

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)114

(Question Serial No. 0977)

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:

On facilitating Hong Kong-manufactured food products to access the Mainland and overseas markets, please advise this Committee of the following:

- 1) What were the figures and growth rate for Hong Kong-manufactured food products with access to the Mainland and overseas markets in the past 3 years? Please give a breakdown by food type.
- 2) At present, how do Hong Kong-manufactured food products benefit from market access and simplified customs arrangements of the Mainland? Will the Government further provide more simplified customs arrangements?
- 3) In the past 3 years (2023, 2024 and 2025), what were the fees charged for applying for different certificates, and the manpower and expenditure involved for processing such applications?
- 4) Regarding the planned waiver of fees related to the certification of food products for 2 years, what will be the expected increase in the access of Hong Kong-manufactured food products to the Mainland and overseas markets?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Chun, Jonathan (LegCo internal reference no.: 3)

Reply:

- 1) The value of Hong Kong-manufactured food products with access to the Mainland and overseas markets and the year-on-year percentage change (y-o-y % change) in the past 3 years according to the Census and Statistics Department are as follows:

Destination of exports	2023		2024		2025	
	Value (\$ billion)	Y-o-y % change [@]	Value (\$ billion)	Y-o-y % change [@]	Value (\$ billion)	Y-o-y % change [@]
Mainland	5.07	31.1	4.59	-9.5	6.46	40.9
Others	3.01	1.0	3.14	4.4	2.98	-5.2
Total	8.08	18.0	7.73	-4.3	9.44	22.2

[@] There may be slight discrepancies in the percentages for the breakdown figures due to rounding.

- 2) Regarding market access, under the Memorandum of Understanding on the Inspection, Quarantine and Hygiene Requirements for Meat Products Exported from Hong Kong to the Mainland and the Cooperation Arrangement for the Export of Dairy Products from Hong Kong to the Mainland signed between the Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB) and the General Administration of Customs of the People’s Republic of China (GACC) last year, Hong Kong-manufactured meat and dairy products are allowed to be imported into the Mainland.

For facilitation of customs clearance, under the Cooperation Agreement on the Supervision of Safety and Facilitation of Customs Clearance of Food Products Manufactured in Hong Kong Exported to the Mainland signed between EEB and GACC in November 2023, once an Advance Release Permission is granted to a Hong Kong food manufacturer, its products subject to inspection by the Mainland Customs can be released upon completion of sampling without waiting for the results, thereby substantially shortening the time required for customs clearance. Commenced on 21 May 2024, the Advance Release Arrangement covers 3 major categories of food, namely beverages and frozen drinks (excluding alcoholic and dairy beverages); biscuits, pastries and bread; and candies and chocolates (including chocolate, cocoa butter substitute chocolate and their products) in the first phase.

The Advance Release Arrangement has received good responses, with its first phase running smoothly. In view of this, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, after consulting with the trade, discussed again with GACC and obtained its approval to extend the scope of the arrangement this year to include 3 newly added categories of food products, namely noodles, tea leaves and seasonings.

- 3) CFS has deployed manpower flexibly to handle the relevant work with existing resources, and does not keep a breakdown of the expenditure involved. The fees charged for the issue of Food Inspection Certificate, Health Certificate for Foods of Animal Origin, Recommendation on Food Manufacturer Registration and Advance Release Permission in the past 3 years (2023, 2024 and 2025) are as follows:

Category	Year	Fee (\$)	Number of certificates issued	Total fee (\$'000)
Food Inspection Certificate	2023	1,865 ¹	315	1,424.5
	2024	2,201 ²	402	1,709.2
	2025	2,553 ³	452	2,317.3
Certified true copy of Food Inspection Certificate	2023	160	30	4.8
	2024	160	48	7.7
	2025	160	40	6.4
Amendment certificate of Food Inspection Certificate	2023	155	1	0.2
	2024	181	3	0.5
	2025	208	3	0.6

Category	Year	Fee (\$)	Number of certificates issued	Total fee (\$'000)
Health Certificate for Foods of Animal Origin	2023	7,165	314	2,249.8
	2024	8,455	313	2,603.8
	2025	9,723	274	2,624.8
Certified true copy of Health Certificate for Foods of Animal Origin	2023	160	1 486	237.8
	2024	160	1 286	205.8
	2025	160	1 304	208.6
Amendment certificate of Health Certificate for Foods of Animal Origin	2023	155	8	1.2
	2024	155	3	0.5
	2025	155	16	2.5
Recommendation on Food Manufacturer Registration	2023	9,104	2	18.2
	2024	9,104	3	27.3
	2025	9,331	1	9.3
Advance Release Permission	2023	Not applicable ⁴		
	2024	8,305	9	74.7
	2025	8,305	3	24.9

Notes:

¹ Every additional 500kg or part thereof was subject to an additional fee of \$180.

² Every additional 500kg or part thereof was subject to an additional fee of \$207.

³ Every additional 500kg or part thereof was subject to an additional fee of \$228.

⁴ The Advance Release Arrangement commenced in May 2024.

- 4) Both manufacturing and exports of food are market-driven. The Government waives the fees related to the certification of food exports for 2 years with a view to creating favourable conditions to encourage the trade to seize market opportunities and make good use of the facilitation arrangements. CFS expects that the number of applications will increase following the fee waiver. The exact figure will be contingent upon the trade's response. CFS will continue keeping in view the application situation.

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