Dutch eggs found with pesticide fipronil

What is the incident of fipronil in eggs?

Upon learning a notice issued by the Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) that certain eggs produced in the country were detected to contain a pesticide, fipronil, at levels which might cause adverse health effects and consumption of the affected eggs were not advised, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) has been closely following up on the incident and monitoring its latest development. It has also contacted major local importers and conducted inspections on major retail outlets. According to information and codes of the eggs concerned published by the Dutch authorities, investigation by the CFS showed that the affected batches of the product not fit for consumption as advised by the Dutch authorities have not been imported into Hong Kong. For the sake of prudence, the Centre has collected two samples of Dutch eggs of a different batch at retail level for testing. The test results showed that the two samples contained fipronil at levels exceeding the legal limit as stipulated in local legislation.

What is fipronil?

Fipronil is a broad-spectrum insecticide used to control insects such as fleas, lice, ticks, cockroaches and mites.

What effects can fipronil have on human?

Available information suggests that adverse effects on the nervous system have been observed after short-term exposure to high level of fipronil in experimental animals. Long term adverse effect of fipronil may include damage to the liver, thyroid and kidneys. According to current scientific knowledge, fipronil is not classified as mutagenic or carcinogenic, and has no known harmful effects on reproduction or unborn.

How fipronil in eggs is regulated in Hong Kong?

Fipronil in eggs is regulated under the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap 132CM). According to the Regulation, the maximum residue levels (MRLs) of fipronil in eggs is 0.02 mg/kg, which is consistent with the corresponding standards specified by Codex Alimentarius Commission.

How does CFS monitor the level of fipronil in eggs?

Under its routine Food Surveillance Programme, the CFS has collected food samples at import, wholesale and retail levels for chemical and microbiological testings to

ensure that food meets legal requirements and is fit for human consumption. From 2014 to 2016, the Centre has collected a total of over 1,100 poultry egg samples for chemical (including fipronil) testing. All samples passed the tests.

Has CFS conducted tests on eggs potentially tainted with fipronil in recent incident?

CFS collected two samples of eggs imported from the Netherlands for analysis. The samples were found to contain fipronil at levels of 0.064 and 0.055 parts per million (ppm) respectively, both levels exceeded the legal limits of 0.02 ppm.

Will there be health risk if same batch of eggs tested are consumed?

Based on the level of fipronil detected in two samples of concern, adverse health effects is not expected caused under usual consumption. However, for the sake of prudence, members of the public who have bought the affected batch of the product should stop consuming it. The trade should also stop using or selling the affected batch of the product immediately should they possess it.

4 August 2017