

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)072**

**(Question Serial No. 1974)**

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (1) Food Safety and Public Health

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

The Centre for Food Safety of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is tasked with implementing the Nutrition Labelling Scheme and ensuring that prepackaged food products available on the market are properly labelled. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (a) In each of the past 3 years, what were (i) the Department's budget for its food labelling work, and (ii) the number of food labelling complaints received, (iii) the average cost of handling food labelling complaints, and (iv) the average time taken for handling each complaint by the Department?
- (b) In each of the past 3 years, what were (i) the number of cases of which investigation had been completed, (ii) the number of cases confirmed upon investigation to have breached the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W), (iii) the number of cases in which formal prosecution had been initiated, and (iv) the number of convicted cases, with a breakdown by type of complaints?
- (c) What were the average expenditure and manpower required for completing the aforementioned procedures from investigation to prosecution?
- (d) Will the Department step up its label checking work, such as increasing the number of samples checked and the number of inspectors, to facilitate the trade's compliance? If yes, what are the estimated expenditure and manpower to be involved?
- (e) With an increase in cross-boundary online shopping for prepackaged food products, does the Department plan to include the samples of such products to check whether the labelling information is correct? If yes, what are the details? If no, what is/are the reason(s)?
- (f) Will the Department continue to conduct workshops on Nutrition Labelling Scheme for the food manufacturing trade and provide the trade with advisory and support services? If yes, what are the estimated expenditure and manpower to be involved?

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, Joephy (LegCo internal reference no.: 35)

Reply:

- (a) to (c) From 2023 to 2025, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department received a total of 1 344 food labelling

complaints and initiated 174 prosecutions for breach of the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W) (the Regulations). As at 28 February 2026, apart from 3 cases in which the prosecution results are pending, all other cases have resulted in conviction. A breakdown by year is tabulated as follows:

	Number of cases			
	2023	2024	2025	Total
Number of food labelling complaints received	351	487	506	1 344
Type of complaints				
- Food labels suspected to be in breach of the Regulations	259	357	354	970
- Suspected sale of expired food	92	130	152	374
Number of cases with investigation completed	351	487	506	1 344
Number of cases with prosecution initiated under the Regulations	62	48	64#	174
Number of convicted cases	62	48	61	171

# The results of the hearings of 3 cases are pending.

Upon receipt of a complaint, the Department will contact the complainant as soon as possible for follow-up and investigation. Given that the nature of each complaint case varies, and in general, the investigation of food complaint cases can be completed within approximately 7 days on average. For cases involving prosecution, the handling time will be longer. As staff of different sections of the Department would assist in handling food labelling complaints and they are also tasked with other duties. Therefore, the Department does not keep a breakdown of the budget specifically for its food labelling work and the average cost/relevant manpower for handling the complaints.

- (d) CFS adopts a risk-based approach in checking the labels of prepackaged food products. It keeps under review the relevant monitoring mechanism and continues to step up the label checking work. Since 2022, CFS has introduced targeted surveillance of nutrition labelling, with a view to checking whether the nutrition labels of the targeted category of food items on the market comply with the Regulations and publishing the test results in a timely manner. CFS will flexibly deploy existing manpower to intensify its label checking work.
- (e) Any prepackaged food imported for commercial use and sale in Hong Kong must be marked or labelled as stipulated under the Regulations. Cross-boundary online shopping of prepackaged food products by individuals for personal use falls outside the scope of the Regulations. In 2025, CFS initiated prosecution in 12 complaint cases involving online food sales in breach of food labelling regulations, in order to ensure that the relevant food labels comply with the requirements under

the regulations. Apart from handling complaint cases, CFS also proactively conducts surveillance of the labels of prepackaged food products sold online and 6 prosecutions were initiated for non-compliance in 2025. CFS has continuously intensified checking online food for commercial use and sale in Hong Kong. The number of samples taken increased from about 1 500 in 2015 to about 9 300 in 2025.

In 2026, CFS will continue to increase the number of sampling of online prepackaged food products, and step up the publicity and education work related to the food labelling scheme.

- (f) In order to enhance the trade's understanding of the Nutrition Labelling Scheme, CFS has consolidated the materials from workshops on the scheme and promoted the scheme through various channels, including trade consultation forums, electronic publications and social media. Moreover, CFS has uploaded the guidelines and other technical documents on the Nutrition Labelling Scheme to the website for the reference and access by the trade. Views and enquiries from the trade are welcome.

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