

**Centre for Food Safety**  
**Food and Environmental Hygiene Department**  
**Notes of the Forty second Meeting of the Trade Consultation Forum**  
**held on 18 December 2013 at 2:30 p.m.**  
**in Conference Room at Room 102, 1/F, New Wan Chai Market,**  
**258 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong**

**Present**

**Government Representatives**

Dr. Y. Y. HO	Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment & Communication)	(Chairman)
Dr. Janet HO	Senior Medical Officer (Risk Communication)	
Mr. Arthur YAU	Scientific Officer (Toxicology)	
Dr. Violette LIN	Scientific Officer (Nutrition)	
Ms. Jacqueline FUNG	Scientific Officer (Programme Planning)1	
Ms. CHOW Shuk-man	Scientific Officer (Technical Publication)2	
Ms. Janny MA	Scientific Officer (Microbiology)	
Mr. YANG Chi Ming	Chief Health Inspector (Food Safety Promotion)	
Ms. Barbara CHAN	Chief Health Inspector (Communication & Response)	
Ms. CHUNG Sau Wai	Superintendent (Risk Communication)	(Secretary)

**Trade Representatives**

Ms. May LAU	A & W Food Service Ltd.
Mr. CHAR Siu Lun	A.S. Watson Industries
Ms. Christy CHEUNG	A.S. Watson Industries
Ms. POON Ka Ching	A.S. Watson Industries
Mr. CHENG Wing Chung	A.S. Watson Industries
Mr. Andrew WONG	Abbott Laboratories Ltd. Agricultural Trade Office
Ms. Caroline YUEN	U.S. Consulate General, H K
Mr. Samuel LAM	Bureau Veritas Hong Kong Limited
Mr. TSANG Wah Him	Calbee Four Seas Co., Ltd.
Mr. WONG Kai Man	Calbee Four Seas Co., Ltd.
Mr. WONG Chi Fung	Campbell Soup Asia Ltd.

Mr. Chi WONG	China Dragon Inspection & Certification (HK) Ltd.
Ms. Vicki LEE	China Dragon Inspection & Certification (HK) Ltd.
Ms. Grace YEE	City Super Ltd.
Mr. Dennis CHAN	City Super Ltd.
Mr. Cyrus FUNG	CMA Testing and Certification Laboratories
Ms. Elaine WONG	CMA Testing and Certification Laboratories
Ms. May KAN	Coca-Cola China Ltd.
Ms. Jenny CHEUNG	Dah Chong Hong, Ltd.
Mr. TSANG Lok Wah	Dah Chong Hong, Ltd.
Ms. Kit CHOI	Danone Nutricia Early Life Nutrition (HK) Ltd.
Mr. Freddy FONG	Foodscan Analytics Ltd.
Ms. Yvonne CHAN	General Mills HK Ltd.
Ms. Amanda WONG	Glee Foods Industries Ltd.
Mr. Vito WONG	Glee Foods Industries Ltd.
Ms. Sally LEUNG	Godiva Chocolatier (Asia) Ltd.
Ms. Esther LAM	Gourmet House Ltd.
Mr. Martin WONG	Hong Kong Health Food Association
Mr. Jase TSOI	Hong Kong Health Food Association
Mr. Tommy NG	Hong Kong Hotels Association
Mr. Peter Johnston	Hong Kong Retail Management Association
Ms. Albert TANG	Hong Kong Suppliers Association Ltd.
Ms. Frenda WONG	Hong Kong Suppliers Association Ltd.
Mr. Takuro Mori	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Mr. Gary LO	Hong Kong Yakult Co., Ltd.
Mr. CHAN Chi Ming	Hop Hing Oil Factory Ltd.
Mr. Marco LO	Institution of Dining Art
Mr. HO Tak Po	Kampery Development Limited
Ms. Alice WONG	Lee Kum Kee International Holdings Ltd.
Ms. Faye LEUNG	Mannings
Ms. CHUNG Ka Kit	Maxims Caterers Ltd.
Ms. LAW Chi Sang	Maxims Caterers Ltd.
Mr. Tommy LAM	Maxims Caterers Ltd. (Cakes & Bakery)
Ms. Amy CHU	Mead Johnson Nutrition (Hong Kong) Ltd.
Ms. Ivy KONG	Nestle Hong Kong Ltd.
Mr. Stephen CHOI	Nestle Hong Kong Ltd.
Ms. Vien POON	New Zealand Focus (HK) Limited
Mr. Karlus CHAN	New Zealand Focus (HK) Limited
Mr. Nam HO	Nine to Five Limited
Mr. LAM Tsz Mau	Nissin Foods Co., Ltd.

