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# Seasonal Food Surveillance on Hairy Crabs

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Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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# Background

- Autumn is the season for hairy crabs and there will be an upsurge of consumption during the period.
- The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) recently conducted a seasonal food surveillance project on hairy crabs. The objective was to provide information on the safety of crabs to consumers and the trade.

# Types of tests & results

- The CFS collected over 80 samples from import and retail levels for chemical analysis:
  - Veterinary drug residues (e.g. chloramphenicol, sulphonamides, tetracycline, nitrofurans and malachite green)
  - Metallic contaminants (e.g. mercury, lead and arsenic)
  - Synthetic hormones
  - Colouring matters (e.g. Sudan dyes)
  - Oxalic acid
- Results were all satisfactory.



# Advice for the trade

- Source hairy crabs from reliable suppliers.
- All consignment of hairy crabs imported from the Mainland should bear a health certificate issued by the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China (AQSIQ) or Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau.
- Hairy crabs for sale must be kept in the refrigerator.



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## Advice for the trade (Cont'd)

- Do not sell hairy crabs that are spoiled or unfit for human consumption.
- Cooking or steaming hairy crabs for their customers or providing tables/chairs for customers' consumption inside the premises only when operators of the food business hold a valid licence for food business.

# Advice for consumers

- Observe the "Five Keys to Food Safety" in purchasing, storing, preparing and cooking crabs:
  - **Choose wisely**
    - Buy hairy crabs from reliable and hygienic shops or restaurants.
    - Buy crabs with intact, shiny shells without a foul smell.
  - **Keep clean**
    - Brush and wash the crab shells and claws before cooking.
    - Wash hands thoroughly with running water and soap before consumption.

# Advice for consumers (Cont'd)

- **Separate raw and cooked food**
  - Put raw crabs in a container with cover and store them separately from other foods in the refrigerator to avoid cross-contamination.
  
- **Cook thoroughly**
  - Cook thoroughly and remove internal organs completely before consumption.
  - Avoid eating raw crabs. Condiments such as salt, vinegar, wine and wasabi cannot kill bacteria or parasites that may be present.



# Advice for consumers (Cont'd)

- **Safe temperature**
  - Cooked crabs should be consumed as soon as possible and never keep them in room temperature for more than two hours.
  
- Maintain a balanced diet and limit the intake of hairy crabs, particularly cholesterol-rich roe, to a moderate amount.

