

Progress for the Implementation of the Pesticide Residues in Food

44 Trade Consultation Forum
Agenda 3

Centre for Food Safety
29 May 2014



Outline

- ✿ Background
- ✿ The Regulation
- ✿ Progress for the Update and Implementation of the Pesticide Residues in Food

Background

Background

On 26 April 2012

- ✿ the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH), in exercise of the power under section 55(1) of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132), made the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (the Regulation) (Cap.132CM)
- ✿ The Legislative Council (LegCo) completed scrutiny of the Regulation in June 2012
- ✿ The Regulation will come into operation on 1 August 2014.

Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM)

Objectives

✿ Objectives:

- ✦ Better protect public health;
- ✦ Facilitate effective regulation of pesticide residues in food; and
- ✦ Promote harmonisation between local and international standards

✿ Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM)

- ✦ 8 Sections and 2 Schedules
- ✦ Will come into operation on 1 August 2014

Key Features of the Regulation (1)

- ✿ Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex) form the backbone of the regulatory framework

Schedule 1

- ✿ The Regulation specifies in Schedule 1 a list of maximum residue limits (MRLs) and extraneous maximum residue limits (EMRLs) for certain pesticide-food pairs, i.e. the maximum concentration of specified pesticide residues permitted in specific food commodities

Key Features of the Regulation (2)

The formulation of Schedule 1 to the Regulation

- ✿ Based primarily on the available standards recommended by Codex in 2011
- ✿ Supplemented by standards of the Mainland and other major food exporting countries to Hong Kong available at that time
- ✿ Taking into consideration comments received from stakeholders during the public consultation held between July and September 2011

Key Features of the Regulation (3)

Risk Assessment

- ✿ These standards had been scrutinized by conducting risk assessment to ensure that they are adequate to protect public health in Hong Kong, taking into account the heavy reliance of Hong Kong on imported food.

Schedule 2

- ✿ Schedule 2 to the Regulation specifies a list of exempted pesticides with no MRLs/EMRLs
- ✿ These are pesticides that are natural and the residues of which are identical to or indistinguishable from natural food components. Exemption of these natural pesticides is intended to facilitate their use by the trade.

Key Features of the Regulation (4)

The general principle

- ✿ Except for exempted pesticides
- ✿ Import or sale of food containing pesticide residues with no specified MRLs/EMRLs in Schedule 1 is only allowed if the consumption of the food concerned is not dangerous or prejudicial to health
- ✿ Based on risk assessment, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) will decide whether the consumption of the food concerned is dangerous or prejudicial to health

Key Features of the Regulation (5)

Update the Schedules to the Regulation

- ✿ As we had previously informed the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene (the FSEH Panel) and the trade in June 2012
- ✿ We would update the Schedules to the Regulation regularly, having regard to the latest international developments on application of pesticides, particularly changes to the Codex standards, and proposals received from the trade
- ✿ DFEH would consider the proposals on a case-by-case basis, taking into account whether the limits concerned could pass the risk assessment scrutiny based on local food consumption pattern before deciding whether the Schedules should be amended.

Progress for the Update and Implementation of the Pesticide Residues in Food

Update of Schedule 1

- ✿ To incorporate the latest changes to MRLs adopted by Codex in 2012 and 2013, while taking into account proposals put forth by relevant stakeholders since the enactment of the Regulation in June 2012
- ✿ To address the concerns of Members and the public about the proposed removal of the three pesticides (i.e. fosetyl aluminium, thidiazuron and triphenyltin hydroxide)
- ✿ Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has re-activated the Working Group under the Expert Committee on Food Safety (the Expert Committee) to examine the proposed amendments to the Regulation afresh
- ✿ We estimate that the work may not be completed before 1 August 2014
- ✿ Therefore, we **will implement** the legislation in accordance with the relevant Schedule to the **Regulation enacted in June 2012**.

Briefing Sessions

- ✿ CFS has conducted a series of briefings for the trade and other interested stakeholders to prepare for the commencement of the Regulation on 1 August 2014.
- ✿ e.g. 2 briefings to local farmers in July 2013, 1 briefing and 2 technical meetings to trade on February, March and May 2014, etc

Preparation of Guidelines

- ✿ CFS has prepared guidelines to assist the trade in complying with the requirements of the Regulation –
 1. User Guidelines
 2. Guidelines on Food Classification for the Regulation
 3. Guide to the Proposal for Addition or Revision of MRLs and EMRLs, and Addition of Exempted Pesticides under the Regulation (Cap. 132CM)

Online Searchable Database

- ✿ To facilitate the trade and relevant stakeholders to find appropriate MRL/EMRL for the pesticide-food pair concerned
- ✿ Will be available on the website of CFS for use soon

End