

Shanghai issued the "Notice on Implementing Transit Inspection of High-risk Imported Cold Chain Foods"

2020.11.16

This city issued the "Notice on Implementing Transit Inspection of High-Risk Imported Cold Chain Foods", requiring all high-risk imported cold chain foods to be stored, processed and sold in this city to be checked for Covid-19 testing and disinfection certificates.

From 00:00 on November 16, 2020, high-risk imported cold chain foods should enter the transit inspection warehouse for covid-19 testing and outer packaging disinfection. The delivery should be made online (www.sipg.com.cn). When making an appointment, you must truthfully fill in the complete information of the owner, the customs declaration, the vehicle, the driver, and the flow of the goods as required, and sign the "Pandemic Prevention and Control Work Notification Commitment".

Notice on the implementation of transit inspection for high-risk imported cold chain foods:

1. Implement transit inspection management for high-risk imported cold chain foods that enter the Shanghai port and enter the city for storage, processing, and sales. Except for imported cold chain food that has been disinfected at the port. The transit inspection warehouse includes the public transit inspection warehouse designated by the government and the independent transit inspection warehouse (area) set up in the enterprise's own cold storage.

2. In order to ensure that imported cold chain foods are transferred from the port area to the transit inspection warehouse in an efficient and orderly manner, an appointment should be made online (website: www.sipg.com.cn). When making an appointment, you must truthfully fill in the complete information of the owner, the customs declaration, the vehicle, the driver, and the flow of the goods as required, and sign the "Pandemic Prevention and Control Work Notification Commitment".

3. Consignors of imported cold-chain food and storage and transportation enterprises shall implement the main responsibility of the enterprise for epidemic prevention and control. When picking up the goods, the "Entry Cargo Inspection and Quarantine Certificate" of imported cold chain food shall be checked. Imported cold chain food that has been marked "disinfected" can be directly shipped to the destination. Imported cold chain foods that are not marked as "disinfected" and the company does not have a transit inspection warehouse (area) must be transported to the transit inspection warehouse by transportation vehicles designated by the municipal transportation department, and Covid-19 testing and outer packaging disinfection shall be carried out uniformly.

4. High-risk imported cold chain foods that enter the transit inspection warehouse, after passing the Covid-19 test and disinfection of the outer packaging, the transit inspection warehouse informs the owner of the delivery, and issues the "Shanghai Imported Cold Chain Food Delivery Certificate".

This notice will be implemented from 00:00 on November 16, 2020.

Important press releases:

China to strengthen supervision of imported cold-chain foods

Updated: Nov 10,2020 07:17 AM Xinhua

BEIJING — China will take measures to realize full-chain, closed-loop, traceable management of imported cold-chain foods to minimize importation risks of COVID-19, according to a plan released by the State Council joint prevention and control mechanism against COVID-19 on Nov 9.

To effectively block the transmission of COVID-19 through imported cold-chain foods, complete disinfection of those products will be carried out while novel coronavirus tests will be conducted at the ports, according to the plan.

For imported cold-chain foods that test negative for the virus, the interiors of cold chain vans and the outer packaging of the foods should be disinfected before being transported. The foods that test positive for COVID-19 will be returned or destroyed.

The plan requires cold-chain logistics firms to strictly check customs clearance documents for imported cold-chain foods and disinfect vehicles, ships, and other transportation equipment. Workers who have direct contact with the foods should take protective measures.

Cold storages should keep records of imported cold-chain foods coming in and out, and the records should be kept for at least two years, read the plan.

Efforts should go into ensuring all the imported cold-chain foods entering the market are traceable, the plan said.

The plan also requires improving customs clearance efficiency of the ports to avoid overstocking and safeguarding the stability of the industrial and supply chain.

Source:

http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202011/10/content_WS5fa9ce21c6d0f7257693f5d5.html

Cold-chain food focus of virus prevention

Updated: Nov 16,2020 07:32 AM China Daily

China's customs agency has stepped up efforts to prevent the novel coronavirus from being imported via cold-chain food with actions including broader communication with authorities in more than 100 countries, following a recent increase in cases of the virus entering the country on imported cold-chain food.

The General Administration of Customs said it has been in touch with authorities in all 109 countries that export cold-chain food to China and has demanded they urge food exporters to strictly follow sanitation guidelines and prevent coronavirus contamination of food and packaging bound for China. The administration said it has also suspended imports of goods from all enterprises that have reported cluster infections among their employees. By Nov 11, 99 such companies from 20 countries had suspended exports to China, it said.

The administration has also intensified risk-monitoring of imported cold-chain food and increased sampling tests of higher-risk foods such as seafood.

