

12 January 2004

To: Person-in-charge of All Food Premises

Precautionary Measures against Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)

As you are aware, there is a recently confirmed SARS case in Guangzhou. In Hong Kong, we should always stay alert and step up precautionary measures against the return of SARS. You may recall that last year this Department issued to you letters on precautionary measures against SARS including those relating to rodent and pest controls. These measures are still applicable and you should continue to observe them closely.

You would also wish to note that the Government has, since 1994, disallowed the importation of live civet cats, and as a precautionary measure against the spread of SARS, no permission for importation of game meat derived from civet cats has been granted from May 2003 onwards. As such, there would not be any fresh, chilled or frozen civet cat meat coming from approved source and available for sale in the market. Furthermore, handling of live wild animals or their meat from unapproved source may expose you to the risk of contracting diseases.

I wish to take this opportunity to remind you that the sale or in possession for sale of any fresh, chilled or frozen meat of animals which have not been slaughtered in a local licensed slaughterhouse or such meat that is not lawfully imported into Hong Kong in accordance with the Imported Game, Meat and Poultry Regulations (Cap.132 Sub. Leg.) is an offence under section 29 of the Food Business Regulation (Cap.132 Sub. Leg.). Any person who is convicted of the offence under the said provision will be liable to a fine of \$50,000, imprisonment for 6 months and \$900 for each day during which the offence continues. The conviction of the offence may result in cancellation of the food business licence.

We trust that you will continue to respond positively to our appeal and contribute to the efforts of our community to prevent the return of SARS. Should you have any enquiries on the matter, please feel free to contact our Senior Health Inspector, Mr. /Ms.

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Yours faithfully,
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for Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene