

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**EEB(F)089****(Question Serial No. 2719)**Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene DepartmentSubhead (No. & title): (-) Not specifiedProgramme: (1) Food Safety and Public HealthControlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and EcologyQuestion:

With regard to the quarantine of imported fresh food in the past 3 years (i.e. from 2022-23 to 2024-25), please advise this Committee of:

- the annual handling capacity and the average time required for quarantine, with a breakdown by category (e.g. vegetables, fruits, seafood, fresh meat, etc.);
- the relevant manpower deployment at various border control points, and whether rapid testing technology was introduced to improve efficiency; if yes, the details and effectiveness; and
- the quantity and value of illegally imported and exported fresh food (such as hairy crabs and lobsters) intercepted in each year.

Asked by: Hon HO Chun-yin, Steven (LegCo internal reference no.: 13)Reply:

- The numbers of food consignments inspected at the import level by the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department in the past 3 years are as follows:

Type of food	Number of food consignments inspected		
	2022	2023	2024
Meat and meat products	9 846	10 106	10 193
Poultry and poultry products	11 090	11 444	12 026
Aquatic products	97 852	113 407	112 886
Game	2 802	3 916	4 213
Milk and milk beverages	2 601	2 653	3 327
Frozen confections	1 594	1 775	1 797
Eggs	12 812	13 263	14 641
Vegetables	29 793	31 958	36 532
Fruits	41 972	44 305	46 830
Others	49 667	55 425	62 900
Total	260 029	288 252	305 345

Apart from examining import documents, CFS officers also conduct food inspection and sampling under a risk-based principle. The duration required is determined by a variety of factors, including whether the relevant documents or information are clear and complete, and the quantity and type of food products. In general, the inspection of imported fresh food can be completed within half an hour.

- b. In the past 3 years (i.e. from 2022-23 to 2024-25), the staff establishment of Health Inspectors in the relevant offices responsible for the inspection of imported food is as follows:

Year	Staff establishment of Health Inspectors*			
	At air	At sea	At all land boundary control points	Total number of posts
2022-23	27	50	64	141
2023-24	27	50	64	141
2024-25	27	46	66	139

* Health Inspectors responsible for the inspection of imported food also undertake other duties, such as investigating food incidents and cases of illegal import of regulated food.

In general, food consignments will be released upon completion of sampling at the import level without waiting for the test results, and the testing of food samples is generally conducted by government testing institutions. CFS and the relevant testing institutions will keep in view the international developments in testing technology.

- c. The numbers of suspected cases of illegal import of fresh food referred from the relevant law enforcement departments to CFS in the past 3 years are as follows:

Type of food	Number of cases		
	2022	2023	2024
Meat and poultry	101	609	1 401
Eggs	81	459	551
Game	13	49	96
Hairy crabs	9	33	16
Total	204	1 150	2 064

CFS does not keep information on the value of food.

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