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Global Agricultural Information Network

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Hong Kong Moving towards Regulatory Control on Edible Fats and Oils

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Trade Policy Monitoring

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Report Highlights:

Hong Kong is expected to implement regulatory control of edible fats and oils following a public consultation period which will impact \$14 million in U.S. exports of vegetable and animal fat exports to Hong Kong. The public consultation period ends October 6, 2015.

Summary

The Hong Kong government (HKG) has launched a public comment period on its proposed regulatory control on edible fats and oils. HKG has notified this potential measure to the WTO via [SPS/N/HKG/41](#) and [TBT/N/HKG/48](#). The regulatory control consists of two parts: new statutory standards, and new certification requirement. The public consultation will end on October 6, 2015. No implementation date has been announced.

Background

Currently, Hong Kong has neither a specific regulation stipulating the safety standard for edible fats and oils nor a licensing system to monitor the recycling of waste cooking oils.

In September 2014, Taiwan detected products produced with substandard lard made from recycled cooking oil sourced from Hong Kong. Subsequently, Hong Kong banned the import of affected food products from Taiwan. This event prompted the government to implement regulatory control on edible fats and oils.

Proposed Regulatory Control

Products covered in the proposed regulatory regime include the following:

- Vegetable oils, such as olive, cottonseed and peanut;
- Animal fats, such as lard and tallow
- Edible fats and oils used as ingredients

Proposed Standards for Edible Fats and Oils

	Proposed amendments	
	Description of food	Maximum level
Arsenic	Edible fats and oils	0.1mg total arsenic/kg
Lead	Edible fats and oils	0.1mg/kg
Erucic Acid	Low-erucic acid rapeseed oil or any food to which low-erucic acid rapeseed oil but no other edibles fats and oils has been added	2 per centum by weight of their fatty acid content
	Any food to which edible fats and oils or a mixture thereof has been added except any food to which low-erucic acid rapeseed oil but no other edibles fats and oils has been added	5 per centum by weight of their fatty acid content

	Any edible fats and oils or any mixture thereof except low-erucic acid rapeseed oil	5 per centum by weight of their fatty acid content
Aflatoxins	Edible fats and oils	5 micrograms aflatoxins, total (B1+B2+G1+G2) per kilogram of the food
Benzo[a]pyrene	Edible fats and oils	5 micrograms per kilogram of the food
Acid value	Lard	1.3 mg KOH/g fat = ffa max 0.65%
Peroxide value	Lard	Up to 10 milliequivalents active oxygen/ kg fat

Proposed Regulatory Targets

- To prohibit the use of “waste cooking oils” and “substandard fats and oils” as ingredients for edible fats and oils manufactured locally or imported into Hong Kong
- To ensure compliance by requiring edible fats and oils manufactured locally for either export or domestic sale are accompanied by an official certificate or a certificate issued by an officially recognized independent testing institution certifying the regulated products compliance with the statutory standard and are fit for human consumption. This requirement will be incorporated into the plant licensing conditions for production.
- To require importers of edible fats and oils to provide an official certificate or a certificate issued by an officially recognized independent testing institution certifying the regulated products having met the statutory standard and are fit for human consumption.
- To apply equivalent import regulatory measures to exports
- To require traders to provide copies of certificates to downstream distributors, retailers or food premises to facilitate inspection by Hong Kong’s Center for Food Safety.

In addition, the Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department will also initiate licensing requirements for the collection, disposal and import/exports of waste cooking oil so as to strengthen the control of the waste cooking oil and prevent its use in food or oil production.

Time Frame

The Hong Kong government did not specify a time frame for the enactment of the new regulation. However, it pledged to provide adequate grace period for the trade to refine its product formula so as to comply with the statutory product standard.

Comments Submission

The U.S. exported a total of \$14 million of vegetable oils and animal fats to Hong Kong in 2014. The U.S. industry is encouraged to study the proposal and submit comments to the Hong Kong, if necessary, with particular relevance to certification requirements and statutory standards for edible oils and lards as the new regulation will have impact on U.S. exports of these products to Hong Kong. The full [consultation paper](#) is available at the Food and Health Bureau and comments can be submitted to the following party before October 6. Post would appreciate to be copied on the submissions.

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