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**Prepared By:** ATO Hong Kong Staff

**Approved By:** Jennifer Clever

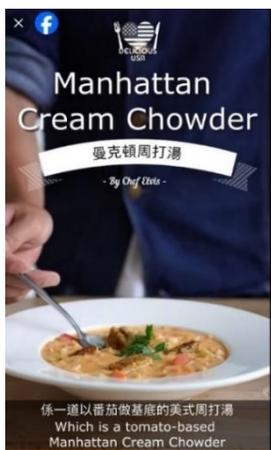
**Report Highlights:**

Bite size local news, Post reports and activity summaries wrapped by ATO Hong Kong. In this issue: ATO Hong Kong Encourages Local Consumers to Get Their U.S. Veggies On; Chan Upbeat on Recovery Despite Deficit; Visitors Flock to Hong Kong Over Mainland China's 'golden week' Holiday, But Retailers Say Extra People Did Not Mean Higher Sales; High-Speed Rail to Add New Line Linking Five New Destinations; Fitch Forecasts 65 Percent GDP Rebound For Macau; Restaurants Expect Up to 20 Percent Business Boost; Hong Kong Suspends Imports of Poultry Meat and Products from Jerauld County, South Dakota; Imports of Poultry Meat and Products Suspended from Areas in South Africa and Denmark; No Room for Hong Kong to Ease Japanese Seafood Ban.

# THE HONG KONG WONTON

wrapped by ATO Hong Kong

Sep. 29 - Oct. 12, 2023 | Vol. 3 Issue #21



陳浩基 Elvis Chan (新食造人) and Delicious USA Hong Kong  
September 23 at 8:28 PM · 香港

【紐約式風格 - 曼克頓周打湯】  
這款Weekend都唔講！周打湯是傳統美式湯品之一，而素食一族會以周打湯半湯品而加以重新詮釋為「曼克頓周打湯」則係當中比較特別的一種！大抵有一種適合你唔怕新穎、創新、帶健康而風情、大膽地以白色以豆漿作基底的周打湯就身一變成為「紅湯」！同樣要變創新型的，特選選用美國加州的薯仔、甘藷、西芹、洋葱和豆蔻，為大喇喇的一位素食版本的「曼克頓周打湯」！🥰🥰🥰  
[U.S. styled Weekend - Manhattan Cream Chowder]  
Thinking of making soup this weekend? Chowder is a traditional American soup, with Corn Chowder as a vegetarian version. Today See less  
You and 443 others · 12 · 22K



陳浩基 Elvis Chan (新食造人) and Delicious USA Hong Kong  
September 28 at 1:03 PM · 香港

【素做開心假期 - 水牛城素雞翅】  
家呀開心假期，水牛城素雞翅！  
大家中秋節快樂！長假好唔好多家裏朋友聚餐呀，今次特別為大家選擇了Veggie Buffalo Wings素食水牛城雞翅，除了你睇番個個樣花，我還選用了美國芝士、牛油、蒜汁、搭配那甜甘和酸辛🥰🥰，相信已經會讚你的味覺好唔好！  
[Happy Holidays in Veggie style - Plant-based Buffalo Wings]  
Happy Mid-Autumn Festival! Thinking of some party food for family and friends gathering during the long holiday? Try this party recipe: Veggie Buffalo Wings. Besides the spicy and crispy cauliflower, I also made some U.S. blue See less  
You and 456 others · 15 · 15K

## ATO HONG KONG ENCOURAGES LOCAL CONSUMERS TO GET THEIR U.S. VEGGIES ON!

From late September to early October, ATO Hong Kong partnered with local vegetarian Chef Influencer Elvis Chan to create original recipes and demonstration videos featuring U.S. vegetables. As of this report, the video published on both Chef Elvis Chan’s and ATO Hong Kong’s social media platforms generated 65,994 views and received at outstanding 3,259 reactions. This project enhanced ATO Hong Kong’s social media presence and increased consumer awareness about the positive attributes of U.S. fresh produces. Hong Kong remains an open market for food and agricultural products, hence it is not unusual to see a wide variety of U.S. fresh produce at the local grocery stores, particularly during the summer months. Leveraging consumer interest for plant-based recipes, ATO hopes to continue highlighting less known U.S. fresh produce already available in the Hong Kong market. In 2022, Hong Kong’s fresh vegetable market was valued at \$792 million, the city’s top suppliers are China, the Netherlands, Japan, and the United States. Hong Kong top imports of U.S. vegetables were asparagus, lettuce, potato, carrot and turnip, onion, and cauliflower.

