

“TRADERS’ RESPONSES TO FOOD INCIDENTS”

**CENTRE FOR FOOD SAFETY
REGIONAL SYMPOSIUM:**

***From Food Incidents to
Crisis Management***

1-2 June 2011

Allen Ho

Is Our Food Safe?



蔬菜含有違禁農藥

Banned pesticides in greens: poll

Greenpeace found excessive levels of DDT and other chemicals in vegetables sold at supermarkets

Chandra Wong

Greenpeace has urged the government and the two main supermarket chains to step up safety and testing after finding banned pesticides and excessive levels of other chemicals in vegetables for sale in their stores.

The chemicals were found in samples bought from five ParkShop branches and two Wellcome branches in Tin Shui Wai between November and March. They included the banned pesticides DDT, lindane, delta-HCH and methamidophos.

Excessive levels of cypermethrin and chlorpyrifos – the two most commonly used farm pesticides – were also found.

"This is unacceptable," the environmental group's food safety assistant campaigner, Chow Yuen-ping, said. "We're under pesticide threat every day from these vegetables with unsafe content. It can constitute serious health threats like acute poisoning or chronic intoxication if we keep consuming them."

Wellcome said it had already traced the contaminated crops and stopped using the suppliers. It promised to raise its standards.

ParkShop has told Greenpeace it will look at stepping up its monitoring system, but condemned as "irresponsible" the piecemeal release of the report, which it said was part of a study that also included wet markets.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department said it would follow up the matter with mainland counterparts.

Greenpeace, which collected the samples on four visits, said it had made two random checks initially, but went back on two further occasions when the first tests showed Tin Shui Wai seemed to be a particular problem.

Thirteen types of commonly con-



Tomatoes on sale at the Chung Fu Shopping Centre branch of ParkShop in Tin Shui Wai yesterday, where some of the pesticide samples were found.
Photo: Ricky Chung

Greenpeace tested 55 samples of 13 different vegetables across five ParkShop and two Wellcome branches.

- At two supermarkets, 41 samples were found to contain pesticide residue
- 17 contained excessive amounts based on both WHO standards, which Hong Kong follows, and EU standards
- 5 contained pesticides banned in Hong Kong

NAUSEA TO DEATH, DEPENDING ON THE LEVEL OF EXPOSURE

Chlorpyrifos is an insecticide widely used in homes and on farms. Breathing or ingesting it can affect the nervous system to cause headaches, blurred vision, seizures, coma and death, depending on the amount and length of exposure.

Cypermethrin is classified by the World Health Organisation as moderately hazardous and can interfere with receptors in the nervous system. Symptoms of poisoning include abnormal facial sensations, dizziness, headache, nausea, anorexia and fatigue, vomiting and increased stomach secretion. It can also irritate skin and eyes.

Symptoms should disappear after some days but patients severely exposed to the chemical may also suffer from muscular twitching, coma and convulsive attacks, with symptoms persisting for weeks.

Former medical sector legislator Lo Wing-lok warned the pesticide could cause death, depending on the severity of poisoning. Dr Lo said the extent to which consumers could protect themselves was limited and that the most common method was to soak vegetables for at least half an hour before washing them under running water.

- Compare to other countries, the food in **Hong Kong** is actually among the safest;
- Food borne illness recorded in **Hong Kong** per year is relatively low;
- For comparison, in the **US**, food borne illness is a significant burden (**USFDA** data).
 - About **48** millions (**1** in **6** Americans) get sick each year;
 - **128,000** are hospitalized;
 - **3,000** die

- However, food incidents, no matter how few, are nightmares for food traders, especially in **Hong Kong** due to:
 - Over **90%** of the food consumed in **Hong Kong** is imported;
 - Traders carried tens and thousands of SKUs;
 - Traders normally have no direct production /manufacturing control (in terms of food safety) over the majority of the items they sell.

What Can Food/Retail Traders Do in Terms of Food Incidents?

- Basically there are **three** types of key actions in response to food incidents:
 - Post Incidents – recalls, withdrawals, etc.;
 - Preventive Actions
 - ✓ Monitoring / testing;
 - ✓ Prevention

The **Dairy** **Farm** Group, HK

- Number of Retail Outlets:

① Wellcome (includes Market Place, ThreeSixty and Oliver's)	282
② 7-Eleven Convenience Stores	964
③ Mannings	338
④ IKEA	3
Total	1,587

Our Vision on Food Safety & Quality

- ◆ To provide our customers with consistently safe, clean, nutritious and wholesome foods to meet or exceed their expectations.

