Why do we need to regulate pesticide residues in food?
The use of pesticides and other chemicals has become a common agricultural practice to enhance and stabilize crop yield, protect the nutritional integrity of food, facilitate storage to assure year-round supplies, and provide attractive and appealing food products. The proper use of pesticides is beneficial to public health by protecting crops from contamination by bacteria and fungal microorganisms.

The adverse health effects of pesticides depend on the nature of the pesticide, as well as the amount and duration of individual exposure. Excessive exposure to some pesticides may cause acute adverse health effects. Most of the international regulatory authorities and the Hong Kong authority have already introduced statutory control on pesticide residues in food. To better protect public health, facilitate effective regulation and promote harmonization between local and international standards, there is a genuine need to introduce a regulatory framework on pesticide residues in food in Hong Kong.

The refined regulatory framework
The refined regulatory framework aims to strengthen the regulation of pesticide residues in food to achieve the following objectives:

(a) better protect public health;
(b) facilitate effective regulation; and
(c) promote harmonization between local and international standards.

In driving to achieve the above objectives, the Government is mindful of the need to maintain a stable supply of food in Hong Kong. To achieve the above objectives, we propose that the Director of Food and Environmental Health (DFEH) should make a Regulation on Pesticide Residues in Food (the proposed Regulation) under section 55 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132).

Salient features of the refined regulatory framework are summarized as follows:

• to define “pesticide” and other related terms in a way consistent with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex);
• to provide at least of “maximum residue limits” (MRLs) and “intraspecies maximum residue limits” (SMRLs) to adopt MRLs and SMRLs recommended by Codex as the backbone as well as the Codex’s standardization of foods;
• to prohibit the import and sale of the concerned food for which no MRL or SMRL has been specified, unless DFEH is satisfied that the detected level will not be dangerous or prejudicial to health;
• to provide a list of exempted substances;
• to accept applications for adding/revising MRLs and exempted substances;
• to adopt the proposed Regulation with the registration of pesticides for use on food crops under the Pesticides Ordinance (Cap. 133); and
• to commit the proposed Regulation after a four-year grace period.

Details of the refined regulatory framework are set out in the consultation document which may be downloaded from the website of the Food and Health Bureau (http://www.fhb.gov.hk) or the Centre for Food Safety (http://www.fshb.gov.hk) or obtained from the following locations:

- Communication Resource Unit
  MK Fa Yuen Street Municipal Services Building
  123A Fa Yuen Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon
- District Environmental Hygiene Offices
- District Offices of Home Affairs Department

Views sought
The Government invites you to let us have your views on the refined regulatory framework. Please send your comments by letter, facsimile or e-mail to the Centre for Food Safety before 19 September 2011:

Centre for Food Safety
(Attn.: Consultation on Pesticide Residues in Food)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
445 Queenway Government Offices
66 Queenway Hong Kong
Facsimile: (852) 2893 3547
E-mail address: pesticide_consultation@fehd.gov.hk
Enquiry tel. nos.: (852) 2867 5699

The Government will take the views received into consideration before finalising the proposed Regulation.

Any person submitting views and comments should be aware that the Government may publish all or part of the views and comments received and disclose the identity of the source in such manner as the Government considers appropriate, unless he/she requests any part of the views and comments and/or his/her identity be treated in confidence.

Published by the Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
(Attn.: Consultation on Pesticide Residues in Food)

July 2011
Why do we need to regulate pesticide residues in food?

The use of pesticides and other chemicals has become a common agricultural practice to enhance and stabilize crop yield and protect the nutritional integrity of food, facilitate storage to ensure year-round supplies, and provide attractive and appealing food products. The proper use of pesticides is beneficial to public health to protect crops from contamination by bacteria and harmful microorganisms.

Notwithstanding the beneficial effects, the use of pesticides and its resultant residues requires careful monitoring and regulation. Small amounts of pesticide residues may remain in the crops or animal foods. Exposure to pesticide residues in food is an area that is of considerable concern to consumers, food producers, academics and government agencies.

The adverse health effects of pesticides depend on the nature of the pesticide, as well as the amount and duration of individual exposure. Excessive exposure to some pesticides may cause acute adverse health effects.