### ECONOMY



#### Chan Upbeat on Recovery Despite Deficit [[The Standard](#), Oct 9]

The economy has been recovering since early this year although Hong Kong is expected to record a high financial deficit due to lower land sales, Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po said. However, he said Hong Kong's financial situation over the long term remains healthy and that an abundance of caution

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remains the official mantra. He said the local economy had been recovering well since the border reopening and the city will also host more large-scale events, including the Global Financial Leaders' Investment Summit next month, which is expected to bring in a lot of business travelers. "The number of tourists has resumed to 70 to 80 percent of pre-pandemic levels. Retail sales has also recovered to 90 percent of the pre-Covid number," Chan said. "The most important thing is working together to boost the economic recovery in Hong Kong and bring prosperity back to the market so that people will feel the city has interesting events and good food, is safe, and they can make money here." Chan, who visited France, Britain, and Germany recently, said the European business sector had shown great interest in the Hong Kong as he touted the advantages the city has under "one country, two systems" and eased their concerns about rule of law. Asked whether U.S. sanctions against Hong Kong and mainland officials will deter overseas companies from coming, Chan said the business sector pays more attention to economic benefits and development. He said western countries, including the United States, are greatly invested in Hong Kong, adding they should develop with Hong Kong together. **ATO Notes:** For this year's summer months, Hong Kong has successfully recovered tourist numbers and overall retail sales to pre-pandemic levels. It is worth noting that recently, food retail sales have slowed for the first time since the pandemic as Hongkongers return to dining out (even to nearby mainland cities) but retailers are confident that grocery sales will pick up before the end of the year.

## **Visitors Flock to Hong Kong Over Mainland China's 'golden week' Holiday, But Retailers Say Extra People Did Not Mean Higher Sales [[SCMP](#), Oct 5]**

Hong Kong retailers are uneasy over business prospects for the next big holiday periods after the city had a net outflow of people over the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day long weekend and those in the city did not spend in stores, despite higher footfall. Immigration Department statistics showed 1 million visitors came to Hong Kong from September 29 to Wednesday in the first post-pandemic celebration of the National Day "golden week" holiday, which ends on Friday. However, the number of tourists was offset by the 1.4 million Hongkongers who left the city on holiday over the same period. While there was a "notable increase" in foot traffic of up to 30 percent from September 29, retail sales had remained similar to a normal weekend. "Even though Hong Kong retail sales will still rebound by 16 percent in 2023, it is only a base effect and the structural challenges remain more important than ever." **ATO Notes:** Although there is a large inflow of visitors coming to Hong Kong during the "golden week" holiday, around the same number of locals of Hong Kong also left the city to mainland for cheaper dining and shopping. This will be an enduring trend if Hong Kong is not able to show significant distinction in the products the city has to offer; at present, mainland offerings are reportedly much more competitive.

## **Thousands Return Home to Hong Kong After Enjoying Good Deals in 'No-brainer' Shenzhen Over National Day Long Break [[SCMP](#), Oct 2]**

Thousands of Hongkongers have streamed through border crossings from mainland China and returned to the city on the last day of the long weekend, after enjoying good deals on food and self-pampering options in neighboring Shenzhen. Immigration figures showed 1.38 million people left the city from Friday to Sunday, including 989,071 residents. The statistics also showed 1.19 million people entered the city from Friday to Sunday, resulting in a net outflow of 482,652. Meanwhile, restaurant and massage operators over the border were delighted with a significant business surge from Hongkongers

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amid the long weekend. **ATO Notes:** This review supports previous reports on locals increasingly crossing the border to spend in Shenzhen. Shenzhen is only less than half an hour train ride from Hong Kong. Moreover, with Hong Kong offering new routes to the mainland at different subway stations, travelling to mainland will become more convenient for Hongkongers to visit.

