

SCIO briefing on China's import and export performance of 2020

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Red Star News:

Facing the current severe global epidemic situation, what measures has China Customs taken to prevent the virus from being imported via cold chain food products? How has the effect been so far? Thank you.

Li Kuiwen:

I want to add that the latest relevant data we just released has been published on the GACC website simultaneously. We wish to share it with you all.

Thank you for your question. The GACC has resolutely implemented General Secretary Xi Jinping's important instructions on inspection and quarantine of imported cold chain food. Acting strictly in accordance with the general arrangements of the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of the State Council, customs has tightened inspections of imported frozen food products to prevent the spread of COVID-19 via cold chains. We have mainly taken measures in four aspects:

First, we have strengthened source management. We have enhanced communication and consultation with the relevant administrations of exporting countries, and required them to supervise the exporting of food to China according to regulatory guidelines released by the FAO and the WHO. They must see to it that food exporters strictly implement the guidelines for food companies by the FAO and the WHO, so as to ensure their exports and packaging are not contaminated by the virus at all levels of procedure, including production, processing, storage, and transportation. We have also informed the exporting countries' administrations of the two guidelines stipulated by China's National Health Commission, namely *Technical Guideline for COVID-19 Prevention and Control in Cold Chain Food Production and Operation* and *Technical Guideline for the Prevention, Control and Disinfection of COVID-19 in Cold Chain Food Production and Operation Processes*. We have urged and kept track of those enterprises exporting food to China to implement the two technical guidelines, and taken preventive and control measures in time. Currently, we have suspended imports from 124 cold chain food companies in 21 countries whose employees have been infected with COVID-19. Among them, 107 voluntarily suspended their exports to China after the epidemic outbreak.

Second, we have reinforced risk monitoring procedures for the virus in imported cold chain food. We have conducted nucleic acid sample testing of imported cold chain food, especially imported

seafood. By Jan.13, customs across China have tested a total of 1,295,692 samples, with 47 positive results.

Third, we have implemented emergent preventive measures after finding positive samples. The GACC will temporarily stop import declarations of any overseas food production enterprises found to have positive samples for one to four weeks. We have now adopted such emergent preventive measures against 39 overseas food production and operation facilities.

Fourth, we have conducted preventive disinfection work at ports across China. In accordance with the work plan on preventive and thorough disinfection of imported cold chain food released by the Joint Prevention and Control Mechanism of the State Council, we have carried out stringent disinfection of cold-chain food imports at ports of entry, and intensified cooperation with relevant departments to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 through imported cold-chain food. As of Jan. 13, ports across the country have disinfected 13,170,000 outer packages of imported cold chain food for prevention purposes.