

**Centre for Food Safety**  
**Food and Environmental Hygiene Department**  
**Notes of the Seventeenth Meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum**  
**held on 22 May 2009 at 2:30 p.m.**  
**in Conference Room at Room 102, 1/F, 258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong**

**Present**

**Government Representatives**

Dr. Y. Y. HO	Consultant (Community Medicine)	(Chairman)
	(Risk Assessment & Communication)	
Dr. Anne FUNG	Principal Medical Officer (Risk Assessment & Communication)	
Dr. Ada WONG	Senior Medical Officer (Risk Communication)	
Mr. Y. K. LAI	Superintendent (Food Surveillance)2	
Ms. LEUNG Yuen Sheung	Superintendent (Import/Export)2	
Ms. Waiky WONG	Scientific Officer (Total Diet Study)	
Ms. S. M. CHOW	Scientific Officer (Biotechnology)	
Ms. Janny MA	Scientific Officer (Food Additive)	
Miss Violette LIN	Scientific Officer (Nutrition)	
Dr. Ken CHONG	Scientific Officer (Microbiology)	
Mr. K. W. CHUNG	Chief Health Inspector (Food Labelling)	
Mr. H. M. WONG	Superintendent (Risk Communication)	(Notes-taker)

**Trade Representatives**

Mr. FUNG Kwok Keung	A.S. Watson
Mr. NGAU Hing Chun	Chinese Cuisine Management Association
Mr. LEUNG Chi Wai	Chinese Cuisine Management Association
Mr. Dennis CHAN	City Super Limited
Mr. Marco KWOK	City Super Limited
Ms. May KAN	Coca-Cola China Ltd.
Mr. Stephen CHOI	Food Safety Services International
Ms. Frenda WONG	Hong Kong Suppliers Association
Mr. Gary LO	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Ms. Corine LIU	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.

Mr. LEUNG Yiu Hung	Hong Kong Yamazaki Baking Co., Ltd
Mr. LI Ping Lun	Hsin Kuang Restaurant (Holdings) Ltd.
Mr. WOO Chu	Hsin Kuang Restaurant (Holdings) Ltd.
Ms. LAI Yuen wan	Imperial Bird's Nest International Co. Ltd
Ms. NG Pui Kay	Kee Wah Bakery
Mr. Johnny CHAN	Kee Wah Bakery
Ms. Cheryl WU	Kraft Foods Ltd.
Dr. Chelsea LI	Kraft Foods Ltd.
Ms. CHOY Lai Ching	Lam Soon Hong Kong Group
Mr. K. L. TO	Lam Soon Hong Kong Group
Mr. Philip KWAN	Lee Kam Kee International Holdings Ltd.
Mr. Raymond YAM	Maxim's Caterers Ltd.
Ms. Zoe WO	Maxim's Caterers Ltd.
Ms. Ivy YIM	McDonald's Hong Kong
Mr. Eugene WONG	McDonald's Hong Kong
Ms. Doris CHAN	Nestle Hong Kong Ltd.
Mr. Jonathan CHOW	Nikken's Japanese Food Co., Ltd
Ms. Nancy CHOW	Nikken's Japanese Food Co., Ltd
Mr. HUI Yiu Kai	Nissin Foods Co., Ltd.
Ms. Cartus LAI	Parknshop
Mr. Chris CHAN	Pat Chun International Ltd (Food Technology Department)
Ms. Peko LO	PepsiCo International
Ms. MAK Lai yin	Pizza Hut
Ms. Grace YU	Procter & Gamble Hong Kong Ltd.
Ms. Joyce TSANG	Procter & Gamble Hong Kong Ltd.
Ms. Stephanie SHUM	Saint Honore Cake Shop Ltd.
Mr. Wellock LO	Sims Trading Co., Ltd.
Mr. WONG Kam Chuen	Swire Coca-Cola HK Ltd.
Ms. Gabriella W.C. CHAN	Taipan Bread & Cakes Co. Ltd.
Mr. Allen HO	The Dairy Farm Group
Ms. Nicole LO	The Dairy Farm Group
Mr. Douglas CHENG	The Garden Co., Ltd.
Mr. Samuel CHAN	The Garden Co., Ltd.
Mr. CHAN Chi Wai	The Garden Co., Ltd.
Mr. Keith LING	The Garden Co., Ltd.
Mr. Eric AU	Unilever Hong Kong Ltd.
Ms. Ivan CHAN	Vitasoy International Holdings Limited

Ms. LAM Siu Ping

Winner Food Products Ltd.