Products we sell can be classified mainly as:

✓ *Grocery*

✓ *Fresh Produce*

➤ **Post Incidents – Recalls/Withdrawals**

- Information from various sources
 - 1) Government – rapid alert and/or verbal communication/directions (work closely with CFS)
 - 2) Suppliers
 - 3) News media
 - 4) Consumers
 - 5) Other sources, e.g. trade

Rapid Alert



2

Date 日期: 16.5.2011	Case no. 檔號: 16May2011-1
Total No. of Pages (including this copy) 總頁數(連本頁): 1/2	
RAPID ALERT: 快速警報 Rose & Shore Meat Co. is recalling ready-to-eat deli meat products due to possible Listeria contamination	
Source of Information: 資料來源	The US Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)
Name of Affected Product: 問題食品名稱	For details, pls. refer to Pages 2. 詳情請參閱第2頁
Durability Indication/ Lot Code: 食用期/批次	For details, pls. refer to Pages 2. 詳情請參閱第2頁
Barcode/GTIN/UPC/ EAN: 條碼:	N/A
Name and Address of Supplier: 供應商名稱及地址:	Rose & Shore Meat Co., a Vernon, Calif., establishment
Reason for Recall: 回收原因	The products may be contaminated with <i>Listeria monocytogene</i> .
Advice to Trade: 給業界的建議	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Please take necessary actions to ensure all products for sale are fit for human consumption and complying with relevant standards. 請採取所需行動，以確保出售的所有食品適宜供人食用，並符合有關標準。 2) Avoid selling or serving the affected products. 不要出售或使用問題食物。 3) Check relevant website(s) for latest information. 請瀏覽有關網頁，以便取得最新的資訊。 4) Contact Centre for Food Safety <u>immediately</u> at 3428 8142 (office hours) or 9867 8401 (non-office hours), if the product in question is available. Sale of food unfit for human consumption in Hong Kong is an offence. 如有上述食品，請立即致電 3428 8142 (辦公時間) or 9867 8401 (非辦公時間) 與食物安全中心聯絡。任何人士在香港出售不適宜供人食用的食物，均屬違法。 5) Contact Centre for Food Safety via the above telephone no., if there are any enquiries. 如有任何查詢，請致電上述電話與食物安全中心聯絡。
Further Information: 更多資料	Source of information 資料來源: http://www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/Recall_037_2011_Release/index.asp

Details of the Products:

The products subject to recall include:

- 40 to 50 pound boxes containing packages of "OLYMPIC GOLD BEEF PASTRAMI" with the lot number "20911" and a "04-05-11" pack date on the outside of each box. Each package has the lot number "20911" and lot code "10951."
- 40 to 50 pound boxes containing packages of "ROSE AND SHORE N.Y. STYLE PASTRAMI" with the lot number "20911" and a "04-05-11" pack date as well as a "29 N.Y." case code on the outside of each box. Each package has the lot number "20911" and lot code "10951."
- 9 to 13 pound boxes containing "COOKED ANGUS ROAST BEEF" with lot number "20941" and a use by date of "05-17-11." Each package has the lot number "20941" and a use by date of "05-17-11."
- 24 to 30 pound boxes containing packages of "TOGO'S PASTRAMI" with the lot number "20911", a "04-05-11" pack date and a use by date of "05-23-11" on the outside of each box. Each package has the lot number "20911" and a use by date of "05-23-11."