Mr. Herbert LEE	Nissin Foods Co., Ltd.
Ms. LO Kit Mui	NU Skin Enterprises HONG Kong Ltd.
Ms. German Cheung	Pappagallo Pacific Limited
Ms. Yuki WONG	Pappagallo Pacific Limited
Ms. Cactus LAI	ParknShop (HK) Limited
Mr. MAK Hong Man	PrizeMart Limited
Mr. CHAN Leung Chung	PrizeMart Limited
Ms. Pansy CHUNG	Renaissance Harbour View Hotel
Mr. Sandro Rucci	Santerfood HK Ltd.
Ms. LEUNG Wai Yan	Satay King (Holdings) Co. Ltd.
Mr. LAU Ka Yin	Satay King (Holdings) Co. Ltd.
Mr. Nick LEUNG	Snow Brand HK Co., Ltd.
Ms. Jenny KIONG	Sun Yik Food Limited
Mr. Terry LAU	Sun Yik Food Limited
Mr. WONG Kam Chuen	Swire Coca-Cola HK Ltd.
Mr. LAI Sing Hin	The Association for Hong Kong Catering Services Management Ltd.
Ms. Tess WONG	The Garden Co. Ltd.
Mr. NG Chi Ming	The Dairy Farm Company Ltd.
Ms. Kammy YEUNG	The Hong Kong Standards and Testing Centre Ltd.
Ms. Candy HON	The Hong Kong Standards and Testing Centre Ltd.
Mr. John LEUNG	The Ritz-Carlton, Hong Kong
Ms. Abby WONG	Tingyi-Asahi Beverages Holding Co., Ltd.
Ms. Wing CHEUNG	Unilever Hong Kong Limited
Mr. Attlee LAU	URC Hong Kong Co. Ltd.
Mr. Sidney NG	Vital Production Limited
Ms. Christina YIP	Vitasoy International Holdings Ltd.
Mr. CHAN Wai Lun	Winner Food Products Ltd.
Mr. Tony CHOW	Wyeth (Hong Kong) Holding Co. Ltd
Ms. Amy FU	Wyeth (Hong Kong) Holding Co. Ltd
Mr. HUI Hon Man	五行副食品關注組(No English Name)

**In Attendance**

Mr. Henry TSOI	Assistant Secretary for Food & Health (Food)6/Food and Health Bureau
Mr. Gregory NG	Executive Officer (Risk Communication)

## **Opening Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed all trade representatives to the 42<sup>nd</sup> meeting and introduced government representatives to the meeting.

## **Confirmation of the Notes of Last Meeting**

2. The notes of last meeting were confirmed without amendments.

## **Agenda Item 1**

### **The First Hong Kong Total Diet Study: Mycotoxin**

3. Mr. Arthur YAU briefed the meeting about the results of the First Hong Kong Total Diet Study (TDS) - Mycotoxin. He explained that diet was the main source of exposure to five mycotoxins for Hong Kong adults and chronic toxicity was the main concern. He elaborated on the findings of the study on the five types of mycotoxins, namely aflatoxins, ochratoxin A, fumonisins, deoxynivalenol and acetyldeoxynivalenols, zearalenone. He introduced the methodology of the TDS, the concentration of the substances in food and the effect on health and comparison of dietary exposures in different countries. It was found that the dietary exposure estimates for the four mycotoxins were below their health based guidance values. For aflatoxins where there is no health based guidance value, it was estimated that aflatoxins contributed to less than 1% of liver cancer cases. Hence, it was concluded that the general adult population was unlikely to experience major undesirable health effects of these mycotoxins. Nevertheless, it was recommended that the trade should observe good agricultural practice / good manufacturing practices and HACCP to minimize contamination of foods by mycotoxins, obtain food materials from reliable suppliers, maintain good storage

conditions and maintain proper records to enable source tracing when required. For the public, it was recommended to purchase from reliable retailers, to store cereals, grains and nut products in cool dry places, to maintain a balanced diet, to look out for the durability and expiry date of food, and to discard mildewed or damaged food. The Chairman reported that a press release on the Study result had been released at the same time.

4. In response to the question from a trade representative on why there were toxins detected in steamed barbecued pork bun and what ingredients contributed them, Mr. Arthur YAU said that due to the design of the total diet study, separate analysis on the fillings and the dough was not possible. However, it was likely that they came from the cereals that were used to make the flour.

5. Another trade representative asked whether CFS would reveal the retail outlets concerned. The Chairman replied that no such details would be released as no regulatory levels had been exceeded. However, CFS would follow up and trace back if the contaminants detected in various studies were above the regulatory level.