Ms. Amelia YEUNG

YHS Hong Kong (2000) PTE Limited

### **Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed all trade representatives to the 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**

#### **Matters Arising from Notes of Last Meeting**

#### **Amendment to the Chinese Rendition of “use by” Date on Labels of Pre-packaged Foods**

3. Mr. K. W. CHUNG said that the commencement notice for the amendment to the Chinese rendition of “use by” date on labels of pre-packaged foods was published in the Gazette on 15 May 2009. The food trade would be notified of the matter in writing shortly. To foster a smooth transition, the revised Chinese rendition of “use by” date might be used during the transition period.

## **Food Safety Charter 2009**

4. Dr. Anne FUNG told the meeting that a separate meeting with trade representatives on the detail arrangement for the Food Safety Charter 2009 was held on 20 May 2009. The consensus was that the Charter should be a continuous process and some incentives to sign the Charter for a number of years should be provided. More publicity was required so that the public knew about these signatories and that would also provide incentives for the signatories to do better. We would revise the plan of the Food Safety Charter 2009 to incorporate views expressed at the meeting. Trade representatives would be briefed on the finalised plan at the next meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum.

## **Agenda Item 2**

### **Safety of Irradiated Food**

5. Ms. S. M. CHOW briefed the meeting about the risk assessment (RA) study on the safety of irradiated food. According to the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), food irradiation referred to the technology of processing food products by ionising radiation in order to control foodborne pathogens, reduce microbial load and insect infestation, inhibit the germination of root crops, and extend the durable life of perishable produce. She said that at present more than 50 countries had approved the use of ionising radiation for food treatment. Although the positive list of irradiated food varied among countries, it was confined to spices, herbs, seasonings, fresh or dried fruits and vegetables, meat, poultry, seafood and egg products. Treatment of food with ionising radiation was in practice for more than 40 years but its safety remained a public concern. The RA study aimed at reviewing the basic principles and application of food irradiation technology and determining

the safety of irradiated food for human consumption in the perspectives of radiological safety, microbiological safety, toxicological safety and nutritional adequacy.

6. Ms. S. M. CHOW said the RA study concluded that induced radioactivity in irradiated food was insignificant under controlled conditions. There was no report on induction of novel pathogen to irradiated food or evidence to show that ionising radiation had introduced toxicological hazard. Although irradiation would lead to chemical changes and nutritional loss in irradiated food, there was little impact on the total intake of specific nutrients when irradiated food was consumed as part of a mixed diet. To sum up, consumption of irradiated food should pose no additional health risk.

7. Ms. S. M. CHOW advised that traders should follow closely international guidelines for radiation processing to ensure absorbed dose fell in a safe range for consumer without destroying nutrition value, structural integrity and sensory attributes to food. At the same time, every container containing irradiated food should be properly labelled, in accordance with the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) (Amendment: Requirements for Nutrition Labelling and Nutrition Claim) Regulation 2008 (Amendment Regulation), and clearly and legibly marked with the words “IRRADIATED” or “TREATED WITH IONIZING RADIATION” in English capital lettering and “輻照食品” in Chinese characters. Food after irradiation treatment should be handled under quality controlled and hygienic conditions to prevent subsequent contamination. She also advised the public that there was little impact on the total intake of specific nutrient and no additional risk to human health with the consumption of irradiated food. They should maintain a balanced diet and avoid overindulgence of food items.

8. Ms. S. M. CHOW replied to an enquiry from a trade representative that, in Hong Kong, not only food being irradiated in the process of production should be properly labelled but also those produced with raw materials treated with irradiation should also be properly labelled. Mr. K. W. CHUNG agreed with the reply. Ms. S. M. CHOW also replied that food processed with microwave was not required to be labelled.

