

# 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 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.

# Types of tests

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

# Test results

- In total, 126 samples have been completed testing. One of them was found to contain a small amount of veterinary drug residues, 3-amino-2-oxazolidione (AOZ).



# Sample detected with veterinary drug residues

- 1 sample detected with veterinary drug residues, AOZ:

Sample	Unsatisfactory testing item	Result
Hairy crab	AOZ (Veterinary drug residues)	0.0032 ppm <sup>(1)</sup>

<sup>(1)</sup> The detected level was low and was unlikely to pose adverse effects upon normal consumption.

# Follow-up actions

- Traced source of food item in question.
- Requested vendors to stop sale and dispose of incriminated food item.
- Issued a warning letter to concerned vendor.
- Took follow-up samples for analysis. 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.