

SFA's Response to the Suspension of Tiong Bahru Tian Bo Shui Kueh

Under the Singapore Food Regulations, the use of benzoic acid and sorbic acid are not allowed in Kueh products, except for its filling. If used in filling, it must not exceed the maximum permissible limits of 1,000ppm.

On 12 April 2022, SFA corresponded with Tiong Bahru Tian Bo Shui Kueh (TBTBSK) which had sought information on whether sorbic acid is allowed. SFA informed TBTBSK that sorbic acid is allowed in Kueh products, up to the maximum permissible limits of 1,000ppm. This was incorrect as sorbic acid is only permitted in kueh filling but not kueh. TBTBSK was informed on 20 April of the correct legal requirements.

As part of SFA's on-going enforcement efforts, an inspection was conducted on TBTBSK on 19 Apr 2022. Samples of Chwee Kueh, 9 Layer Kueh and Tapioca Kueh were taken for laboratory testing. Notwithstanding the miscommunication by SFA on the permitted use of sorbic acid in kueh products, we found 2 products (9 Layer Kueh and Tapioca Kueh) to contain high levels of sorbic acid above the limit of 1,000 ppm. As these were not in compliance with food safety requirements, and after investigations, SFA suspended on 26 July the production, distribution and sale of the affected products from TBTBSK.

On 27 July TBTBSK provided test results which were conducted by a third party accredited lab. The results showed that their current production is free from sorbic acid. Based on the results given, SFA lifted the suspension of TBTBSK as adequate measures have since been put in place, in compliance to the Singapore Food Regulations.

SFA has since revoked the suspension order. TBTBSK is now allowed to resume with its production, distribution and sale of the 3 kueh products.

We regret the miscommunication to TBTBSK that had given them the wrong impression that up to 1,000ppm of sorbic acid was permitted in the production of their kueh products. Moving forward, SFA will review internal procedures to ensure that food safety requirements are communicated fully and accurately to food manufacturers.

Issued by SFA

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