Most of the international regulatory authorities and the Hong Kong authorities have already introduced statutory control on pesticide residues in food. To better protect public health, facilitate effective regulation and promote harmonisation between local and international standards, there is a genuine need to introduce a regulatory framework on pesticide residues in food in Hong Kong.

The refined regulatory framework

The refined regulatory framework aims to strengthen the regulation of pesticide residues in food to achieve the following objectives:

1. To better protect public health;
2. To facilitate effective regulation and promote harmonisation between local and international standards.

The adverse health effects of pesticides depend on the nature of the pesticide, as well as the amount and duration of individual exposure. Excessive exposure to some pesticides may cause acute adverse health effects.

The refined regulatory framework

The refined regulatory framework seeks to strengthen the regulation of pesticide residues in food to achieve the following objectives:

(a) To better protect public health;
(b) To facilitate effective regulation and promote harmonisation between local and international standards.

In striving to achieve the above objectives, the Government is mindful of the need to maintain a stable supply of food in Hong Kong. To achieve the above objectives, we propose that the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) should make a Regulation on Pesticide Residues in Food (the proposed Regulation) under the section 55 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132).

Salient features of the refined regulatory framework are summarised as follows:

1. To define "pesticide" and other related terms in a way consistent with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex);
2. To provide a list of "maximum residue limits" (MRLs)
3. To provide a list of "extraneous maximum residue limits" (EMRLs)
4. To adopt MRLs, EMRLs and MRLs recommended by Codex as the backbone as well as the Codex’s classification of foods
5. To prohibit the import and sale of the concerned food for which no MRLs or EMRLs has been specified, unless DFEH is satisfied that the detected level will not be dangerous or prejudicial to health
6. To provide a list of exempted substances
7. To accept applications for adding/revising MRLs and exempted substances
8. To issue a list of the proposed Regulation after a two-year grace period

Details of the refined regulatory framework are set out in the consultation document which may be downloaded from the website of the Food and Health Bureau (http://www.fhb.gov.hk) or obtained from the following locations:

- Communication Resource Unit
  6/F, Fa Yuen Street Municipal Services Building
  123A Fa Yuen Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon
- District Environmental Hygiene Offices
- District Offices of Home Affairs Department

Views sought

The Government invites you to let us have your views on the refined regulatory framework. Please send your comments by letter, facsimile or e-mail to the Centre for Food Safety before 19 September 2011:

Centre for Food Safety
(Attn.: Consultation on Pesticide Residues in Food)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
43/F, Queenway Government Offices,
43/F, Queenway Government Offices,
6/F, Queenway Government Offices,
6/F, Queenway Government Offices,
123A Fa Yuen Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon
123A Fa Yuen Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon
Facsimile: (852) 2893 3547
Facsimile: (852) 2893 3547
Email: pesticide_consultation@fhb.gov.hk
Email: pesticide_consultation@fhb.gov.hk
Enquiry tel. no.: (852) 2867 5699
Enquiry tel. no.: (852) 2867 5699

The Government will take the views received into consideration before finalising the proposed Regulation.

Any person submitting views and comments should be aware that the Government may publish all or part of the views and comments received and disclose the identity of the source in such manner as the Government considers appropriate, unless he/she requests any part of the views and comments and/or his/her identity be treated in confidence.

For further information, please refer to the consultation document which may be downloaded from the website of the Food and Health Bureau (http://www.fhb.gov.hk/).
Refined Regulatory Framework for Pesticide Residues in Food in Hong Kong

July 2011

Why do we need to regulate pesticide residues in food?

The use of pesticides and other chemicals has become a common agricultural practice to enhance and stabilize crop yield, protect the nutritional integrity of food, facilitate storage to assure year-round supplies, and provide attractive and promising food products. The proper use of pesticides is beneficial to public health to protect crops from contamination by bacteria and microorganisms.

Notwithstanding the beneficial effects, the use of pesticides and its resultant residues requires careful monitoring and regulation. Small amounts of pesticide residues may remain in the crops destined for animal food. Exposure to pesticide residues in food is an issue that is of considerable concern to consumers, food producers, academics and government agencies.