## **High-Speed Rail to Add New Line Linking Five New Destinations Starting Oct 11 [[The Standard, Oct 3](#)]**

Starting October 11, 2023, the High-Speed Rail will add a new line linking Hong Kong to five new destinations, including Jiangmen, Kaipingnan, Yangjiang, Maoming and Zhanjiangxi, MTR Corp announced on Tuesday. The new service will provide one pair of southbound and northbound trains every day. Train services between the Hong Kong West Kowloon station and Guangzhoudong, as well as Futian station, will be strengthened starting the same day. The number of daily train services to Guangzhoudong will increase to 20, while the last southbound train departure time will be extended from the current 6.45 pm to 8.18 pm from Guangzhoudong, train frequencies between Shenzhen and Hong Kong will also increase from 178 to 184 on the same day. In addition, the High-Speed Rail network coverage will be further expanded, including direct access to seven major cities in the Greater Bay Area. They are Shenzhen, Guangzhou, Zhaoqing, Foshan, Dongguan, Huizhou, and Jiangmen. Daily train services will increase from 182 to 188, and passengers can purchase tickets for the new destinations. The traveling time of the corresponding lines will also be shortened by 1 to 1.5 hours.

## **Fitch Forecasts 65 Percent GDP Rebound In 2023 [[Macau Daily Times, Oct 11](#)]**

Fitch Ratings anticipates growth of up to 65 percent in Macau's economy this year, driven by sustained recovery in the gaming and tourism sector. In its report entitled "Asia-Pacific Sovereigns – Peer Review," the new forecast by Fitch Ratings rose 19 percentage points compared to initial predictions made in December 2022 when borders were still closed. In its recent report, the firm said that the strong growth comes amid China's faltering economy – which adds to worries over surging youth unemployment and a weak property sector. The situation is thought to increase the likelihood of the government doubling down on support for the faltering post pandemic recovery. The city's gaming revenues have so far already reached \$16.5 billion. Tourist arrivals have also sustained momentum and demonstrated consistent recovery, despite slightly lower arrivals in September compared to August's post-pandemic record high. Fitch Ratings also anticipates Macau's current-account surplus to increase to 25.6 percent of GDP in 2023. **ATO Notes:** Macau's economic recovery exceeded expectations, lead by gaming. During the summer holidays, Macau had 6 million visitors, in September gross gaming revenue was \$2 billion and GDP growth stood at 117.5 percent.

## **Series of Events to Mark Mid-Autumn, Golden Week as Holidays Poised to Boom [[Macau Daily Times, Sep 29](#)]**

Macau will see a series of activities to mark the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day holidays as tourists are expected to swarm the city amid this holiday, which is poised to be record-breaking. According to the China Tourism Academy, more than 100 million travel trips will be made per day during the Golden Week holidays, far surpassing the levels of last year and 2019. Through a variety of cultural and commercial activities, artistic performances, art installations, and leisure dining options, this initiative aims to enrich the pedestrian experience for visitors. In addition, Albergue SCM will

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commence “Celebration of the Moon – Mid-Autumn Festival 2023” with festive specialties and drinks, various performances, and limited traditional rabbit lanterns for children. **ATO Notes:** Like Hong Kong, Macau has launched series of celebrations and events during the Mid-Autumn and Golden Week holidays targeting to boost the atmosphere and attract more visitors to travel to Macau. Reviews have been conservative over the overall achievement for Golden Week as the summer months have already past and overseas tourists are expected to drop as these are only local holidays.

## **Casino Revenues Slip as September Storm Rattles City [[Macau Daily Times](#), Oct 5]**

Macau’s casino gaming revenue growth slowed in September, falling to a five-month low as revenues fell slightly to \$1.9 billion. Data from the Gaming Inspection, and Coordination Bureau shows gross gaming revenue soared 404.2 percent year-on-year, albeit from a low base. The numbers fell 13 percent from the previous month. Revenues were 68 percent of 2019 pre-Covid levels. Last month, the government ordered the shutdown of casinos for nine hours due to Typhoon Saola – a rare shutdown as the city braced for the storm when it hoisted its highest storm signal, No. 10. Along with amended travel plans for some would-be visitors, Typhoon Saola disrupted transportation and temporarily closed border entry points. Heavy rainfall in the week following the storm also kept bookings light. According to a Bloomberg report, analysts predict gaming revenue could return to 72 percent of pre-pandemic levels, the highest percentage since the onset of the pandemic. Citigroup Inc. analysts forecast a boost in revenue as Macau will see a major roster of events in the fourth quarter of the year, including high-profile concerts and a poolside dance party featuring former NBA all-star player Shaquille O’Neal. Secretary for Economy and Finance Lei Wai Nong acknowledged the 2023 forecast has already exceeded the government’s expectation of \$17 billion.



