

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Hong Kong Detects COVID-19 on Imports of Brazilian Frozen Beef and Polish Frozen Pork Skin

Country: Hong Kong

Post: Hong Kong

Report Category: Agriculture in the News, Agriculture in the Economy

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Report Highlights:

Hong Kong continues to take random tests on imports of chilled and frozen foods and their packaging for the COVID-19 virus. The latest detections were connected to frozen meats' packaging from Brazil and Poland in February 2022. In 2021, Brazil was the largest supplier of beef and pork products for Hong Kong while Poland ranked as the fifth supplier for pork products.

Following reports on China's finding of COVID-19 virus-contamination in imported frozen foods or their packaging, in mid-2020, Hong Kong started testing various types of cold chain food imports and their packaging at the point of entry, from different countries/regions. Samples are taken at airport and importers' cold warehouses/storage units.

In late February 2022, the Center for Food Safety (CFS) received testing reports that packaging samples of imported frozen food items were found to be positive for the COVID-19 virus during precautionary testing. Earlier, the CFS collected 36 samples for testing from a batch of around 1,100 cartons of frozen beef (total of around 29 tons) imported from Brazil via sea. Test results showed one outer packaging sample and two inner packaging samples were found to be positive for the virus.

In 2021, Hong Kong's global imports of beef products totaled \$2.7 billion, a drop of 39 percent compared to 2020. Brazil was the largest supplier, providing 39 percent of imports while the United States supplied 20 percent ranking as the second largest supplier.

In addition, the CFS also collected 12 testing samples from a batch of around 300 cartons of frozen pork skin (total of around seven tons) imported from Poland via sea. Test results showed one inner packaging sample was found to be positive for the virus. Both shipments have been stored in warehouses and have not entered the market. The CFS has ordered the respective importers to dispose of the entire batch of affected products. Operators of the concerned warehouses were asked to conduct thorough cleaning and disinfection.

In 2021, Hong Kong's imports of pork products valued at \$1.4 billion, dropping 13 percent compared to 2020. Brazil was the largest supplier accounting for 26 percent, while Poland supplied 5 percent. The United States supplied 3 percent of Hong Kong's total pork products imports.

Since CFS' starting to test imported frozen foods and their packaging against the COVID-19 virus in mid-2020, Hong Kong authorities have collected over 29,000 samples of foods and their packaging for testing. Apart from the samples mentioned above, only the pomfret fish from Indonesia announced in August 2021 (GAIN Report) and cuttlefish slice surface and inner packaging samples from Malaysia announced in November 2021 (GAIN Report) were found to be positive.

As a matter of practice, during testing, the tested products are held at the warehouse. Only if the tests are completed and the results are negative, then the products are released to the market for sale. The CFS is mindful that importers must pay storage costs if shipments stay at the airport beyond 24 hours. Normally, test results are available within that timeframe. However, exceptions occur only when preliminary test results are inconclusive.

Other related GAIN reports:

[COVID-19 Testing of Imported Foods and their Packaging;](#)

[Hong Kong Detects COVID-19 Virus on Frozen Seafood Imports from Malaysia;](#)

[Macau: COVID-19 Testing of Imported Foods and their Packaging](#)

Attachments:

No Attachments.