The adverse health effects of pesticides depend on the nature of the pesticide, as well as the amount and duration of individual exposure. Excessive exposure to some pesticides may cause acute adverse health effects.

Most of the international regulatory authorities and the Mainland authority have already introduced statutory control on pesticide residues in food. To better protect public health, facilitate effective regulation and promote harmonization between local and International standards, there is a genuine need to introduce a regulatory framework on pesticide residues in food in Hong Kong.

The refined regulatory framework

The refined regulatory framework aims to strengthen the regulation of pesticide residues in food to achieve the following objectives:

1. To better protect public health;
2. To facilitate effective regulation;
3. To promote harmonization between local and international standards.

In driving to achieve the above objectives, the Government is mindful of the need to maintain a stable supply of food in Hong Kong. To achieve the above objectives, we propose that the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) should

- make a Regulation on Pesticide Residues in Food (the proposed Regulation) under section 55 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132).
- propose that the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (DFEH) should
  - promote harmonisation between local and international standards.
  - facilitate effective regulation;
  - better protect public health;
- refine the regulatory framework on pesticide residues in food in Hong Kong.

Salient features of the refined regulatory framework are summarized as follows:

- To define “pesticide” and other related terms in a way consistent with the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex);
- To provide a list of “maximum residue limits” (MRLs)1; “harmonized maximum residue limits” (HMRs)1; to adopt MRLs/HMRs recommended by Codex as the backbone as well as the Codex’s harmonization of foods;
- To prohibit the import and sale of the concerned food for which no MRL/HMR has been specified, unless DFEH is satisfied that the detected level will not be dangerous or prejudicial to health;
- To provide a list of exempted substances;
- To accept applications for adding/revising MRLs and exempted substances;
- To elevate the proposed Regulation with the registration of pesticides for use on food crops under the Pesticides Ordinance (Cap. 133); and
- To commit the proposed Regulation after a longer grace period.

Details of the refined regulatory framework are set out in the consultation document which may be downloaded from the website of the Food and Health Bureau (http://www.fhb.gov.hk) or the Centre for Food Safety (http://www.fds.gov.hk) or obtained from the following locations:

- Communication Resource Unit
  123A Fa Yuen Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon
- District Environmental Hygiene Offices
- District Offices of Home Affairs Department

Views sought

The Government invites you to let us have your views on the refined regulatory framework. Please send your comments by letter, facsimile or e-mail to the Centre for Food Safety before 19 September 2011:

Centre for Food Safety
(Am: Consultation on Pesticide Residues in Food)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
455 Queenway Government Offices
66 Queenway Hong Kong
Facsimile: (852) 2893 3547
E-mail address: pesticide_consultation@fedh.gov.hk
Enquiry tel. no.: (852) 2867 5699

The Government will take the views received into consideration before finalising the proposed Regulation.

Any person submitting views and comments should be aware that the Government may publish all or part of the views or comments received and disclose the identity of the source in such manner as the Government considers appropriate, unless he/she requests any part of the views and comments and/or his/her identity be treated in confidence.

1 Codex defined MRL as the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue (as expressed in mg/kg) recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined HMR as the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue (as expressed in mg/kg) which is recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined exempt substances as substances in or on food crops from contamination by natural, agricultural microorganisms, or other substances that are recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or recognized as acceptable in food and agricultural commodities. Codex, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization of the United Nations (Codex), is the single most important reference point for consumers, food producers, processors, national food control agencies and the international food trade in developing food associated standards.

2 By the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined exempt substances as substances in or on food crops from contamination by natural, agricultural microorganisms, or other substances that are recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or recognized as acceptable in food and agricultural commodities.

3 Codex Alimentarius Commission (Codex), established by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization of the United Nations (Codex), is the single most important reference point for consumers, food producers, processors, national food control agencies and the international food trade in developing food associated standards.

4Most of the international regulatory authorities and the Mainland authority have already introduced statutory control on pesticide residues in food. To better protect public health, facilitate effective regulation and promote harmonization between local and International standards, there is a genuine need to introduce a regulatory framework on pesticide residues in food in Hong Kong.

