

Consumer Liaison Group Newsletter

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~ Meetings ~

(1) The Consumer Liaison Group (CLG) convened a discussion meeting in the evening of 16 December 2016 at the Communication Resource Unit (CRU) of Centre for Food Safety (CFS). The meeting was under the theme of “Members’ knowledge on toxic glycoalkaloids in potatoes”. Main points of the discussion were as follows:

Members’ habits on purchasing and handling potatoes: Members usually bought potatoes sufficient for use in a single meal and stored them in dark and shaded area for 1-2 days only. Some members stored potatoes in refrigerator. Members would check whether the surface was smooth, without sprout and not turned green when they bought potato. They would not purchase potatoes that were sprouted or turned green.

Members’ knowledge on potato toxin: All members knew that green or sprouted potatoes might be toxic and could not be eaten. No member knew the exact chemical name of the toxin, but all of them knew that short storage time and avoid light exposure could prevent toxin formation. Most members gained the knowledge on potato toxin through chatting with relatives and friends. Some members also learned from various publicity materials. Only a few members knew that potato

toxin poisoning occurred in Hong Kong in the past.

Members’ opinions on publicity materials of potato toxin: Some members noticed the publicity materials published by CFS. All members agreed that the following advices were feasible and practical for consumers:

- Buy on an “as needed” basis to avoid the need for long-term storage;
- Store potatoes in a cool, dry, dark place;
- Peel the potatoes before cooking can reduce the amount of glycoalkaloids;
- Cut away any parts that show damage (cuts and bruises), rotting, green colouring and sprouting before cooking. In severe cases, discard the entire potato;
- Do not eat potatoes that taste bitter or cause a burning sensation in the mouth.

(2) The CLG convened discussion meetings in the evening of 21 and 28 April 2017 at the CRU of CFS. The theme of the meeting was “Using WhatsApp to broadcast food safety message to CLG members”. Main points of discussion were as follows:

Members’ habit in using WhatsApp: Most of the members used WhatsApp frequently and the main purpose was to chit-chat. Only a few members had used the broadcasting function of WhatsApp. Members had forwarded messages (from a few

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people to a dozen or so), and the main target was family and friends.

Members' views on using WhatsApp to disseminate food safety messages: At first, members were worried about the safety and privacy issues of using WhatsApp to disseminate food safety messages. After explanation, most of the members understood that broadcasting had higher privacy. Most of the members were interested and joined the program immediately after the meeting. A small number of members wondered if they could send enquiry via WhatsApp message. Upon explanation, members understood that the WhatsApp broadcasting was not intended for public enquiry and enquiry should be sent by e-mail or through the CFS Facebook page.

Types of food safety messages members wanted to receive: Most of the members wanted to receive food safety information under urgent situation. Members were also interested to know the correctness of the food safety information circulated in social media platforms. Members suggested that the broadcasting messages should be as concise as possible. Food safety message should not be broadcasted too frequently and should be issued in the form of web-links to prevent others from changing the content of the message. Most of the members did not want to receive video through

WhatsApp, because the file size was larger.

(3) The CLG convened a tasting panel in the evening of 25 September 2017 at the CRU of CFS. The CFS prepared steamed meat patties using three different recipes for tasting evaluation. The steamed meat patties contained 860mg sodium, 660mg sodium and 150mg sodium per 100 grams of meat patties, respectively.

Most of the members (8 of 11) gave the highest score to patties with the lowest sodium content, whereas almost all of the members (10 of 11) gave the lowest score to patties with the highest sodium content. In terms of salty taste, the majority of the members (9 out of 11) preferred the patties with the lowest sodium content. For overall impression, most of the members (8 of 11) also preferred the patties with the lowest sodium content.

Overall, the participants in the panel had highest acceptance of patties with the lowest sodium content. There was indeed room for the trade to reformulate the recipe to reduce sodium content in food.

~ Food Safety Day 2017 ~

The Food Safety Day 2017 was held on 20 October (Friday) at Education Bureau Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre. The prize presentation

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ceremony of the Low-Salt and Low-Sugar Front-of-pack Label Design Competition as well as the Smart Choices for Low-Salt and Low-Sugar Slogan Writing cum Poster Design Competition was held on the same day. In order to promote healthy eating habits and remind students to reduce dietary intake of salt and sugar through the good use of nutrition labels, the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food, the Food and Health Bureau, the Education Bureau, the CFS and the Department of Health, in collaboration with the Committee on Home-School Co-operation, jointly organised the Smart Choices for Low-Salt and Low-Sugar Slogan Writing cum Poster Design Competition.



The detail of activities has already been uploaded to the website:

http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/whatsnew/whatsnew_act/Food_Safety_Day_2017.html

[~ Visit ~](#)

The CLG visited the Tao Heung Food Culture Museum on 28 December 2017 to learn about the characteristics of Hong Kong's food culture, as well as food safety measures and programmes adopted by catering industry.