

**SFA's statement on testing of ethylene oxide in food**

There have been recent recalls of food products such as ice cream, due to the presence of ethylene oxide (EO).

EO can be used to fumigate agricultural products to prevent microbial contamination. Under the Singapore Food Regulations, EO is allowed to be used in the sterilization of spices. The Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) of EO in spices should not exceed 50mg/kg (50ppm).

Vanilla (flavouring) and locust gum (thickener and stabilizer) are agricultural products which may be used in very small quantities (<1%) in the production of ice cream. Traces of EO in fumigated locust gum and vanilla pods may carry into the finished ice cream products. The consumption of such ice cream products with trace amounts of EO do not present any health risk, as it is not a food product that is consumed by individuals regularly and in significant quantities. Nonetheless, SFA has taken a precautionary approach in recalling food products detected with EO that have been recalled by some overseas regulators.

SFA conducts regular reviews of our food standards based on the latest scientific assessments and taking into account international developments. As part of this process, SFA has started a review of the permitted level of EO in food products sold in Singapore.

SFA is currently conducting a proactive sampling and testing of Haagen-Dazs products and other similar products in Singapore. There has been no detection of EO in ice cream products sampled thus far. Should EO be detected beyond trace levels, SFA will initiate recalls of the affected products as a precautionary measure.

#foodsafety

**Issued by SFA**

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