9. The Chairman said that the RA study would be uploaded to Centre for Food Safety (CFS) website in early June 2009.

### **Agenda Item 3**

#### **Draft Guidelines on the Use of Aluminium-containing Food Additives**

10. Ms. Waiky WONG briefed the meeting about the draft guidelines on the use of aluminium (Al)-containing food additives. The guidelines were drawn up after two meetings of Working Group on the Use of Al-containing Food Additives held on 21 April and 7 May 2009. They set out principles for the use of Al-containing food additives in food production and provide recommendations to the trade for reducing Al content in food products. These guidelines would apply to all manufacturers and producers. The guidelines were available on CFS website ([http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme\\_rafs/files/Guidelines\\_on\\_the\\_use\\_of\\_Al\\_additives\\_e.pdf](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/files/Guidelines_on_the_use_of_Al_additives_e.pdf)).

11. The Chairman thanked the trade for contributions to the preparation of the draft guidelines on the use of Al-containing food additives. Views of the food trade were taken

into account when the guidelines were being drafted. The food trade was invited to offer their further comments on the draft guidelines to the CFS on or before 5 June 2009. After incorporating further comments from the trade, the guidelines would be issued to the food trade for reference.

12. The Chairman replied to an enquiry from a trade representative that there was no intention to regulate AI-containing food additives by legislation for the time being but he did not rule out such a measure in future. He said that the need of legislative measure to regulate AI-containing food additives would depend on the availability of international standard set out for such food additives and the effectiveness of reducing the level of AI in food after the guidelines on the use of AI-containing food additives were issued for reference of the food trade. In other words, legislative measure to regulate AI-containing food additives might be considered when the released guidelines were found ineffective in reducing AI in food and there was international standard set out by the Codex for controlling AI in food.

13. A trade representative pointed out that jellyfish sold in Hong Kong was mostly imported from the Mainland where it was processed. There were not much useful actions could be taken out by the Hong Kong food trade in controlling AI contained in such food. It was suggested that the public should be educated on the methods of handling and cleaning jellyfish in order to reduce AI in such food as this should be a more practicable approach in controlling the intake of AI from jellyfish. The Chairman replied that the RA study on AI in food was already circulated to the Mainland authority concerned for considering suitable parallel actions to reduce AI in jellyfish. On educating the public, production of a leaflet was being considered to educate the public on the risk of AI.

14. Ms. Waiky WONG replied to an enquiry from a trade representative that the level of Al contained in food was expressed as per kilogram of the food. She also replied to the same enquiry that the local distributors were sourcing for Al-free baking powder as substitute to Al-containing one for consideration of the bakery business. The trade representative requested the trade to be informed once there was news on the Al-free baking power. The Chairman welcomed trade representatives to inform CFS of their further views on the issue.

#### **Agenda Item 4**

##### **Permitted Colouring Matter: Natural Colours**

15. Ms. Janny MA gave a presentation on “Permitted Colouring Matter: Natural Colours”. In light of several enquiries regarding the regulatory control of some natural colours in food in Hong Kong received by the CFS, the presentation aimed at providing more information on the issue for trade reference. In Hong Kong, the use of colouring matters in food was regulated under the Colouring Matter in Food Regulations (Cap. 132H). Permitted colouring matters were listed under the First Schedule (Part I and II) of the Regulations. Ms. Janny MA said some members of the trade might not be familiar with the principle behind the statement “colouring matter natural to edible fruits or vegetables or their pure colouring principles whether isolated from such natural colours or produced synthetically.....” listed under Part II of the First Schedule. She used two natural colours i.e. spirulina blue and crocin as examples to illustrate why they were permitted in food with reference to the principle of the statement. She provided examples of permitted (e.g. 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)] and paprika oleoresin [INS 160c]) and non-permitted (e.g. red kojic rice, monascus red and lac dye red (lac red)) natural colouring



matters in the presentation.

16. Ms. Janny MA advised that the trade should use only the permitted colouring matters in food and the quantity added should be limited to the lowest possible level necessary to accomplish its desired effect and should provide accurate information on pre-packaged food label including specific natural colouring matter used. In case there was doubt on the use and labelling of natural colouring matter, advice from food scientists or the authority concerned should be sought.

17. Mr. K. W. CHUNG replied to an enquiry from a trade representative that there was no legislation regulating the use of the word “natural” on labels on pre-packaged food. However, the food trade was advised not to use the word “natural” unless it was sure that the colouring matter was truly natural.