5 Codex defined MRL as the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue (as expressed in mg/kg) recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined HMR as the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue (as expressed in mg/kg) which is recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined exempt substances as substances in or on food crops from contamination by natural, agricultural microorganisms, or other substances that are recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or recognized as acceptable in food and agricultural commodities.

6 To elevate the proposed Regulation with the registration of pesticides for use on food crops under the Pesticides Ordinance (Cap. 133); and
- To commit the proposed Regulation after a longer grace period.

Details of the refined regulatory framework are set out in the consultation document which may be downloaded from the website of the Food and Health Bureau (http://www.fhb.gov.hk) or the Centre for Food Safety (http://www.fds.gov.hk) or obtained from the following locations:

- Communication Resource Unit
  123A Fa Yuen Street, Mong Kok, Kowloon
- District Environmental Hygiene Offices
- District Offices of Home Affairs Department

Views sought

The Government invites you to let us have your views on the refined regulatory framework. Please send your comments by letter, facsimile or e-mail to the Centre for Food Safety before 19 September 2011:

Centre for Food Safety
(Am: Consultation on Pesticide Residues in Food)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
455 Queenway Government Offices
66 Queenway, Hong Kong
Facsimile: (852) 2893 3547
E-mail address: pesticide_consultation@fedh.gov.hk
Enquiry tel. no.: (852) 2867 5699

The Government will take the views received into consideration before finalising the proposed Regulation.

Any person submitting views and comments should be aware that the Government may publish all or part of the views or comments received and disclose the identity of the source in such manner as the Government considers appropriate, unless he/she requests any part of the views and comments and/or his/her identity be treated in confidence.

1 Codex defined MRL as the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue (as expressed in mg/kg) recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined HMR as the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue (as expressed in mg/kg) which is recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined exempt substances as substances in or on food crops from contamination by natural, agricultural microorganisms, or other substances that are recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or recognized as acceptable in food and agricultural commodities.

2 By the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined exempt substances as substances in or on food crops from contamination by natural, agricultural microorganisms, or other substances that are recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or recognized as acceptable in food and agricultural commodities.

3 Codex, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization of the United Nations (Codex), is the single most important reference point for consumers, food producers, processors, national food control agencies and the international food trade in developing food associated standards.

4 Most of the international regulatory authorities and the Mainland authority have already introduced statutory control on pesticide residues in food. To better protect public health, facilitate effective regulation and promote harmonization between local and International standards, there is a genuine need to introduce a regulatory framework on pesticide residues in food in Hong Kong.

5 Codex defined MRL as the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue (as expressed in mg/kg) recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined HMR as the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue (as expressed in mg/kg) which is recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on a given agricultural commodity. Codex defined exempt substances as substances in or on food crops from contamination by natural, agricultural microorganisms, or other substances that are recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or recognized as acceptable in food and agricultural commodities.
Why do we need to regulate pesticide residues in food?
The use of pesticides and other chemicals has become a common agricultural practice to enhance and stabilize crop yield, protect the nutritional integrity of food, facilitate storage to assure year-round supplies, and provide attractive and appealing food products. The proper use of pesticides is beneficial to public health to protect crops from contamination by pests and microorganisms.

Notwithstanding the beneficial effects, the use of pesticides and its resultant residues requires careful monitoring and regulation. Small amounts of pesticide residues may remain in the crops or animal food. Exposure to pesticide residues in food is an issue that is of considerable concern to consumers, food producers, academics and government agencies.

The adverse health effects of pesticides depend on the nature of the pesticide, as well as the amount and duration of individual exposure. Excessive exposure to some pesticides may cause acute adverse health effects.

Most of the international regulatory authorities and the Mainland authority have already introduced statutory control on pesticide residues in food. To better protect public health, facilitate effective regulation and promote harmonisation between local and international standards, there is a genuine need to establish a regulatory framework on pesticide residues in food in Hong Kong.