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## ***HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, AND INSTITUTIONS***

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## **Tickets and Tasting Passes for Wine & Dine Fest on Sale [[The Standard](#), Oct 9]**

From October 26 to 29, the Central Harbor front Event Space will once again host the Wine and Dine fest organized by the Hong Kong Tourism Board. This year's festival features over 300 wine and cuisine kiosks, showcasing premium wines from 36 nations, including Bordeaux and Burgundy of France and Italy, as well as international delicacies from 17 countries and regions. Leading celebrity chefs, "Asia's 50 Best Bars" bartenders, wine-tasting specialists, and more are invited to the brand-new "Tasting Theatre" to individually impart their knowledge and explore the potential of wine and food pairings. **ATO Notes:** Wine and dine festival is returning in its original format since 2018. Since the pandemic, the year’s event will introduce wines, whiskeys, cocktails, elevated street food and hotel fine dining dishes, including wines from 200-plus wine exhibitors across 36 countries and regions. Some 140,000 visitors are expected during the four-day gourmet event. Instead of participating in the Wine & Dine Festival, this year, ATO Hong Kong will focus on other targeted activities such as the launch of the

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*Delicious USA* 2023 restaurant promotion campaign (running during the month of November); support the return of the Great American Barbeque event, in partnership with the U.S. Meat Export Federation, on November 21; and an exclusive bartender tasting event “Renaissance of American Spirits,” in collaboration with the U.S. Distilled Spirits Council on November 27.

## **700 Chefs Cook Up a Storm at Charity Gala Dinner [[The Standard](#), Oct 10]**

The seventh Charity Gala Dinner was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre last night, drawing some 700 chefs from 22 different countries and regions to raise funds for the underprivileged, including the elderly, mentally disabled and subdivided flat residents. The event was held in Hong Kong for the first time after a three-year hiatus due to the pandemic. More than 2,000 representatives from different sectors, including the 700 chefs, brought the dinner participants to a record high. Officials, including Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po and Secretary for Security Chris Tang Ping-keung attended the gala dinner. The 400 overseas chefs also prepared lunch boxes at Food Angel and distributed 2,000 goodie bags to the underprivileged.

## **Restaurants Expect Up to 20 Percent Business Boost This Mid-Autumn Festival [[The Standard](#), Sep 29]**

A representative of the catering sector said they are expecting to enjoy a 20 percent jump in business during the Mid-Autumn Festival. Leung Chun-wah, Chairman of The Association for Hong Kong Catering Services Management, said the situation is ideal as many of the city’s restaurants are fully booked. He expected restaurants to have a table turnover rate of 1.5 to 2 times, reaching pre-pandemic levels. As for the National Day Golden Week, business is expected to go up by 20 to 30 percent, he added. Meanwhile, Leung said the “Night Vibes Hong Kong” campaign could only bring crowds to certain areas, and that even if shopping malls extend their opening hours it will not help bring more patrons to restaurants. **ATO Notes:** After pandemic without the government’s promotion, the table turnover rate was less than 1 times a night, for weekends, the occupancy rate is not typically fulfilled. Restaurants are hoping business will improve during the two big holidays. In the second quarter of 2023, restaurants receipts accounted for \$3.5 billion, an increase of 24.3 percent compared to the same period last year.

## **Slow Start for Hong Kong Restaurants Offering National Day Deals as Residents Lament They Were Unaware of Discounts [[SCMP](#), Oct 2]**

Some Hong Kong restaurants offering National Day promotions got off to a slow start as discounts failed to draw crowds on Sunday and minimal in-store advertising left many unaware of the deals. Around 1,750 dining spots around the city were providing discounts and other deals to commemorate National Day, with some slashing prices by as much as 30 percent for certain dishes. Industry leaders had previously predicted that the long weekend including the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day could generate as much as \$153 million for the city’s struggling restaurant sector, with some hoping the discounts would boost sales by 20 percent. While Hong Kong restaurant receipts in the second quarter jumped by 24.3 percent year-on-year, many operators previously said they experienced a massive summer slump as residents flocked to nearby Shenzhen on the weekends. **ATO Notes:** The government has supported promotions and discounts encouraging consumers to dine out. However, not every local has been aware to those discount offers as promotions have not been massively advertised to the public.

