

Replies

Food safety • Science-based and risk management approach taken

We refer to Ms Tan Saw Bin's letter, "Have certified labels for inspected products" (Nov 15).

Food can potentially be contaminated anywhere along the supply chain, from the time it is produced to the time it is consumed. It is not practical to inspect or label all food in the market.

Similar to what the food safety authorities around the world do, the Singapore Food Agency (SFA) adopts a science-based and risk management approach to food safety. This means that food that is more susceptible to food-borne diseases is subjected to more stringent checks.

SFA's food safety regime includes accreditation of sources of high-risk food, post-import sampling, inspection and testing. Both locally produced and imported food must meet SFA's food safety requirements. Products that do not meet safety standards will not be allowed for sale.

When a breach in food safety is detected, SFA will take measures to mitigate risks to consumers, such as recalling the affected products immediately.

SFA also works with other international regulatory agencies and conducts its own horizon scanning to keep abreast with developments that can have an impact on the safety of food sold in Singapore.

However, we need the combined efforts of the Government, the food industry and the consumer to ensure food safety.

While SFA regulates the food industry to ensure that it maintains high food safety standards that comply with our stringent requirements, the industry must also adopt good agricultural and manufacturing practices to ensure that its products are safe for consumption.

Consumers, too, can play a role by making informed decisions when making food purchases and adopting good food safety practices. Consumers can visit SFA's website for tips on safe food selection, handling and storing practices.

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Food safety • Have certified labels for inspected products

I refer to the Singapore Food Agency's (SFA) recent issuing of a recall of three products from Feng He Garden brand that exceed authorised levels of preservatives (Feng He Garden brand sauce and paste products recalled as preservatives exceed permitted levels: SFA, Nov 6).

I am disappointed and shocked, as I have been using these products in my family's meals for several years. They are not new products.

I believed that every food product sold here is checked by SFA, and is safe for consumption. SFA's recent announcement makes me wonder if there are other types of food sold here that may not be safe for consumption.

The SFA website states that not every food item in the market can be inspected and tested.

I suggest having labels on food packaging to indicate that the product has been inspected and certified safe by SFA, so consumers can opt to buy only certified products.

Tan Saw Bin