

Consumer Liaison Group Newsletter

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Jul 2012

The past few months have been busy but fruitful for members of the 3rd term Consumer Liaison Group (CLG) whose term of service is drawing to a close. Four activities, including visits, meetings and Food Safety Day, were held at different sites.

~Visits and Meetings~

(1) On 17 December 2011, a CLG meeting was held at the Health Education Exhibition & Resource Centre in Kowloon Park to find out what difficulties the public would come across when they applied the 5 Keys to Food Safety (i.e. Choose, Clean, Separate, Cook and Safe Temperature) in daily life. It was also hoped to solicit feedbacks and suggestions from members with respect to the promotional activities organised by the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) and audio-visual resources on food safety. The meeting was preceded by a guided tour of the Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre. The following major issues were discussed at the meeting:

Why fail to separate raw and cooked food: Members were put off handling raw and cooked food with two sets of utensils, thus resulting in a higher risk of cross contamination, by different reasons such as unfamiliar to this practice or not enough storage space for utensils.

How to tell the food is thoroughly cooked: The best way to tell if the food is cooked thoroughly is to use a food thermometer to check that the core temperature of food reaches at least 75°C, or to look at the appearance of the food, for example, see if meat juices run clear and egg yolks are solid. However, members admitted that they usually relied on texture to tell if food was done, for example, using a fork to test the firmness of the food. The reasons for not

using a food thermometer included never heard of it or didn't know where to buy one.

Feedbacks on promotional activities: Members opined that contents of the promotional activities such as talks should be able to apply to their daily lives. And the activities should be more interactive by having sessions like tools demonstration and Q & A or discussion sessions.

Suggestions on audio-visual resources: Having watched several programmes produced by the Centre, members shared the view that people would respond best to programmes kept as short as one minute and centred around one message at a time. At the end of the programme, ways to revisit the programme or search for more information should be provided.

(2) On 12 March, CLG members visited the factory of Swire Coca-Cola HK Ltd. in Shatin to get a better insight into what a business that has adopted ISO22000 were doing to ensure food safety in the soft drinks manufacturing processes. Before the visit, we took the opportunity to ask about members' perception and practice on safe temperature and also their views on detecting foreign bodies in food. Below were the major points discussed:

Perception and practice on storage temperature of food: Most of the members were able to point out that chilled foods should be refrigerated at or below 4°C as soon as possible after purchase. But they paid little attention to the temperature of their fridges. Some members admitted they only took notice of the temperature of the fridge occasionally or just relied on intuition to tell if the temperature was right.

Time control of food left out at room temperature:

Most of the members said they would cover and left cooked food such as siu mei out at room temperature after purchase. However, they had the notion that it was safe as long as the cooked food was consumed on the same day they purchased it. They failed to follow the safety rules that cooked food should be refrigerated at 4°C or below within two hours and that food left out at room temperature for more than four hours should be discarded.

Avoid foreign bodies at a personal level: Members recounted their personal experiences of finding foreign bodies in food. They observed that foreign bodies were more commonly found in food outlets with poor hygiene practice and in foods in liquid form like soup, congee and noodle soup. To prevent similar occurrences, one could take note of the hygienic condition of food outlets and food before shopping or dining. Members also commented that food premises should step up cleansing and inspection and hire a professional pest control company.

(3) A meeting was held on the night of 23 April at the office of Communication and Resource Unit to discuss the legibility of food labels and the draft Trade Guidelines on Preparation of Legible Food Label.

Legibility of food labels: Members found food labels of some products sold on the market were indeed difficult to read. They were of the opinion that legibility of print was achieved by appropriate font size, information printed in dark type on a light background and enough spacing between words and the lines/boarders surrounding/separating them.

Products with small or special packaging:

Members suggested that for products with small or special packaging, hang tag could be used to display the required labeling information; for glass beverage bottles, the labeling information could be printed on the surface of bottles.

Comments on the draft Trade Guidelines on Preparation of Legible Food Label: After being briefed on the draft Trade Guidelines on Preparation of Legible Food Label, members agreed that the guidelines had all the key elements of preparing a legible label. Members pointed out that the clarity of words might also be enhanced by other relevant factors such as appropriate ratio of food label to packaging area, suitable printing technology and a non-reflective printing surface.

The revised Trade Guidelines on Preparation of Legible Food Label, taking into account of feedbacks from CLG members, was published at the end of May 2012.

**~ Food Safety Day 2012
“Get the Temperature Right” ~**

Food Safety Day 2012 under the slogan “Get the Temperature Right” was held on 26 May. The event took place with many diversified activities, such as exhibition, performances and games, with a view to promoting food safety messages on the correct holding and storage temperatures to members of the public. More information of the event can be found at CFS [Website](#). The CFS will organise, together with food trade associations and non-governmental organisations, a series of “Get the Temperature Right” talks between June and August 2012. Trade representatives and experts will be invited to give the talks. Meanwhile, the "Safe Food Gourmet Paradise" photo competition organised by the CFS is accepting entries now. Members are invited to submit their photos. The new TV announcement “Get the Temperature Right”, which intends to get the message across to the public in an engaging and entertaining way, has been launched on 2 July 2012. For details, please visit Food Safety Day 2012 “Get the Temperature Right” website (www.cfs.gov.hk).