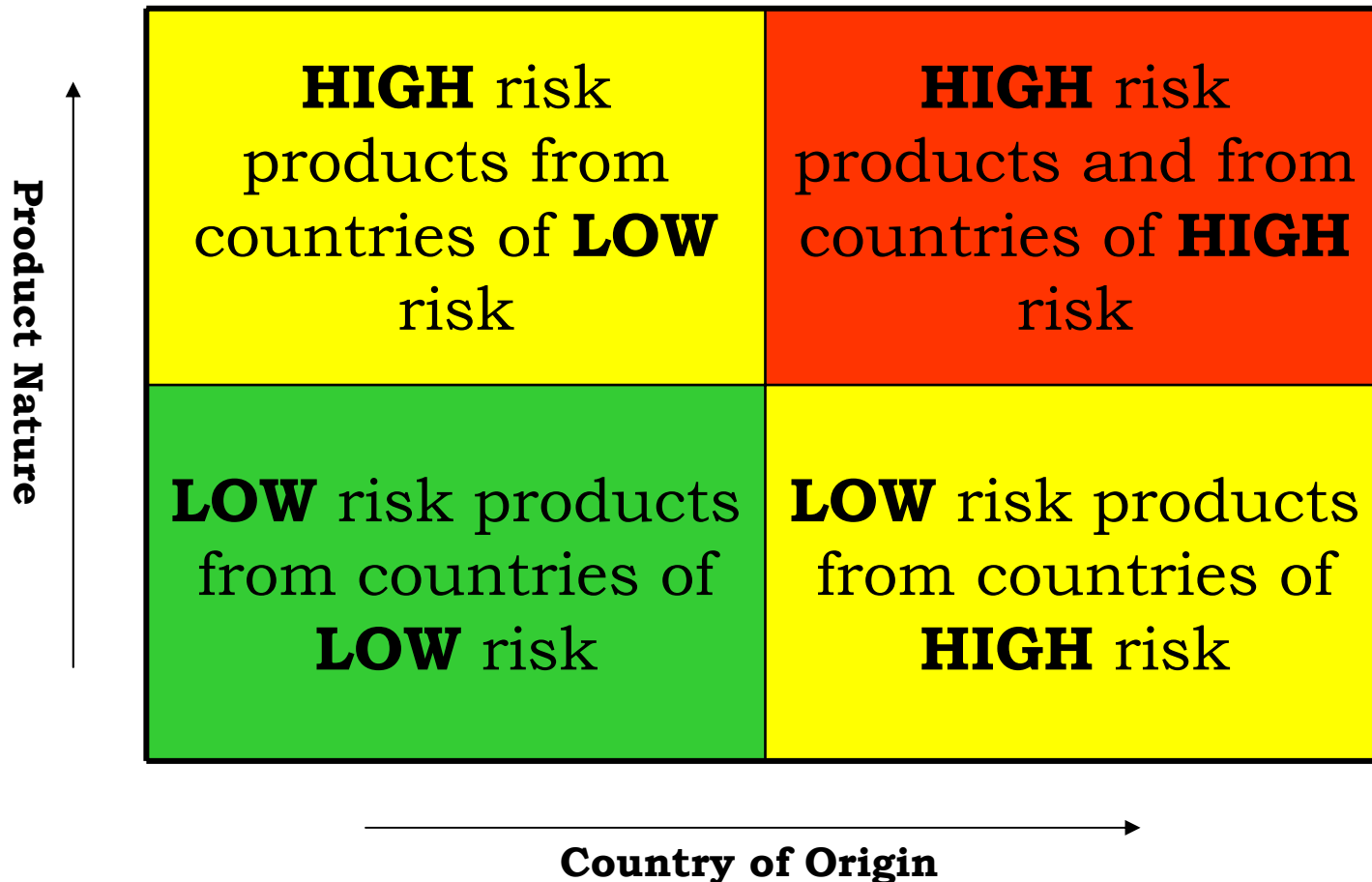
Each box bears EST. 1821 inside the USDA mark of inspection. The products were produced on April 5, 2011.

To assure the continuous effective operation of the food incidents communication/process flow, we also:

- ✓ perform mock recall every year to assure the system in place is effective and efficient;
- ✓ Send letters out every **6** months to store managers, merchandisers and relative groups to assure/remind them of the flow chart/sequence to follow in case of food incidents.

➤ Product Monitoring – Testing

Risk Assessment of the Products – Rough Estimate



Checking / Testing

- Documentation/certificates
- Visual QC – incoming products
- Sampling
- Microbiological Testing – routine/pathogens/ad hoc
- Chemical Testing – pesticides, heavy metals, other routine tests, etc.
- Nutritional Testing – in compliance with the regulations
- Other tests e.g. antibiotic, Sudan Red, melamine, etc.

Other Monitoring Methods

✓ Auditing

- Our own stores
- Suppliers
- Farms
- Packing facilities
- Warehouses,
- Other related facilities and systems

✓ Regulatory & Compliance

- Label checking / verification
- COA verification
- Certificates

➤ **Preventive Actions**

- Where feasible/applicable, preventive control is our priority and corner stone of our food safety system;
- Feasible/effective with products (e.g. fresh produce) that we have some control over our sources;
- Examples are vegetables, fruits and meat.

➤ **Preventive Actions Initiatives/ Approach**

- Applicable to product / produce we can influence the quality control at the source;
- Partnership with suppliers approach;
- Take “*From Farm to Table*” approach;
- Adequate training is key to success;
- Monitoring system in place to gauge progress and for further improvement.

Example: Chinese Vegetables

- Partnership with registered suppliers / farms in **China**;
- Provide agricultural / horticultural training according to international standard;
- Implementation of *Good Agricultural Practice* (**GAP**);
- Establish a record/traceability system and continuous improvement program.