The refined regulatory framework

The refined regulatory framework aims to strengthen the regulation of pesticide residues in food to achieve the following objectives:

(a) better protect public health;
(b) facilitate effective regulation; and
(c) promote harmonisation between local and international standards.

In striving to achieve the above objectives, the Government is mindful of the need to maintain a stable supply of food in Hong Kong. To achieve the above objectives, the Government is mindful of the need to:

- to maintain a stable supply of food in Hong Kong.
- to prohibit the import and sale of the concerned food for which no MRL/EMRL is defined, specified, unless DFPF is satisfied that the detected level will not be dangerous or prejudicial to health;
- to provide a list of "exempted substances";
- to accept applications for adding/revising MRLs and exempted substances;
- to draft the proposed Regulation with the registration of pesticides for use in or on food crops; and
- to provide a list of "minimum residue limits" (MRLs) to assure the safety of food in Hong Kong.

Salient features of the refined regulatory framework are summarised as follows:

1. Codex, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization of the United Nations in 1963, is the single most important reference point for consumers, food producers, processors, national food control agencies and the international food trade in developing food associated standards. The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) of the United Nations has the unique role to be the single forum for harmonisation of food standards between national bodies in the food and agriculture sectors. The Codex Alimentarius Commission is the single point to be legally permitted in or on food and agricultural commodities.

2. Codex defines "MRL" as the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue (expressed as a mg/kg) recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on food and agricultural commodities. Codex also defines "EMRL" as "exempted residue" or "residues occurring in or on food and agricultural commodities.

3. The maximum concentration of a pesticide residue, which has been recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on food and agricultural commodities, is the "MRL". The MRL itself is the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue which has been recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on food and agricultural commodities. The "EMRL" is the maximum concentration of a pesticide residue which has been recommended by the Codex Alimentarius Commission to be legally permitted in or on food and agricultural commodities. The "MRL" can be significantly different from the "EMRL".

4. Exempted substances must fall under the definition of pesticide and meet one of the following criteria:

(a) the use of the exempted substance does not result in residues occurring in or on food crops;

(b) the exempted substance is used on crops from contamination by natural toxins and harmful microorganisms;

(c) the residues from the exempted substance do not result in residues occurring in or on food crops.

5. Codex, established by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Health Organization of the United Nations in 1963, is the single most important reference point for consumers, food producers, processors, national food control agencies and the international food trade in developing food associated standards. The Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) of the United Nations has the unique role to be the single forum for harmonisation of food standards between national bodies in the food and agriculture sectors. The Codex Alimentarius Commission is the single point to be legally permitted in or on food and agricultural commodities.

6. Exempted substances must fall under the definition of pesticide and meet one of the following criteria:

(a) the use of the exempted substance does not result in residues occurring in or on food crops;

(b) the exempted substance is used on crops from contamination by natural toxins and harmful microorganisms;

(c) the residues from the exempted substance do not result in residues occurring in or on food crops.

Views sought

The Government invites you to let us have your views on the refined regulatory framework. Please send your comments by letter, facsimile or e-mail to the Centre for Food Safety before 19 September 2011:

Centre for Food Safety
(Attn.: Consultation on Pesticide Residues in Food)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
64 Queenway Hong Kong
Facsimile: (852) 2893 3547
Email address: pesticide_consultation@fehd.gov.hk
Enquiry tel. no.: (852) 2867 5699

The Government will take the views received into consideration before finalising the proposed Regulation.

Any person submitting views and comments should be aware that the Government may publish all or part of the views and comments received and disclose the identity of the source in such manner as the Government considers appropriate, unless he/she requests any part of the views and comments and/or his/her identity to be treated in confidence.

Details of the refined regulatory framework are set out in the consultation document which may be downloaded from the website of the Food and Health Bureau (http://www.fhb.gov.hk) or the Centre for Food Safety (http://www.fshb.gov.hk) or obtained from the following locations:

- Communication Resource Unit
  123A Fa Yuen Street Mongkok Kowloon
- District Environmental Hygiene Offices
- District Offices of Home Affairs Department

Printed by the Government Logistics Department
Published by the Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Published by the Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
Published by the Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department