

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**EEB(F)148**

**(Question Serial No. 3324)**

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:

With regard to the quarantine of imported fresh food in the past 3 years, please advise this Committee of:

- a. the annual handling capacity and the average time required for quarantine, with a breakdown by category (e.g. vegetables, fruits, seafood, fresh meat, etc.);
- b. 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;
- c. 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.: 45)

Reply:

- a. 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		
	2023	2024	2025
Meat and meat products	10 106	10 193	10 839
Poultry and poultry products	11 444	12 026	12 669
Aquatic products	113 407	112 886	108 858
Game	3 916	4 213	4 124
Milk and milk beverages	2 653	3 327	3 889
Frozen confections	1 775	1 797	1 055
Eggs	13 263	14 641	15 455
Vegetables	31 958	36 532	32 461
Fruits	44 305	46 830	40 217
Others	55 425	62 900	65 357
<b>Total</b>	<b>288 252</b>	<b>305 345</b>	<b>294 924</b>

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 2023-24 to 2025-26), 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
2023-24	27	50	64	<b>141</b>
2024-25	27	46	66	<b>139</b>
2025-26	27	46	66	<b>139</b>

\* 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		
	2023	2024	2025
Meat and poultry	609	1 401	1 527
Eggs	459	551	517
Game	49	96	104
Hairy crabs	33	16	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 150</b>	<b>2 064</b>	<b>2 165</b>

CFS does not keep information on the value of food.

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