
Seasonal Food Surveillance on Hairy Crabs

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Background

- Autumn is the season for freshwater hairy crabs and there will be an upsurge of consumption during this period.
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) recently conducted a seasonal food surveillance project on hairy crabs. The objective was to provide information on the safety of hairy crabs to consumers and the trade in a timely manner.

Types of tests

- The CFS collected samples from import, wholesale and retail levels for :
 - **Chemical analysis**
 - Veterinary drug residues (e.g. chloramphenicol, sulphonamides, tetracycline, nitrofurans and malachite green)
 - Metallic contamination (e.g. mercury, lead and arsenic)
 - Synthetic hormones
 - Colouring Matters (e.g. Sudan dyes)
 - Oxalic acid
 - **Microbiological analysis**
 - Testing for parasites

Results

- 115 samples have been completed testing.
- All results were satisfactory.



Advice for the trade

- Should import hairy crabs from registered hairy crab farms in Mainland and each consignment should be accompanied by a health certificate issued by the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) or Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau.
- Source hairy crabs from reliable suppliers.
- Hairy crabs for sale must be kept in the refrigerator.



Advice for consumers

- Observe the "Five Keys to Food Safety" in purchasing, storing, preparing and cooking hairy crabs:
 - **Choose**
 - Buy hairy crabs from reliable and hygienic shops or restaurants.
 - Buy hairy crabs with intact, shiny shells without a foul smell.
 - **Keep clean**
 - Brush and wash the crab shells and claws before cooking.
 - Wash hands with soapy water before consumption.

Advice for consumers (Cont'd)

- **Separate raw and cooked food**
 - Put the crabs in a container with cover and store them separately from other foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross-contamination.

- **Cook thoroughly**
 - Cook thoroughly and remove internal organs completely before consumption.
 - Avoid eating raw crabs. Condiments such as salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi cannot kill bacteria or parasites that may be present.



Advice for consumers (Cont'd)

- **Safe temperature**
 - Cooked hairy crabs should be consumed as soon as possible and never keep them in room temperature for more than two hours.

- Maintain a balanced diet and limit the intake of hairy crabs, particularly cholesterol-rich roe, to a moderate amount.