
Seasonal Food Surveillance on Hairy Crabs

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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Introduction

■ Background

- ❑ Autumn is the season for freshwater hairy crabs and there will be an upsurge of consumption during this period. From time to time, there are public concerns about the safety of hairy crabs.
- ❑ The Centre for Food Safety recently conducted a seasonal food surveillance project on hairy crabs for chemical and microbiological analysis.

■ Objective

- ❑ To provide information on the safety of hairy crabs to consumers and the trade in a timely manner.

Types of tests

- Hairy crab samples were collected 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)
 - Microbiological analysis
 - Testing for parasites

Results

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

Advice for food 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

- Buy hairy crabs from reliable shops or restaurants.
- Store the crabs separately from other foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross-contamination.
- Wash the crabs thoroughly and remove the internal organs completely before eating.
- Avoid eating raw crabs and cook the crabs thoroughly before eating.
- Maintain a balanced diet and limit the intake of hairy crabs, particularly cholesterol-rich roe, to a moderate amount.