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MEDIA RELEASE

Two food importers and their directors fined for illegal import of fresh and processed produce

Two food importers, Honesty Fruit and Vegetables Wholesaler Pte Ltd and Fresh Choice Avenue Pte Ltd, were fined \$5,000 and \$7,000 respectively by the Court today for illegally importing fresh and processed produce for sale. Their Directors, Wong Chiew Fong and Chew Chai Sin, were both fined \$5,000 each for failing to prevent the offence from being committed.

1. Honesty Fruit and Vegetables Wholesaler Pte Ltd and Director, Wong Chiew Fong

2 On 8 June 2022, a truck carrying food produce consigned to Honesty Fruit and Vegetables Wholesaler Pte Ltd was stopped and referred for checks during a joint operation conducted by the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority (ICA) at Woodlands Checkpoint. The truck was then referred to SFA for follow-up inspection.

3 SFA's investigation found that the company illegally imported about 267kg of undeclared and under-declared fresh fruits and vegetables and about 319kg of undeclared and under-declared processed food in the consignments from Malaysia. All illegal consignments were seized.



Some of the illegally imported produce included round cabbage, xiao baicai, and cut garlic. (Photo: SFA)



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2. Fresh Choice Avenue Pte Ltd and Director, Chew Chai Sin

4 On 13 October 2022, a truck carrying food produce consigned to Fresh Choice Avenue Pte Ltd was stopped and referred for checks during a joint operation conducted by SFA and ICA at Woodlands Checkpoint. The truck was then referred to SFA for follow-up inspection.

5 SFA's investigation found that the company illegally imported approximately 337kg of undeclared and under-declared fresh fruits and vegetables and 273kg of undeclared processed food in the consignments from Malaysia. All illegal consignments were seized. The company had also previously been prosecuted for the illegal import of processed produce.



Some of the illegally imported produce include cut cabbage, cut brinjal, and long cabbage (Photo: SFA)

6 In Singapore, food imports must meet SFA's requirements. Fruits and vegetables can only be imported by licensed importers, and every consignment must be declared and accompanied with a valid import permit. Illegally imported vegetables are of unknown sources and can pose a food safety risk (e.g. if unregulated or high level of pesticides are used). The long-term ingestion of excessive pesticide residues through the consumption of vegetables that have been subjected to pesticide abuse could lead to adverse health effects.



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7 Offenders who illegally import fresh fruits and vegetables shall be liable on conviction to a maximum fine of \$10,000 and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years. Offenders who illegally import processed fruits and vegetables shall be liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding \$1,000 and in the case of a subsequent conviction, to a fine not exceeding \$2,000.

8 Safeguarding Singapore's borders remains a top priority for ICA. ICA will continue to conduct security checks to detect and deter illegal importation attempts so as to keep Singapore safe. SFA will continue to safeguard food safety 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 our borders.

Issued by the Singapore Food Agency and the Immigration & Checkpoints Authority

10 May 2023