## **Agenda Item 2**

### **Revision of Small Volume Exemption (SVE) Fee**

6. Ms. Barbara CHAN briefed the meeting on the proposed revision of the SVE fee. The current SVE fee was \$345 for new application and \$335 for renewal of exemption. The fees were charged on a full-cost recovery basis in accordance with Government policy. In view of the enhanced efficiency and reduced processing time through the use of the Food Import and Control System, FEHD had conducted a review of the SVE fees. It was decided that the SVE fees for new and renewal applications submitted online via the System would be

lowered to \$265 and \$250 respectively. As for new and renewal applications submitted via other means like post, fax or email, the fees would remain at \$345 and \$335 respectively. The proposal to amend the relevant sections of the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations to introduce the new SVE fees was submitted to the LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene for discussion in December 2013. The new fees were expected to be implemented before 1 April 2014.

7. A trade representative enquired why after the review, the fees for applications submitted via post, fax or email remained the same. The Chairman replied that the result of the review actually showed slight changes to the original charge, the Government, however, would choose not to make the trivial adjustment.

8. The trade representative further asked whether there was any decrease in the number of chronic diseases found in the population after the implementation of the relevant nutrition labelling regulations. The Chairman replied that the result of this new initiative could only be seen in the longer term, and that the Department of Health was regularly monitoring the number of non-communicable diseases in Hong Kong.

### **Agenda Item 3**

#### **Points to Note in Safe Preparation of Apple and Pear Juice**

9. Mr. Arthur YAU introduced to the meeting the presence of cyanogenic glycosides in the seeds of apples and pears. Cyanogenic glycosides are also found in bamboo shoots, bitter apricot seeds, stone fruit kernels, and cassava etc. He remarked that apple and pear juices, which were among the more popular fruit juice choices in Hong Kong, might contain toxic

cyanide if the seeds were being juiced with the flesh of apples and pears. He explained that while the substance did not exist in the flesh of the fruits concerned, it existed in the seeds and could be detected in juice when apple and pear seeds were processed with the flesh to express the juice. A recently published New Zealand study reported the presence of low level of hydrocyanic acid in apple juice. Even though the level was not high, young children were more sensitive to the effects of cyanide due to lower body weight, and there was a higher possibility of children consuming a larger amount of apple or pear juice. The remedy was to remove apple and pear seeds before juicing.

10. In response to questions from trade representatives, Mr. Arthur YAU advised that water melon seeds were not known to have contained cyanogenic glycoside. The Chairman added that the purpose of discussing the study at that Meeting was to alert the trade of the potential hazard and to encourage the good practice of removing the seeds of the concerned fruits before juicing. There was presently no international regulatory standard established for that purpose. Nevertheless, the CFS would keep a close watch.

#### **Agenda Item 4**

##### **Reducing the Content of Trans Fatty Acids in Local Foods**

11. Dr. Violette LIN briefed the meeting on the background of the issue. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had tentatively determined that partially hydrogenated oils (PHOs), the primary dietary source of industrially-produced trans fatty acids (TFA) associated with increased risk of coronary heart disease, were not “generally recognized as safe (GRAS)” for any use in food based on current scientific evidence establishing the health risks associated with the consumption of TFA, and therefore PHOs were food additives. The FDA had opened a 60-day comment period (till 7 January 2014) to collect additional data

and to gain input on the time potentially needed for food manufacturers to reformulate products that currently contain artificial TFA should this determination be finalized. It was understood that TFA increased the risk of heart diseases which had been the second killer in Hong Kong since 2001. The World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations had recommended that in order to promote cardiovascular health, diets should provide a very low intake of TFA of less than 1% of daily energy intake. Local studies on TFA in local foods indicated that some cake, egg tart/pie/pastry, and bread generally had high TFA content. Compared with the results of previous studies, the TFA content in some individual samples tested recently had reduced dramatically whilst a similar saturated fatty acids (SFA) content had been maintained, reflecting that the reduction in TFA without raising the SFA content in foods was practically feasible. Dr. LIN supplemented that on the publicity side, trade guidelines had been issued to advise the trade to avoid using PHOs or their products in preparing foods, and modify the manufacturing process or ingredients to lower TFA and SFA content in foods. On the regulatory aspect, since 1 July 2010, nutrition labels setting out the content of TFA had become mandatory for all applicable prepackaged food products. In addition, nutrition claims on TFA should meet relevant specified criteria. Nevertheless, there was no specific regulation restricting the TFA content of food in Hong Kong.

12. A trade representative sought advice on whether naturally occurring TFA would need to be controlled in addition to industrially-produced TFA. Dr. LIN advised that the intake of natural TFA (from milk, butter, cheese, cream, etc., as well as from refined vegetable oils) was very minimal as compared with the industrially-produced TFA. The Chairman replied that the research result of TFA in nature was not yet finalized and the current emphasis was put on industrially-produced TFA and to alert the trade to pay attention to the trade guidelines.

