



Woman fined \$8,400 for illegal import of meat products

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A woman was sentenced to a fine of \$8,400 in court yesterday for illegally importing meat products from China.

2 Earlier in August this year, AVA had received public feedback regarding the online sale of meat products, such as duck, beef and chicken, by a local seller in Singapore. Following the feedback, AVA officers posed as buyers to purchase meat products from the seller and seized 52.8 kg of assorted meat products from China from the seller's residence. Further investigations showed that the woman had been illegally importing and selling meat products from China, online since May 2014. AVA also worked with Singapore Customs to intercept and detain an incoming consignment imported by the woman, at the port in the same month. The detained consignment, which contained 85.68 kg of assorted meat products, will be destroyed.

3 AVA regulates the import of food, including meat and meat products, into Singapore for animal health and food safety reasons. Meat and meat products can only be imported from accredited establishments/farms in approved countries which comply with our bio-security requirements. For example, poultry can only be imported from countries which are free from bird flu. China is not an approved source for the import of meat, meat products, poultry and poultry products.

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4 Apart from food safety, AVA has to remain vigilant on the potential risk of the introduction of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) or bird flu into Singapore through illegal imports. Illegal imports which are not from accredited establishments or approved sources carry the risk of bird flu, which is a highly infectious viral disease of birds that can spread rapidly among poultry. Singapore is free from bird flu. However, the disease is endemic in the region. Bird flu outbreaks in other countries have led to massive deaths and culling of poultry and birds. Singapore has several poultry and bird farms which are put at risk from such illegal imports.

5 It is important that Singapore maintains its bird flu-free status for trade and public health reasons. We will continue to safeguard food safety and ensure animal health through our integrated food safety system, which includes strict import regulations and enforcement, and work closely with border control agencies to deter illegal import across borders. We would like to remind the public that meat and meat products can only be brought back from approved sources. The public should also be aware of the risks associated with consuming food items purchased online as it may not have undergone checks by AVA.

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