A: Ⅳ
AG 品种 红叶生菜、九芽生菜、
罗马生菜、红苞菊
面积 0.93亩
日期 2008.10.27日





MULTI
LAYERED



CREEPY CRAWLIES



CODE NO. EM-108

TRAPS HOUSE FLIES
COCKROACHES AND
OTHER IRRITATING
NIGHT-FLYERS



ALL
RIGHTS
RESERVED

R.O.C. PATENT 097674, 107305
P.R.C. PATENT 90229180, 9



Can be used again after tearing off this sticker









Examples of Preventive Measures Applied to Other Products

Chilled Pork Process Flow (1)



- Pig farm in China

Chilled Pork Process Flow (2)



- Pig slaughtered at temperature controlled process plant
- Carcass cut into half and coded
- Delivery to HK chilled pork processing facility

QC Measures

- ✓ Supplier audit to ensure compliance to WELLCOME quality / sanitary standards

Chilled Pork Process Flow (3)



- Carcass halves cut into individual pieces at HK chilled pork process facility

QC Measure

- ✓ Process facility audited to ensure compliance to WELLCOME quality / sanitary standards

Chilled Poultry Process Flow (1)



- Chicken raised at China farm



- Chicken slaughtered at chilled chicken plant with GMP

Chilled Poultry Process Flow (2)



- Chicken delivery to HK
- Packing / coding/ labeling by supplier
- Chicken delivery to WFFC
- Chicken delivery to stores

QC Measures

- ✓ QC random checking of received stock
- ✓ Random sampling for testing (e.g. Micro testing, H5N1, etc).

SUMMARY

◆ **Food safety will always remain a challenge even though we have established:**

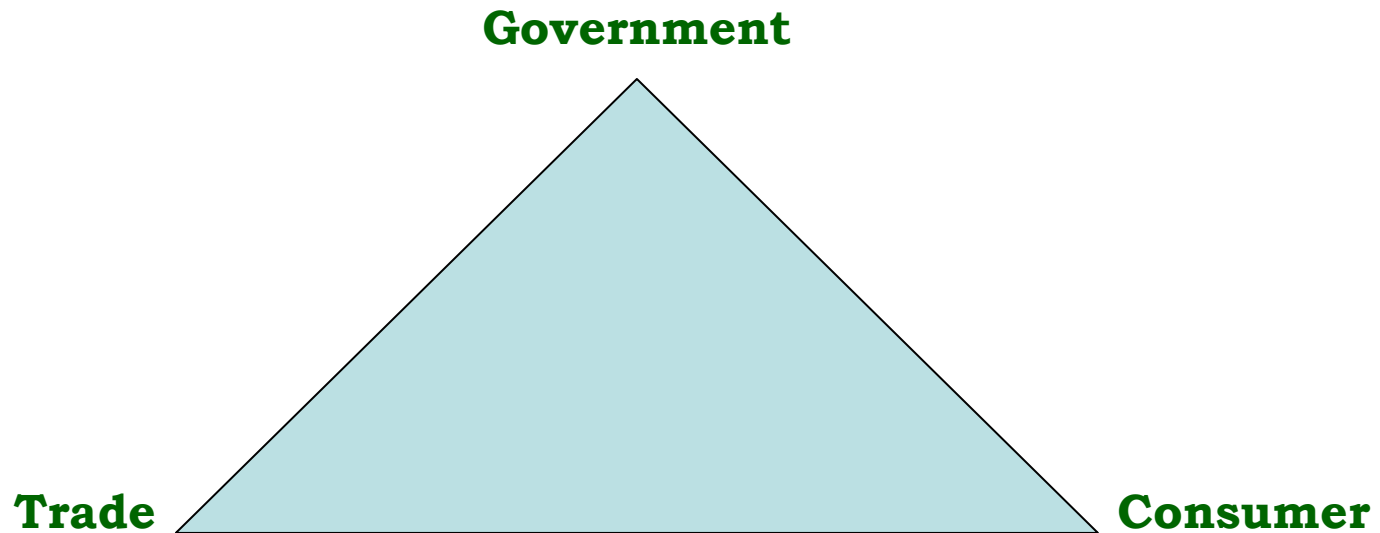
- ✓ Preventive measures at the sources
- ✓ Monitoring/testing system
- ✓ Timely remedial action (recalls)

◆ **Continued challenges ahead mainly due to:**

- ✓ Social economic changes
- ✓ Advancement of food technology & techniques
- ✓ Globalization of food trade
- ✓ Environmental pollution
- ✓ Natural and man made disasters, etc.

CONCLUSION

- **Government, trade and consumers must all work closely together to deal with those challenges in order to continue maintaining the safety of our foods in Hong Kong.**



THANK YOU