tai Pan Bread & Cakes Co., Ltd
Ms. Kammy YEUNG	The Hong Kong Standards and Testing Centre Ltd
Ms. Sarah LI	USA Poultry & Egg Export Council
Mr. CHAN Chi Kong	Vitasoy International Holdings Ltd
Mr. LEE Kam Ying	Windy City International Limited
Mr. LAM Tsz Mau	Winner Food Products Ltd
Ms. Jolene MAN	Yuen Loong & Co., Ltd
Mr. Victor Machamba	Zimbabwe Consulate

Opening Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all trade representatives to the 61st 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

Nutrient Content of Hong Kong Style Savoury Dishes

3. Ms. Joey KWOK briefed the meeting of the joint study conducted by the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) with the Consumer Council (CC) on Nutrient Content of Hong Kong Style Savoury Dishes. She first introduced the background of the study. Excessive intake of some nutrients such as sodium, sugar and fat could lead to overweight, obesity and other chronic diseases. Specifically, excessive intake of sodium might increase risk of developing high blood pressure whereas untreated high blood pressure could lead to chronic diseases

such as heart attack and stroke. The daily intake of sodium of an average adult should be less than 2,000 mg (5 g of salt, slightly less than 1 level teaspoon of salt). According to WHO, high proportions of sodium in the diet came from salt added in cooking and from sauces in Asian countries. Sugar could provide energy for the body (each gram of sugar could provide 4 kcal of energy). Consuming too much sugar could lead to excessive energy intake and in turn increase the risk of overweight and obesity, it could also lead to dental decay. Obesity increased the risk of a number of chronic diseases, such as hypertension, heart diseases and diabetes mellitus. Fat was a concentrated source of energy, as each gram of fat can provide 9 kcal of energy. Consuming too much fat could lead to too much energy intake, and in turn increase the risk of obesity, high blood pressure and diabetes. Consuming too much saturated fat and trans fat could increase the level of “bad cholesterol” in blood and increase the chance for coronary heart disease. In Hong Kong, eating out was very much a way of life. Hong Kong style savoury dishes constituted a significant part of the people’s everyday local diet. The current study aimed to measure and compare the nutrient content of Hong Kong style savoury dishes provided by local food premises, to inform and assist the public to make informed choices when eating out, and to encourage the trade to provide Hong Kong style savoury dishes with less sodium through recipe reformulation. The study covered ten types of HK style savoury dishes that were commonly available in local food premises. 100 samples of 10 HK style savoury dish types were collected from Chinese restaurants, local style cafes and fast-food restaurants in March and April 2017 and for testing for content of sodium, sugar, total fat (saturated and trans fat), and energy. These 10 dish types included steamed minced pork patty with salted egg, pork and pineapple in sweet and sour sauce, beef fillet in sweet and sour sauce, scrambled egg with shrimp, fish fillet in sweet corn sauce, stir-fried broccoli with fish fillet, sauteed French bean with minced pork and Chinese preserved olive, eggplant casserole with salted fish and minced pork, stir-fried celery with chicken fillet and broccoli with braised Chinese mushroom. The result indicated that

among the ten savoury dishes selected, ‘steamed minced pork patty with salted egg’ had the highest mean sodium content at 530 mg / 100 g. The same dish also had the highest mean total fat content at 20 g / 100 g. The study also simulated different scenarios of eating out in local food premises serving HK style savoury dishes. The results showed that, even with different combinations of HK style savoury dishes, the sodium intake for the whole meal per person would still far exceed one-third of WHO’s recommendation on daily intake upper limit for sodium. This reflected that the trade had the responsibility to reduce sodium content in HK style savoury dishes through recipe reformulation, so that consumers could reduce their sodium intake gradually when eating out. Ms. Joey KWOK also shared with the meeting that CFS had conducted a taste evaluation exercise earlier on to gauge consumers’ taste preference. 11 members of CFS’ Consumer Liaison Group were invited to evaluate three versions of steamed pork patty with salted egg: (i) original recipe (using whole salted egg, salt and soy sauce for seasoning); (ii) reduced-salt formulation 1 (left out salt, using salted egg and soy sauce only); and (iii) reduced-salt formulation 2 (left out salt, using salted egg yolk (substituted fresh egg white for salted egg white) and soy sauce reduced by half). It was found that the pork patty with the least sodium content (i.e. reduced-salt formulation 2) was highly acceptable to the participants, indicating that the trade had large room for reformulation to reduce the sodium content in this type of savoury dish and are welcomed by consumers.

