

Consumer Liaison Group Newsletter

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~Activities and Meetings~

(1) The Consumer Liaison Group (CLG) convened its first discussion meeting in the evening of 26 February 2016 at the Communication Resource Unit (CRU) of Centre for Food Safety (CFS). The meeting was under the theme of “Members’ view on different food safety information”. Main points of the discussion were as follows:

Members’ experience in receiving food safety

information: All members had received different information on food safety, including information related to healthy food, food recall, food nutrition (e.g. low sugar, low salt and low fat food) and food incident. Besides social media platforms, members had obtained the information from other channels as well, including chit-chat with friends, relatives, forum and television.

Members’ preference on using social media

platform: Members used Facebook and WhatsApp most frequently, some young members used LINE and only a small number of members frequently travelled to mainland used WeChat.

Members’ opinion towards food safety

information: Members agreed that there was too much food safety information and difficult to confirm the accuracy. The majority of the members believed the accuracy and the source of the food safety information is very important. Some members considered that the presentation format of

the information was important. Some members opined that timely release of information was critical, because hot issues faded out with time and the effect would be diminished.

Members’ action after receiving the food safety

information: Most of the members viewed that food safety information could make them more aware of food safety and heightened their alertness. Some members would confirm the accuracy of the information and then shared with others. Most of the members would act according to the information only upon confirming its accuracy.

Members’ opinion on the Food Safety App:

Only a small portion of members downloaded the Food Safety App. Some members opined that CFS has already established many channels to deliver food safety message and the Food Safety App did not help much. Other members opined that the Food Safety App could encourage members to share food safety information with others, by providing a credible source of information. Members suggested CFS to disseminate food safety information more proactively.

(2) The Consumer Liaison Group (CLG) convened its second discussion meeting in the evening of 15 and 22 July 2016 at the CRU of CFS. The meeting was under the theme of “Members’ view on handling vegetables and fruit”. Main points of the discussion were as follows:

Members' practice on handling vegetables and fruits: Members usually removed withered parts of the produce, washed it under running water and soaked the produce in water for different duration. Soaking time ranged from 5 minutes to two hours, mostly less than 30 minutes. Some members added salt, vinegar and soda powder in the water for cleaning produce. Only a few members used specialised vegetable detergent.

Members' habit of handling fruit: The majority of members used only water to wash the fruit. A few members added salt or vinegar in the water.

Members' perceived purpose of washing vegetables and fruits: Members expected that washing and soaking could remove pesticides, dust, dirt, bacteria and insects. The majority of member expressed that these handling methods were family tradition and had been used for a long time.

Members' opinions on CFS advice of handling vegetables and fruits: Some members opined that the soaking time (1 hour) was too long and worried that the vegetables would reabsorb the pesticides. Some members disagreed with the advice on consuming various vegetables to prevent excessive pesticide intake, and viewed that the purpose of consuming various vegetables was to adsorb different nutrients. The majority of member did not have special opinion towards the existing advice of handling fruits because their habits were consistent with the CFS advice.

Members' opinions on the new advice: The majority of member opined that soaking vegetables should be retained in the new advice. Although members understood that the level of pesticide on the produce was safe, they still wanted to remove pesticide residue as much as possible. Members did not accept the suggestion of boiling frozen berries when there was associated food poisoning case. They opined that the advice should be stop consuming the frozen berries.

Members' opinions towards promotional material on handling vegetables and fruits: Members opined that the design of the original materials was suitable. Members suggested that CFS could promote the advice in different channels, e.g. wet market.

~Food Safety Day 2016~

Food Safety Day 2016 was held on 30 June 2016 (Thursday) at Arts & Technology Education Centre. Food Safety Day is an annual signature event organised by the CFS with a view to promoting tripartite collaboration among the Government, the food trade and the public. The theme for this year was "Hong Kong's Action on Salt and Sugar Reduction - Healthy cooking starts small". This aims at promote the advantage of low sugar and low salt in food content. Together providing some simple and practical method, let citizen can apply the low sugar and low salt diet in daily life.



The final adjudication of the Junior Chefs' Culinary Ideas of Salt and Sugar Reduction Competition and award presentation ceremony was held on the same day. The Chairperson of the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food, Mr Bernard Charnwut CHAN attended the Food Safety Day to support the event and exchanged experience on reduction of salt and sugar in food with the participants of the competition. The detail of activities and competition has already been uploaded to the website:

http://www.cfs.gov.hk/tc_chi/whatsnew/whatsnew_act/whatsnew_act_Food_Safety_Day_2016.html