

Ref.: FEHD/CRU 17/157/7 (2010)

17 June 2010

Dear Sir/ Madam,

**Preservatives in Food (Amendment) Regulation 2008 -  
End of Transitional Period**

I am writing to inform you that the transitional period of the captioned Amendment Regulation will end on **30 June 2010**.

Preservatives and antioxidants are commonly used in various kinds of food, such as meat products and juices to prolong their shelf-life. The control on their use in food is governed by the Preservatives in Food Regulation (Cap. 132BD). The Regulation stipulates that any food being imported, manufactured for sale, or sold, should only contain permitted preservatives or antioxidants and in the specified permitted proportion as provided in the relevant Schedule.

The Preservatives in Food (Amendment) Regulation 2008 was passed by Legislative Council and came into effect on 1 July 2008. Amendments made include the following:

- (a) The definition of preservative and antioxidant is now in line with those adopted by the Codex. A food additive may be regarded as a preservative and/or antioxidant depending on its multi-functional property in the food.
- (b) A Food Category System has been introduced to replace the previous “product-specific” listing for the permitted levels of the various additives. The Food Category System is in line with that adopted by the Codex GSFA. For instance, bacon and ham are now listed as processed meat. This approach will facilitate the trade in the identification of preservatives and antioxidants applicable to individual foods or classes of foods.
- (c) The list of permitted preservatives or antioxidants has also been updated in accordance with the Codex GSFA. Of the 19 preservatives/antioxidants included before 1 July 2008, one chemical, propyl para-hydroxybenzoate, has been withdrawn and 11 others, namely, guaiac resin, isopropyl citrates, stannous

chloride, tertiary butylhydroquinone, thiodipropionic acid, dimethyl dicarbonate, ferrous gluconate, formic acid, hexamethylene tetramine, lysozyme and pimaricin have been added. To date, a total of 29 preservatives/antioxidants are permitted for use in food.

- (d) The permitted levels of preservatives and antioxidants in the respective food categories have been listed in a merged table in Schedule 1 of the Regulation.

Since December 2006, two public forums and five technical meetings were conducted. The document “Preservatives in Food (Amendment) Regulation 2008: Preservatives and Antioxidants User Guidelines” was published in June 2008 and a trade seminar to introduce these guidelines was conducted in July 2008. Recently, updates have also been provided at the Trade Consultation Forum.

To allow sufficient time for the trade to prepare for the changes brought by the Amendment Regulation, a transitional period of two years (the period beginning on 1 July 2008 and ending on 30 June 2010 (both dates inclusive)) after commencement of the Amendment Regulation has been given. During the transitional period, it is legally in order for any single food item to comply with the relevant standards in either the former Regulations or the amended Regulation. With effect from 1 July 2010, the former Regulations will be repealed and all food must comply with the amended Regulation.

If you need additional information or have questions concerning the amended Regulation, please contact us at 2867 5699. You may also visit: [http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/whatsnew\\_fstr/whatsnew\\_fstr\\_consult\\_paper.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/whatsnew_fstr/whatsnew_fstr_consult_paper.html) for more details.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours faithfully,



(Ms CHUNG Sau-wai)

for Controller, Centre for Food Safety