4. To sum up the joint study, the trade was advised to reduce the use of salt or sodium-containing condiments during marinating and cooking steps, or use more fresh ingredients. When the use of high-sodium ingredients (e.g. salted egg, preserved vegetable) was required, the amount of salt or other sodium-containing condiments used should be cut down accordingly. If feasible, should use lesser amount of these high-sodium ingredients. They should reduce the amount of sauce in savoury dishes, and avoid adding extra soy sauce

before serving. If necessary, should serve sauce and condiments in separate containers, and let the consumers decide the amount to be added. Apart from providing the standard portion size of savoury dishes, they should offer savoury dishes in smaller portion size for consumers to choose based on their requirements. They could display nutrition information (particularly energy/calorie, sodium/salt) of savoury dishes on menus, price list and other printed materials. They could make reference to the CFS' "Trade Guidelines for Reducing Sodium in Foods" and "Trade Guidelines for Reducing Sugars and Fats in Foods" for producing foods with lower sodium/salt, sugar and fat contents.

5. The Chairman remarked that recently released report of Population Health Survey conducted by the Department of Health (DH) revealed that the average daily salt intake of the local population was 8.8 g which was higher than the WHO recommended limit of 5 g, and that the salt intake increased with the frequency of eating-out. If the trade would not take steps to reduce the sodium/salt content of savoury dishes of restaurants, it would be very difficult for people eating out to adhere to the salt intake limit recommended by WHO. The trade should be aware that sodium content in food on sale had public health implications, and they should take prompt action to address this important public health issue. From the taste evaluation exercise mentioned above, it could reflect that consumers might not only accept but actually prefer dishes with lower salt contents. Hence there should be much room for the trade to make improvements in lowering the sodium/salt contents of their savoury dishes.

6. One trade representative remarked that in considering to lower the sodium/salt contents of dishes, the chef would be afraid that some consumers might not satisfy with the lighter taste and raise complaint. The Government should enhance publicity to change the dietary habit of the general public and promote less salty food. The Chairman remarked that whilst consumers might raise complaint about the food not being salty enough, other consumers

might also raise complaints about the food being too salty. He added that the trade, the public and the Government had to work together to achieve the goal. The Centre for Food Safety had been promoting and educating the public on salt and sugar reduction and would continue to do so. With reference to overseas studies, people's tastes could change gradually over time. In order to achieve the desirable effect, the trade could reformulate the recipes of the savoury dishes little by little.

7. Another trade representative remarked that as a consumer in a restaurant, he had no choice but to accept the food produced by the chef. He suggested that consumers be provided with choice of three versions of each recipe: normal, low-sodium and very-low-sodium. He also remarked that in some chained fast food restaurants, condiments were separately put on a designated counter for self-serving by customers but not directly added to the food. This was a good practice worthy of promotion. The Chairman remarked that separate serving of condiments and sauces was one of the suggestions for reducing the intake of sodium.

8. One trade representative suggested that the large restaurants should indicate the sodium content of dishes in their menus for the customers' information. This would help educate the public. Another trade representative commented that this could be done in principle, especially for those dishes of standard serving size. The trade representative remarked that the Government's publicity was very effective in changing the food preference of customers, and the tactic of gradual reduction was considered viable. The Chairman added that it might not be necessary to specify the concerned dish as 'reduced-salt' item.

9. One trade representative opined that the sampling size of the aforementioned taste evaluation exercise was too small. Other factors affecting the evaluation results would include the sequence of samples tasted and the age of participants. Regarding the test result

on ‘steamed minced pork patty with salted egg’, he remarked that most consumers would not eat the whole dish. As a consumer he felt that the recipes offered by restaurants were becoming less salty and many customers were ordering drinks with no sugar or less sugar. It reflected that publicity and education for the general public was important and hence the Government should do more in this aspect. He added that many restaurants would not put bottles of salt, pepper and soya sauce on tables and all these were added by the chef according to recipes. The Chairman replied that regarding the taste evaluation exercise, the main purpose was to find out if less salty dishes were accepted by consumers. The results revealed that most of the 11 participants indeed welcomed the less salty options and would give the trade more confidence in providing less salty dishes. The Government was concerned that if the trade would not take steps to reduce the sodium/salt content of HK style of savoury dishes, people eating out would have difficulty to control the salt content in the dishes to achieve the salt intake limit as recommended by WHO. By not putting bottles of salt and soya sauce on the tables of restaurants, the chef would assume the role of controlling the amount of salt added to the foods.

10. Another trade representative remarked that all parties concerned shared the same objective of safeguarding the health of the general public. The trade and the Government should work together to promote the awareness of the public on the matter and help them choose a healthier diet. The Chairman said that the government would work together with the trade on the issue.