18. On the request of trade representatives, the Chairman said that the powerpoint presentation materials of “Permitted Colouring Matter: Natural Colours” in both English and Chinese would be uploaded to the CFS website for trade reference.

## **Agenda Item 5**

### **Report on Transfat**

19. Miss Violette LIN briefed the meeting about the RA study on trans fatty acids (TFA) in local foods. It was recognized that TFA can increase the risk of coronary heart disease (CHD). The World Health Organisation (WHO) had reported that CHD would remain the 3<sup>rd</sup> killer in the world. It was noted that the same disease had been the 2<sup>nd</sup> killer in Hong

Kong since 2001. Some countries had moved to phase out or to limit TFA in food and food products. In Hong Kong, there was no specific legislation governing the maximum level of TFA in foods. However, TFA were one of the seven core nutrients to be stated on label of pre-packaged foods under the Amendment Regulation on Nutrition Labelling for pre-packaged foods. After the Amendment Regulation taking effect on 1 July 2010, the TFA content of pre-packaged foods might be stated on food label as either “0” (when TFA was smaller than or equal to 0.3 gram per 100 gram or 100 millilitre of food) or “Free TFA” (when TFA was smaller than or equal to 0.3 gram per 100 gram or 100 millilitre of food and the conditions for "low Saturated Fatty Acids (SFA)" claim were met).

20. Miss Violette LIN said that the objectives of the RA study on TFA were to examine the nutrient contents, especially their TFA, of some common local foods and to formulate advice to the trade and the public based on the fat content in foods measured in this study and results of two previous studies. The two previous studies were conducted jointly with the Consumer Council in July 2007 (Part 1) and May 2008 (Part 2). The current study covered local foods limitedly covered or not covered in previous studies and foods commonly consumed and might contain high TFA. Based on these criteria, there was a total of 59 items in six groups tested in the study. Miss Violette LIN said that the study revealed that TFA were present in a wide range of local food items, ranging from 0 gram to 11 gram per 100 gram of food. It was noticed that oil/fats, especially margarines, and bakery products, especially puff pastry products, generally contained high TFA content. All four samples of vegetable oils tested in the study were found containing TFA. Besides TFA, dairy or cheese-containing products also contained high SFA content per unit.

21. Miss Violette LIN advised that the food trade should modify the chemical

hydrogenation process to produce partially hydrogenated fats with low TFA content in foods and oils/fats. For pre-packaged foods, the trade should declare the amount of TFA content on the nutrition label to enable consumers make an informed choice. She suggested the food trade to refer to the “Trade Guidelines on Reducing Trans Fat in Food” available on CFS website ([http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food\\_leg/files/trans-fats-guide-e.pdf](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food_leg/files/trans-fats-guide-e.pdf)) or collect printed materials from CFS for reference on alternatives of providing healthier food choices to consumers. She invited trade representatives to the “Introduction on the use of the Nutrition Label Calculator – Experience Sharing Session” on 12 June 2009 introducing the Nutrition Label Calculator to facilitate the trade in producing nutrition labels for compliance with the Amendment Regulation. Miss Violette LIN also advised that consumers should maintain a balanced diet and avoid excessive intake of certain types of food, choose foods based on their overall nutrient profile, including the amounts of TFA and SFA, make reference to the information in the food label (including the ingredient list and nutrition label) and the available food composition databases to make healthier food choices, avoid foods high in TFA and reduce the use of oils/fats when preparing foods. They might use vegetable oils instead of animal fats, and use margarines sparingly.

22. Miss Violette LIN replied to an enquiry from a trade representative that it was difficult to identify whether some of the TFAs were generated from natural or artificial sources. There was no international consensus on CHD and natural TFA. The general advice to the public was to reduce the intake of TFA, principally those coming from artificial sources. The Chairman supplemented that the definition of TFA adopted in the legislation was based on that adopted by the Codex. It aimed to regulate artificial TFA. As studies were not conclusive that natural TFA was harmful to health, the RA study of CFS focused on artificial TFA. There was no relation to the TFA content to be stated on pre-packaged foods and the

source of TFA. As far as the TFA content was smaller than or equal to 0.3 gram per 100 gram of food, the TFA content might be stated on food label of pre-packaged as “0” in accordance with the Amendment Regulation.

