

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Government Disposes Shipment of Brazilian Ox Offals Citing Detection of COVID-19 on Packaging

Country: Hong Kong

Post: Hong Kong

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

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Report Highlights:

On April 6, the Hong Kong government announced that during precautionary testing at the point of import, the packaging sample of a Brazilian offal shipment tested positive for the COVID-19 virus. As a result, the government disposed of this product batch and prevented it from circulation in the market. Since mid-2020, local authorities have collected over 30,000 samples, and announced a total of four positive cases on shipments from Indonesia, Malaysia, Brazil, and Poland. This is the second incidence reported on Brazilian shipments.

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. For this precautionary testing exercise, the Hong Kong Center for Food Safety (CFS) does not allow shipments to be released before the test results are available, which generally take less than twenty-four hours except for cases with undetermined test results.

The latest detection was related to a shipment of frozen ox offal imported from Brazil. In a press release on April 6, 2022, the CFS reported that it collected three samples for testing from a batch of 19 cartons of frozen ox offal (total of around 410 kilograms) imported from Brazil by sea. Test results showed that one outer packaging sample tested positive for the virus. This batch of ox offal was stored in a warehouse pending the results and did not enter the market.

Following the confirmation of the positive test result, the CFS inspected the warehouse and asked the operator to conduct a thorough cleaning and disinfection. The CFS has ordered the importer of the shipment to dispose of the entire ox offal batch. In addition, the CFS indicated it will enhance sampling and testing of similar products.

Between mid-2020 and April 2022, the CFS has collected over 30,000 samples of foods and their packaging for testing of the COVID-19 virus. In addition to the case confirmed in April 2022, the CFS has identified three other cases: the pomfret fish and packaging samples from Indonesia announced last August, the cuttlefish slice and packaging samples from Malaysia announced last November, and the packaging samples of Brazilian beef and Polish pork skin announced this February were found to be positive. This is the second COVID-19 finding on product coming from Brazil.

The CFS pledged that it will continue the sampling of imported frozen foods and their packaging for testing. It is worth noting, that this recent finding was not as widely reported by local media as the previous cases.

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 was the second largest supplier, providing 20 percent.

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](#)

[Hong Kong Detects COVID-19 on Imports of Brazilian Frozen Beef and Polish Frozen Pork Skin](#)

Attachments:

No Attachments.