
Seasonal Food Surveillance on Hairy Crabs

Centre for Food Safety

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

October 2013



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

- The CFS collected samples from import and retail levels for analysis:

- **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

- **Microbiological analysis**

- Testing for parasites
- Testing for pathogens (*V. parahaemolyticus*, *V. cholerae*, *Salmonella*)

Test results

- In total, 110 samples have been completed testing. All results were 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.



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**
 - 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 with soapy water 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.