23. Dr. Anne FUNG advised the meeting that the bilingual Trade Guidelines on Reducing Trans Fats in Food, including a table comparing the fatty acid contents of different types of oils and fats, was available on CFS website for reference of the trade ([http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food\\_leg/files/trans-fats-guide-e.pdf](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food_leg/files/trans-fats-guide-e.pdf)).

24. The Chairman said that the RA study would be released in early July 2009.

#### **Agenda Item 6**

#### **Any Other Business**

#### **Release of Information**

25. In response to a question raised by a member of the trade on whether the results of the risk assessment studies could be communicated with his colleagues after learning that from our consultation activities, the Chairman said that trade representatives were welcomed to communicate information discussed at meetings of CFS with trade representatives within the organisation that trade representatives belonged to. However, it was not advisable for trade representatives to release such information to the press or the general public as premature dissemination of the information might undermine the purposes of the study. The messages of the study should be properly formulated in consultation with the trade before it could be released.

### **Human Swine Influenza (Influenza A/H1N1) and Food Safety**

26. Dr. Ken CHONG briefed the meeting about human swine influenza and food safety. He said that according to the joint statement of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), WHO and World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) issued on 7 May 2009, there was no evidence to indicate that influenza viruses were transmissible to humans through eating processed pork or other food products derived from pigs. Besides, meat cooked to a core temperature of 70°C or above would readily inactivate any viruses potentially present in raw meat products. Lastly, pork and pork products handled in accordance with good hygienic practices recommended by the WHO, Codex and the OIE would not be a source of infection. Dr. Ken CHONG also briefed the relevant section in “Risk in Brief - Human Swine Influenza (Influenza A/H1N1) and Food Safety” to the trade. Full information was available on CFS website ([http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/faq/faq\\_16.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/faq/faq_16.html)).

27. Dr. Ken CHONG replied to an enquiry from a trade representative that scientific evaluation regarding the characteristics of the human swine influenza virus was scarce for the time being. Common precautionary measures for influenza should be applicable to prevent the contract of human swine influenza through normal social activities. On the other hand, the trade should pay attention to updated information from Department of Health.

28. On the difference between cooking pork to a core temperature of 70°C and 75°C, Dr. Anne FUNG advised that the former temperature was the advice of WHO to inactivate virus whereas the latter temperature (for at least 30 seconds) has been the advice of CFS to ensure food is cooked thoroughly for consumption. The Chairman supplemented that cooking pork

with its central part to at least 70°C aimed at killing its virus whilst to 75°C for at least 30 seconds aimed at ensuring the pork would be safe for human consumption.

#### **Briefing on Application Procedures under “Small Volume Exemption Scheme”**

29. Mr. K. W. CHUNG told the meeting that a briefing session on the application procedures under “Small Volume Exemption Scheme” of the Nutrition Labelling Scheme would be held on 2 June 2009. He added that invitation letters had just been issued to the trade and he encouraged trade representatives to enroll to the briefing session in order to get more information on the application procedures under the scheme. Information on the briefing session would also be available on the CFS website ([http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme\\_nifl/programme\\_nifl\\_Workshops\\_on\\_NLS.html#5](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_nifl/programme_nifl_Workshops_on_NLS.html#5)).

30. Dr. Anne FUNG, taking the opportunity, encouraged the trade to enrol to the Rapid Alert System for prompt notification on CFS activities/food incidents by email/fax. Enrolment information was available on CFS website at this link: [http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/rapid\\_alert/rapid\\_alert.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/rapid_alert/rapid_alert.html).

#### **Notice on Meeting of Trade Consultation Forum**

31. The Chairman said that the notice on meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum was and would be issued at least one week in advance. Information on other activities might be issued at a shorter notice. When notice on meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum reached the trade representatives late, it might be attributed to the need of internal circulation

within the trade associations. He suggested trade representatives to inform Mr. H. M. WONG of change of representative timely to ensure the list of trade representatives maintained by CFS would be most updated for speedy notification to trade representatives on meetings and activities organised by CFS.

**Date of Next Meeting**

32. Trade representatives would be notified on the date of next meeting.

33. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.