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While there is still sharp improvement in restaurants receipts compared to same period last year, conditions have not returned to pre-pandemic levels.

## **Free Rides, Dining Discounts and Activities to Celebrate National Day [[The Standard](#), Oct 1]**

The government and business sector launched a number of concessions, including free tram rides and ferry routes for the public, discounts on designated dishes or beverages at more than 1,000 restaurants, and half-priced movie tickets at cinemas. Light Rail, buses, trams, and two ferry routes - including the Tsim Sha Tsui to Wan Chai, as well as the North Point, Kwun Tong and Kai Tak routes also provide free travel for the public. Meanwhile, more than 1,700 restaurants, including Maxim's, Tao Heung, and some cha chaan teng chain outlets, offer up to 30 percent off for dine-in customers on National Day. Separately, various indoor and outdoor facilities under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, permanent and specialized exhibitions at the Science Museum, permanent exhibits at the Space Museum, several museums such as the Heritage Museum and Museum of History, as well as the Wetland Park, were also open to the public free of charge. **ATO Notes:** Local government efforts continue to spur domestic spending. However, some Hongkongers have commented that news on freebies and discounts are not fully advertise in time for residents to use.

## **Skating Rink, Urban Farm Among Galaxy's Plans for Lai Chi Vun Revitalization [[Macau Daily Times](#), Sep 29]**

Galaxy Macau is set to revitalize one of Macau's oldest districts, Lai Chi Vun, with new entertainment elements including a simulated ice-skating rink, innovated urban farming, a new-generation bookstore and café, as part of its pledge to the government to boost non-gaming offerings. In a press conference yesterday, organizers revealed that the plan would be conducted in two phases, with the first phase aimed to be concluded by the third quarter of 2024. According to the Cultural Affairs Bureau (IC), the site has been welcoming some 8,000 to 9,000 visitors per month. **ATO Notes:** In line with government recommendations, Galaxy is placing a lot of efforts to develop non-gaming projects in Macau, the project is targeted for completion in late 2024.

## **Macau Food Festival to Kick off November 17 [[Macau Daily Times](#), Sep 29]**

The 23rd Macau Food Festival will be held from November 17 to December 3, featuring 100 local and 25 international food stalls. In a press conference, the committee announced that there would be 25 catering merchants from Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, South Korea, and Taiwan that will participate in the festival. Last year, the theme of the festival was "Gastronomy in the Metaverse," accommodating over 100 food and beverage merchants and a wide range of dishes and delicacies. **ATO Notes:** ATO Hong Kong's fifth annual *Delicious USA 2023* restaurant campaign will be running during the month of November, the enthusiasm of restaurants in Macau has been unprecedented with 12 establishments signing up to run the campaign featuring new dishes highlighting U.S. food ingredients.

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## RETAIL

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### **Sino Group Sees Double-digit Growth in Footfall and Sales Over the National Day Long Weekend** [[The Standard](#), Oct 2]

Sino Group recorded a 20 percent surge in footfall and sales at its malls after a series of night activities were launched during the Mid-Autumn Festival and National Day long weekend. Foot traffic and business volume at Sino's shopping complexes are recorded to have increased 20 percent year-on-year. According to the director of asset management of Sino Group Bella Chhoa, the success in growing business is attributable to the activities that aimed to boost the night economy and the mainland tourists visiting Hong Kong during the long weekend. She added that the events not only brought the flow of people but also created a good mood that encouraged people to spend. Furthermore, she stated that several restaurants in Tsim Sha Tsui were fully booked on National Day night as the spectacle of the National Day fireworks display returned after a 5-year hiatus. **ATO Notes:** As previously reported, Sino Group (one of the leading property holdings with multiple shopping mall developments in Hong Kong) has responded to local government initiatives and set out night promotions and activities for Hong Kong residents and tourist to boost night traffic and increase domestic spending.