(Post-meeting Note: The FDA had extended the comment period on measure to further reduce TFA in processed foods by 60 days, to 8 March 2014.<sup>1</sup>)

## **Agenda Item 5**

### **Food Safety Charter and New Initiative: “Your Health Your Say, Ask for 3 Less”**

#### **Programme**

13. Ms. Jacqueline FUNG introduced to the meeting the background of Food Safety Charter. The Charter was jointly developed by the CFS and the food trade. It provided facilitation for the food trade to incorporate measures to provide quality service with food safety to Hong Kong citizens and tourists. It also provided networking opportunities for the trade. As at 22 November 2013, 23 trade associations and 1,612 licensed food premises had enrolled in the Charter. Applications for enrolment would be accepted at any time before the end of the term in December 2015. New initiatives for the Food Safety Charter were introduced. Internet publicity had been made via OpenRice.com, the CFS website and the CFS Facebook. “Make a Wise Food Choice”, which was the theme of this year’s food safety campaign, aimed to promote sourcing of safe food ingredients and having good record keeping. On-going food safety training was provided targeting high-risk food handlers. The “Your Health Your Say, Ask for 3 Less” campaign was planned to promulgate the message of reducing the use of sugar, salt and oil in food preparation, delivered through encouraging the use of relevant trade guidelines, health education and promotion.

14. A trade representative enquired whether the size of the certificate could be reduced to enhance display at the food premises. Ms. Jacqueline FUNG replied that the A4 size certificate was a document for retention whereas electrostatic stickers had been issued to

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.fda.gov/Food/NewsEvents/ConstituentUpdates/ucm379916.htm>

Signatories for display at prominent locations.

15. In reply to an enquiry from a trade representative regarding status of Signatories, the Chairman said that a particular Signatory would have its status withdrawn and the name delisted if it failed to comply with the food safety and hygiene requirements/licensing conditions or found to be involved in food poisoning cases. The Chairman also welcomed any suggestions of improvement to the scheme.

(Post-meeting Note: The declaration form for joining the Food Safety Charter has been made available on the CFS website for downloading.)

#### **Agenda Item 6**

##### **The CFS Facebook Page**

16. Ms. CHOW Shuk-man briefed the meeting that the CFS Facebook page was established with effect from 1 October 2013 to disseminate information on food safety and to facilitate better communication and interaction with the public. The Chairman encouraged the trade to pay regular visit to the Facebook page to enhance mutual communication.

##### **Any Other Business**

##### **Safety Concerns on Oysters**

17. Ms. Janny MA briefed the meeting regarding the safety concerns on oysters. It was noted that oysters were filter feeders; if they were grown and harvested from waters contaminated with pathogens (e.g. norovirus), chemical contaminants (e.g. heavy metals) or natural toxins (e.g. marine biotoxins), these substances accumulated might pose significant health risks to consumers. To ensure food safety, the trade should obtain oysters from

reliable sources, keep proper transaction records, seek endorsement from FEHD for selling raw seafood, handle and process oysters properly and always follow good personal hygiene practices. For the public, it was advised that eating raw oysters carried inherent food safety risk and intake of oysters should be reduced. Susceptible population including pregnant women, children, elderly persons and persons with compromised immune systems or liver diseases should avoid taking raw or partially cooked oysters. For oysters intended for consumption after cooking, never eat them raw.

18. In reply to an enquiry from a trade representative, the Chairman informed the meeting that criteria for norovirus would not be included in the amending Microbiological Guidelines for Food as the current laboratory methods though able to detect norovirus RNA present, they could not provide information on whether or not the detected virus was capable of causing human infection. Nevertheless, the trade should pay special attention to the hygienic and safety conditions of the oysters and ensure they were fit for consumption.

**46<sup>th</sup> Session of Codex Committee on Food Additives and International Symposium – Safety and Uses of Food Additives**

19. Mr. YANG Chi Ming briefed the meeting on the coming 46<sup>th</sup> Session of Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) which would be held on 17 – 21 March 2014, and the International Symposium – Safety and Uses of Food Additives which would be held on 16 March 2014. The functions would be held at the Regal Airport Hotel. Regarding the International Symposium, the relevant information, programme rundown and registration form had just been posted on the CFS website and applications were welcome. The Chairman supplemented that regarding the CCFA meeting, it was intended that some places would be reserved for the attendance of trade representatives and the details were to be

worked out. Interested parties were invited to provide their particulars to CFS for consideration.

### **Guidelines on Declaration of Food Containing Allergens**

20. A trade representative remarked that Taiwan had revised the guidelines on declaration of food containing allergens, and asked if translation of the label into English would be required in Hong Kong and the corresponding regulations would be revised accordingly. The Chairman replied that presently there was no new regulations promulgated by Codex on that aspect and information on top of existing regulation would be regarded as additional information for which the provision of English translation was not required by law.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

21. The next meeting would be held in February 2014.

22. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:33 p.m.