



AVA ISSUES RECALL ADVICE AFTER DETECTION OF LOW LEVELS OF MALACHITE GREEN RESIDUES IN EELS FROM CHINA

The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) has detected low levels of malachite green residues in samples of eels from China. Although there are no known or expected human health effects from consuming fish products with low levels of malachite green residues, AVA has ordered importers to conduct a recall from the market place as a precaution. Malachite green is not permitted for use in foodfish aquaculture.

Intensified checks on import of eels from China

2 Following recent reports on malachite green residues in eels from China, AVA took immediate steps to intensify our inspection and surveillance programme on imported eels and eel products. All eel imports from China would be subjected to a "hold and test" inspection regime, i.e., products can only be released after satisfactory testing results for malachite green residues. However, there have been no imports of eels from China since 17 August 2005 as China has suspended all exports and recalled all shipments of eels.

3 Future imports of eels and processed eel products from China will be required to have pre-export testing for freedom from malachite green. Import consignments will be further tested on arrival in Singapore for verification.

4 About 57% of Singapore's eel imports come from China. Besides China, Singapore also imports eels from Australia, Thailand, Japan, Germany, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

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Extending intensified surveillance to other fish and fish products

5 To ensure that all foodfish in Singapore is safe for consumption, AVA will extend the intensified surveillance programme for malachite green residues to cover eels from sources other than China as well as other aquacultured fish such as catfish, salmon and trout.

No cause for public alarm

6 While some animal studies show that malachite green can cause liver tumours in rats, there is no direct evidence of it affecting humans. AVA assures the public that there is no cause for alarm as short term exposure to low levels of malachite green is not a health risk to consumers. For malachite green to have any ill effects, a person will have to consume daily more than 5,000 pieces of 100g eel containing malachite green residues at the low level detected over a long duration.

7 Nevertheless, as a precaution, AVA advises consumers who have bought eel products of China origin to discard them or return them to the retailers. Consumers who have any queries can call AVA's hotline at 1800-226 2250.

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