### **First Virtual Deep-Ocean Adventure Experience Comes to The City in 2025** [[The Standard](#), Oct 2]

The K11 Group and the U.S. technology enterprise Falcon's Beyond announced the establishment of a first-ever virtual deep-ocean adventure experience in Hong Kong to provide the public with an immersive virtual journey. The "Vquarium" will open in 2025 in 11 SKIES - the city's latest retail, dining and entertainment landmark near the airport – and expected to become one of the world-class and first-in-Hong Kong entertainment attractions. Utilizing dynamic simulators with special effects and Mixed Reality (MR) technology, it enhances interactive and immersive experiences for visitors of different ages. Following its debut in 11 SKIES, the Vquarium plans to expand to more locations across China in the following years. **ATO Notes:** This project responds to local and mainland tourists' demand for more experience-based activities (hiking, visiting museums, different forms of entertainment other than shopping). Its proximity to the airport is expected to facilitate access to incoming tourists.

### **The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department Holds Happy Hong Kong: National Day Celebration Carnival at Yuen Long FarmKet** [[HKSAR Press Release](#), Oct 1]

Financial Secretary, Paul Chan, together with Legislative Council Member Steven Ho; the Under Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Miss Diane Wong; the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation, Dr. Leung Siu-fai, and other guests officiated the opening ceremony of the Happy Hong Kong: National Day Celebration Carnival at Yuen Long FarmKet. The Carnival was organized by the

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Fish Marketing Organization, Vegetable Marketing Organization and Yuen Long FarmKet, and co-organized by the Federation of Hong Kong Agricultural Associations and the Federation of Vegetable Marketing Co-operative Societies. The Carnival is running for three days starting from yesterday (September 30 - October 2). More than 40 agricultural and fisheries stalls have been set up and members of the public can purchase a wide variety of local seasonal agricultural and fisheries products, as well as gourmet food and handicrafts. The Carnival also offers cooking demonstrations by renowned chefs, stage performances by youth organizations, booth games and fun exhibitions for members of the public to enjoy their National Day holiday. **ATO Notes:** AFCD is joining general government efforts in promoting Hong Kong. The local agricultural industry in Hong Kong is very small and the production value was only around \$177 million in 2021 covering all categories, including crop grow, aquaculture, fisheries, and livestock farming. Land availability is a major impediment to the city increasing agricultural production; the city imports 95 percent of its food needs.



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## TRADE

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### **Hong Kong Suspends Imports of Poultry Meat and Products from Jerauld County, South Dakota** [\[CFS Press Release, Oct 9\]](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced the suspension of imports from Jerauld County, South Dakota in the United States, in view of a notification from the World Organization for Animal Health (WOAH) about an outbreak of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza (AI) in the area. **ATO Notes:** Following last month's resumption of poultry meat and products from several U.S. counties previously banned as a result of reported cases of Avian Influenza, this month, this county in South Dakota adds to three additional counties in the State of New York currently banned from exporting to Hong Kong. Last year, U.S poultry exports to Hong Kong were valued at \$43 million, the value of exports has recovered significantly this year, following the resumption of imports over the last few months. From January to August, the total value already reached \$56 million, exceeding last full year's value. Conversely, the situation for U.S. eggs exports has not improved, during the same period U.S. egg exports declined 67 percent compared to last year.

### **Import of Poultry Meat and Products from Areas in South Africa and Denmark Suspended** [\[CFS Press Release, Oct 4\]](#)

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department announced the suspension of poultry meat and products from in Kgetlengrivier Local Municipality of North West Province, Emalahleni Local Municipality of Mpumalanga Province and Modimolle-Mookgophong

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Local Municipality of Limpopo Province in South Africa due to reported outbreaks of highly pathogenic H7N6 avian influenza and from in Guldborgsund Municipality in Denmark due to reports of highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza. A CFS spokesman said that Hong Kong has currently established a protocol with South Africa for the importation of poultry meat but not for poultry eggs. According to the Census and Statistics Department, no poultry meat was imported into Hong Kong from South Africa in the first six months of this year. Hong Kong imported about 530 tons of frozen poultry meat from Denmark in the first six months of this year. **ATO Notes:** Hong Kong has not imported poultry from South Africa since 2021. Conversely, Denmark was a top 13 poultry supplier to Hong Kong.