Intensified efforts will continue, including extensive sterilization of imported cold-chain food, to minimize risks of outbreaks of COVID-19 due to importation of the virus, the administration said.

Detection of the novel coronavirus, which causes COVID-19, on imported cold-chain food or its packaging has been reported in more places across China recently, prompting authorities to issue

alerts about the need to handle such food properly to minimize the chances of infection. While the epidemic has been brought well under control domestically, importation of the virus poses a major risk.

In Xi'an, capital of Shaanxi province, two cold-storage facilities were sealed on Nov 15 after a package of pork imported from Argentina tested positive for the novel coronavirus. Eighteen people linked with the case have been put under quarantine for medical observation and have all tested negative for the virus, city authorities said.

Novel coronavirus has also been detected on imported cold-chain food or its packaging in some other places in the past few days, including Jinan, Shandong province, Wuhan, Hubei province, and Quanzhou, Fujian province.

Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, said in a report by China Central Television on Nov 15 that a major reason that contaminated imported cold-chain food is being detected in more places across China is the worsening pandemic overseas, which has increased the chances of importing cold-chain food contaminated with the virus.

Another reason is falling temperatures in the northern hemisphere that have helped the virus survive longer. Meanwhile, local authorities across China have intensified monitoring of cold-chain food, resulting in timely identification of contaminated goods, he said.

Contaminated imported cold-chain food was suspected to be the cause of a COVID-19 outbreak in Beijing in June, as the virus was detected on cutting boards in a local wholesale market that had been used to process imported salmon. No locally transmitted COVID-19 cases had been reported in the city for nearly two months before the outbreak.

In October, researchers from the China CDC isolated live novel coronavirus for the first time from a package containing imported cod while tracing a COVID-19 outbreak in Qingdao, Shandong province. The discovery confirmed that contact with packaging contaminated with the novel coronavirus can cause infection.

Source:

http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202011/16/content_WS5fb1baaac6d0f7257693fe07.html

China increases efforts to block COVID-19 through imported foods

Updated: Nov 16,2020 09:18 PM Xinhua

BEIJING — The Ministry of Transport has released a guideline to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 through imported cold-chain foods in road and water transportation.

It urged all companies, docks, and freight terminals involved in cold-chain logistics to protect their front line employees, stressing protective equipment distribution, temperature checks, and regular nucleic acid testing.

Stricter disinfection measures should apply to transportation, with transportation equipment for imported cold-chain foods, including vehicles, vessels, and containers to be disinfected regularly, according to the guideline.

The guideline also called for an information registration system to track and trace people, cargos, and vehicles more effectively.

More efforts should go into emergency handling, the guideline said, adding that immediate actions must follow to cut off the routes of transmission if any imported food or packaging test positive for coronavirus.

Risks of COVID-19 contamination through imported cold-chain foods are mounting in China. On Nov 15, a packaging sample of imported frozen aquatic products and one from imported frozen pork

were reported to be tested positive for COVID-19 in East China's Shandong province and Northwest China's Shaanxi province, respectively.

To minimize importation risks, related government departments of the country have rolled out measures to strengthen epidemic prevention and control.

The State Council joint prevention and control mechanism against COVID-19 has unveiled a plan to realize full-chain, closed-loop, traceable management of imported cold-chain foods. They vowed to conduct complete disinfection of those products, novel coronavirus tests at the ports, and ensure all imported cold-chain foods entering the market are traceable.

Also, Chinese customs have suspended the import of products of 99 cold-chain food manufacturers from 20 countries that reported cluster COVID-19 infections among employees, according to the General Administration of Customs.

Source:

http://english.www.gov.cn/statecouncil/ministries/202011/16/content_WS5fb27c38c6d0f72576940002.html

China expands its arsenal in COVID battle

Updated: Nov 19,2020 07:03 AM China Daily

Stringent monitoring of cold-chain food imports and the fine-tuning of lockdown and testing strategies are China's latest weapons in the battle against COVID-19 as the country braces for possible outbreaks this winter.

While local transmission of the novel coronavirus has been under control for months, public health experts in China have highlighted the risk of new outbreaks linked to the virus hitching a ride on imports of frozen foods.

As domestic life and production return to normal, experts have hailed local governments' efforts to replace blanket lockdowns and citywide tests with more targeted and economical measures to reduce disruption to socioeconomic development.

"A growing body of evidence shows that frozen seafood or meat products are likely to bring the virus from severely affected countries into China," said Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Wu made the comment last week in an article posted on the website of the Communist Party of China Central Commission for Discipline Inspection.

"The discovery has prompted customs officials to step up testing on imports, and prompted local market regulators and health authorities to tighten supervision over the cold-chain sector."

