

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: April 13, 2022

Report Number: HK2022-0025

Report Name: Hong Kong Narrows the Ban on Imports of Small Mammals To Only Hamsters

Country: Hong Kong

Post: Hong Kong

Report Category: Agriculture in the Economy, Agriculture in the News, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety, WTO Notifications

Prepared By: Caroline Yuen

Approved By: Jennifer Clever

Report Highlights:

The Hong Kong government notified the World Trade Organization that it adjusted the ban on commercial imports of live rodents and lagomorphs to cover only commercial imports of live hamsters effective on April 1, 2022. In 2021, Hong Kong's global imports of small mammals grew 14 percent to \$2.5 million.

In January 2022, a pet shop saleswoman tested positive for the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus. The Hong Kong government (HKG) then tested samples from hamsters and other pet animals including chinchillas and rabbits in the shop. Over 11 samples collected from hamsters originated from Netherlands tested positive for the virus, while the test results of other animals were negative. In addition, some of the environmental swabs collected from the pet shop's warehouse also tested positive for the virus. Following the confirmation of this animal-to-human transmission of the COVID-19 virus in relation to hamsters, the HKG ordered the culling of 2,000 hamsters in Hong Kong, which were imported within the related timeframe. In addition, the HKG suspended the importation of all small mammals including hamsters effective January 18, 2022. (See GAIN report: [Hong Kong Suspends Imports of Small Mammals Amid Fears of COVID Transmission](#))

Recently the HKG, informed the World Trade Organization members via Notification G/SPS/N/HKG/47 that effective on April 1, 2022, the existing ban on commercial imports of live rodents and lagomorphs implemented between January 18, 2022 to March 31, 2022 will adjust to only cover the commercial importation of live hamsters. It is important to note that the ban does not apply to the importation of live hamsters for research purposes.

In 2021, the value of Hong Kong's global imports of small mammals (HS code 010619) grew 14 percent year on year to \$2.5 million. Outside the Asia region, the Netherlands is a significant supplier of small mammals to Hong Kong. While imports from the United States recorded triple digit growth in 2021, imports have not recovered to 2018 levels.

Attachments:

No Attachments.