## **No Room for Hong Kong to Ease Japanese Seafood Ban: Tse Chin-wan [[The Standard, Oct 4](#)]**

There is no room for authorities to ease the ban on aquatic products originating from 10 Japanese prefectures and metropolises at this stage, environment minister Tse Chin-wan said, adding that Hong Kong is under no condition to make any adjustments if Japan doesn't pull from its discharge plan. When asked if authorities would step up support towards the catering sector, Tse said the government has spoken to the industry and traders are well prepared. Tse also noted that the clearance time for Japanese food will not be extended from the current three hours. Having waited for 14 hours for clearance leading the seafood to turn bad, as reported by certain importers, was an individual incident, Tse said. Tse then reminded importers to use the free of charge 24-hour freezers at the border points, saying authorities will deploy more manpower for radiation testing. **ATO Notes:** During the first eight months of 2023, Hong Kong imports of Japanese seafood grew 10 percent to \$331 million compared to the same period last year.

## **Food Safety Authorities Investigate Suspected Breaches to the Food Safety Order Involving Aquatic Products, Vegetable and Seaweed Products Imported from Japan [[CFS Press Release, Sep 29](#)]**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced that aquatic products, vegetable, and seaweed products from regulated metropolis/prefectures were found when the CFS inspected food imported from Japan. A spokesman for the CFS said, "During an inspection of the food labels of the concerned consignments of food imported from Japan, the CFS found one pack each of chestnut leaves and persimmon leaves from Fukushima, two packs of Japanese shiba shrimp suspected to have been manufactured in Tokyo, a box of sea urchin from Miyagi, as well as a pack of kombu processed in Tokyo and a pack of makizushi nori manufactured in Ibaraki, which are suspected of breaching the relevant Order." **ATO Notes:** In 2022, Hong Kong imports of Japanese sea urchin were valued at \$14 million, in the first eight months of 2023, this value increased 21 percent.

## **CFS Announces Food Safety Report for August [[HKSAR Press Release, Sep 29](#)]**

The Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department released the findings of its food safety report for August. The results of about 9,100 food samples tested were found to be satisfactory except for 12 unsatisfactory samples. About 1,900 food samples were collected for microbiological tests, and about 7,200 samples were taken for chemical and radiation level tests. The samples comprised about 4,100 samples of vegetables and fruit and their products; about 700 samples of cereals, grains, and their products; about 600 samples of meat and poultry and their products; about 1,600 samples of milk, milk products and frozen confections; about 800 samples of aquatic and related

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products; and about 1,300 samples of other food commodities (including beverages, bakery products and snacks). The 12 unsatisfactory samples comprised three prepackaged dried porcini samples, a prepackaged salted butter sample, a red crab sample and a potato sample with excessive metallic contaminant; two prepackaged date samples detected with preservatives exceeding the legal limit; a prepackaged date sample in breach of food labelling regulation; a prepackaged meal replacement product sample found to contain Salmonella; a prepackaged breakfast cereals sample detected with an antioxidant exceeding the legal limit and a prepackaged brown eggs sample detected with an excessive pesticide residue. **ATO Notes:** The monthly food safety report released by CFS indicated that the overall satisfaction rate for samples examined were excellent. Among the disqualified samples collected, none were identified as originating from the United States.

## **Customs Bust Six Cases of Boat Smuggling Worth About \$12.8 Million in August and September** **[[The Standard](#), Sep 29]**

Hong Kong Customs announced they had busted six smuggling cases through ocean and river trade vessels within two months, seizing products worth about \$12.8 million. The customs had been stepping up to combat smuggling through boats throughout August and September through operation 'Wave Breaker' after suspecting that criminals were using ocean-going and river trade vessels to smuggle goods and thus formulated strategies to combat related activities. Upon inspection, it was revealed that the six vessels were transporting seven tons of suspected scheduled shark fins, about three tons of frozen meat, over 500,000 pieces of electronic products, 240 pallets of electronic waste, and 2,000 bottles of table wine.

Hungry for more information about the Hong Kong and Macau markets?

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## **Attachments:**

No Attachments.