In an interview with China Newsweek last month, Wu said virus transmission risks from contaminated seafood imports are likely to be greater than those from incoming passengers.

Since June, at least three major outbreaks have been linked to frozen imports, said Feng Zijian, deputy director of the China CDC, during a recent interview.

That includes the Beijing outbreak in June with 335 confirmed cases, the outbreak in Dalian, Liaoning province, in late July with 92 confirmed cases and the outbreak in Qingdao, Shandong province, in October that resulted in 14 confirmed cases.

Excluding a major outbreak in Urumqi, Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region, that saw over 800 confirmed cases, the three outbreaks account for nearly 85 percent of domestic cases since June, according to the National Health Commission. The source of infections in Urumqi is still under investigation.

Concerns linked to cold-chain food imports are bound to rise as cargo shipments into China increase, according to Zhang Wenhong, head of the infectious disease department at Fudan University's Huashan Hospital in Shanghai.

"Land ports and international airports in China will need to cope with the risk," he said.

Wu said virus control in the cold-chain sector entails three layers of testing — samples of imported goods and their outer packaging, samples taken from vehicles and cold-storage facilities and testing of workers involved in handling such products.

The tests are being implemented regularly nationwide and have begun to pay off through timely alerts. CDC officials in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, said on Nov 10 that they managed to block and seal some cold-chain imports from entering the market after shipments from Argentina tested positive for the virus during a routine test.

Then, from Nov 13 to Nov 16, local governments in nine regions said they had detected the virus on cold-chain food imports or their packaging, resulting in the immediate shutdown of affected facilities and the sealing of contaminated products.

He Peng, a spokesman for the Tianjin Health Commission, said at a recent news conference that a local dockworker was confirmed to have contracted the virus after a routine test of frozen pork from Germany tested positive.

"We must adhere to the principle of fending off risks carried by both products and people, especially workers coming into contact with cold-chain food," he said. "Their health is the basis for blocking contaminated food products."

On Nov 9, the State Council released a guideline requiring thorough disinfection of cold-chain imports after collecting samples for testing and urging the establishment of tracking systems.

On Nov 16, the Ministry of Transport published another guideline urging all companies, docks and freight terminals involved in cold-chain logistics to protect their front-line employees by enforcing safety protocols, monitoring their temperatures and conducting nucleic acid testing. It also stressed the importance of the strict and regular disinfection of transportation equipment and vehicles.

Wu, from the CDC, said, "Instead of imposing a reckless and simple ban on all imported food, China has decided to integrate management of cold-chain products into regular disease control work and mitigate risks to the lowest possible level."

He said the State Council guideline is aimed at ensuring the safety of cold-chain food and safeguarding people's health while increasing the efficiency of customs clearance and securing the stability of the industry chain.

Similar efforts aimed at striking a balance between curbing the virus and continuing the pace of economic recovery are part of adjustments to the scope and duration of long-standing epidemic control measures.

Different lockdowns

Feng, the CDC deputy director, said community lockdowns imposed nowadays are "distinctly different" from those in Wuhan early this year.

"Lockdowns are more precise now, affecting smaller areas and having less impact on society, though the goal remains the same: to reduce population-mixing," he said.

When Tianjin detected three local infections among cold-chain workers this month, the city upgraded virus risk levels from low only to medium in three areas where the confirmed patients and several asymptomatic individuals worked and lived. Mass testing covered only residents in medium-risk areas and all cold-chain workers in the city.

Zhang Diyuan, a program developer in Tianjin's Xiqing district, about 100 kilometers from the affected cold-chain facilities, said the new cases did not affect his life at all.

"I'm in favor of such an accurate designation of risks," he said. "As a Tianjin resident, I see no need to expand lockdown areas."

When the Beijing government was dealing with the outbreak in June, the launch of a citywide testing campaign covering all 20 million residents of the capital was initially proposed, Wu said.

"The campaign was called off after screening 10 million because an additional 10 million tests would not detect any more cases and would pile on unnecessary costs," Wu told China Newsweek.

"Other cities should use the science-based and refined method. Large-scale tests should revolve around the origin of confirmed infections and be called off when no new cases can be found."

Zhang, from Shanghai, said during a forum last week that even though the virus continues its rampage worldwide and China has largely stamped out local transmission, there is no need to sever communication with the outside world.

"We should maintain a certain degree of international cargo and personnel exchange while properly managing risks stemming from imported cases," he said.

To reach the goal, Zhang underscored the importance of fever clinics being able to detect suspected cases and send alerts swiftly, as well as the ability of public health workers to track down close contacts.

Source:

http://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202011/19/content_WS5fb5a826c6d0f7257694021d.html