Permitted colouring matter:
Natural colours

Trade Consultation Forum
22 May 09
Background

- CFS has received some enquiries regarding the regulatory control of some natural colours in food in HK
- Aims to provide more information in this aspect for trade reference
Colouring Matter in Food Regulations (Cap. 132H)

- First Schedule – Permitted colouring matter

- Part I – Coal Tar Colours

- Part II – Other Colours

Specific name listed = permitted colouring matter

Colouring matter *natural to edible fruits or vegetables or their pure colouring principles whether isolated from such natural colours or produced synthetically*
Permitted or non-permitted?

- **Spirulina blue**
  - Extracted from a type of algae
  - A permitted colouring matter in HK

- **Crocin**
  - One of the main colouring principles of saffron and gardenia fruit
  - A permitted colouring matter in HK
More examples of permitted natural colouring matter in HK

- Beet red [INS 162]
- Canthaxanthin [INS 161g]
- Gardenia blue [INS 165]
- Gardenia green
- Gardenia red
- Gardenia yellow [INS 164]
- Grape skin extract [INS 163(ii)]
- Paprika oleoresin [INS 160c]
Some non-permitted natural colouring matters in HK

- Colouring matter which is not natural to edible fruits or vegetables e.g.
  - Red kojic rice
  - Monascus red
  - Lac dye red (Lac red)
Advice to trade

- Use only the permitted colouring matter in food and the quantity added is limited to the lowest possible level necessary to accomplish its desired effect.
- Ensure to provide accurate information on prepackaged food label including specific natural colouring matter used.
- Should there be any doubt on the use and labelling of natural colouring matter, seek advice from food scientists or the authority.
Thank you