Agenda Item 2

Trade Single Window and Food Trader Portal

11. Mr. Edmond NG briefed the meeting on the proposed establishment of a Trade Single

Window (SW) by the Government and the development of a Food Trader Portal (FTP) by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). The proposed SW was spearheaded by the SW Project Management Office of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) and to be operated by the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED). It involved nine government departments, including FEHD for food import and export. It was a one-stop electronic platform for the trading community to lodge Business-to-Government documents to meet certain import and export regulatory requirements. The trading community could save time and cost in that there would be no need to approach different government departments separately; Business-to-Government documents could be lodged electronically round-the-clock through a centralized IT platform, i.e. SW; data could be shared and re-used, records could be accessed and application status could be tracked anytime. It was proposed to implement SW in three phases. In Phase 1 which would commence in mid-2018, applications for licences and permits for some departments could be made through SW on a voluntary basis but FEHD would not be involved. In Phase 2 which would commence in 2022, the application for licences and permits on imports and exports through SW would become mandatory through legislation (with a transition period) including import permission and import licence issued by FEHD. FEHD would separately develop a new FTP and interface it with the SW to provide various online functions. In Phase 3 which would commence in 2023, the submission of Trade Declaration (TDEC) and new pre-shipment consignment documentation through SW would be made mandatory through legislation (with a transition period). The proposed online functions of the FTP would include: application for registration as food importer / distributor and renewal of the registration; application for import licence, import permission, health certificate for export; checking on progress of application; retrieval and re-use of data from past application; retrieval of electronic health certificate; and access to information, e.g. approved plant / farm lists. Various functions of FTP would be added by phases until full implementation of SW.

Functions in Phase 1 of FTP (2019 tentatively) would include application for trader registration and renewal of registration; retrieval of electronic health certificate; and publishing of information. Food traders could access FTP direct, or through SW (adopting single sign-on principle). Trade representatives' views on the proposal were welcome.

12. One trade representative asked whether the SW would be used for the application of food business licences. Mr. Edmond NG replied that under the scope of FEHD, SW would be used for handling food import and export issues. The trade representative remarked that the application for food business licence was a very difficult subject for any member of the trade as an applicant had to approach many government departments. It would be a great help if the application could be included in SW. Mr. Edmond NG remarked that processing of the food business licences applications would be coordinated by the FEHD food business licensing offices in a manner similar to the SW, where FEHD made necessary referrals to other departments for the applicants.

13. Another trade representative asked whether the FTP would be open to traders only or open to the public. Mr. Edmond NG remarked that the proposed FTP was a platform for the use of food importers and distributors but not open to the public. The purposes of establishing the FTP was to facilitate the trade while enhancing imported food control. Information for the public could be browsed on the websites of CFS and FEHD.

14. One trade representative asked whether there would be a timeline for the implementation of the FTP in different phases. Mr. Edmond NG replied that there was a tentative timeline but the actual implementation had to tie in with the development of the SW. Ideally if the FTP could be implemented before Phase 2 of the SW, the trade could be allowed a voluntary trial period for better adaptation.

15. Another trade representative wanted to know in which month of 2018 would Phase 1 of the SW be implemented, hoping to avoid confusion during the peak period of exporting seasonal food items to the Mainland. Mr. Edmond NG replied that currently there was not a fixed date for rolling out of SW Phase 1. It was FEHD's plan to launch the FTP before the SW Phase 2. Before enactment of the new legislation, the use of the SW and FTP would be voluntary, i.e. the trade could still use the existing method of paper submission. Mr. James YEUNG supplemented that FEHD would not be involved in the Phase 1 implementation of the SW. In Phase 2 commencing some time in 2022, the application of import licences and permissions through SW would become mandatory. Before that, the use of SW for making applications would be voluntary. The trade's input was welcome during the interim from 2018 to 2022 such that FEHD could develop an efficient and easy-to-use FTP.

Agenda Item 3

Meat/Poultry Imported into Hong Kong and Re-export to Guangdong

16. Ms. LEUNG Mee Sze informed the meeting that upon request from the Guangdong Entry-exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau, the CFS notified the trade on the improvement measure for meat / poultry imported into Hong Kong and re-export to Guangdong. Importer must comply with two Guangdong Entry-exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau requirements if considered re-export the meat / poultry that had been imported into Hong Kong : (1) meat / poultry re-exported to Guangdong had to be in original sealed container as when imported into Hong Kong; and (2) such meat / poultry re-exported to Guangdong had to be accompanied with bilingual (English and Simplified Chinese) health certificate issued to Hong Kong.

Any Other Business

17. One trade representative asked whether the CFS had any plans for legislation of the definition of food processing aids. He remarked that many countries including China had a definition of food processing aids and food items with the food processing aids meeting the definition were not required to separately list the aids in the food label. Currently some food manufacturers expressed that it was unclear whether it was necessary to indicate the aids in the food label. The Chairman replied that under the current legislation there was not a particular definition of food processing aids. The CFS would make reference to Codex on this aspect and would review our food safety standards from time to time.

Date of Next Meeting

18. The date of next meeting would be decided later.

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