

消費者委員會 CONSUMER COUNCIL

# Press Release

## Consumers to stay alert to malpractices on sale of popular Chinese herbal medicine Cordyceps

Consumers are again alerted to malpractices in the sale of the Chinese herbal medicine *Cordyceps* which is highly favoured by Chinese for its nourishment in soup making.

Because of its popular demand and high price (some \$300 per tael depending on the quality), the sale of *Cordyceps* has been fraught with malpractices in the past. In this June issue of CHOICE, two most recent complaints brought to the notice of the Consumer Council are highlighted:



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A rod-like adulterant was found inserted into the body of the herb, thus increasing the weight. This case was investigated by the Customs and Excise Department. It was found that in addition to selling product of short weight, the trader was found to have used an inaccurate scale in contravention of the Metrication Ordinance. The shop was found guilty and fined \$5,000.



# A prepacked *Cordyceps* was suspected to contain imitations of the herbal medicine, which was subsequently confirmed by the Government Laboratory. Out of the 10.7g examined, 9.6g were found to be counterfeit. The case was referred to the Customs and Excise Department for investigation of possible offence under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance.



The report offers this simple do-it-yourself method to identify the genuine from the fake. The genuine *Cordyceps* inflates only slightly and maintains the same physical characteristics when immersed in water: a body divided by lateral indentions with 4 pairs of legs.

Consumers are advised to purchase expensive Chinese herbal medicine such as *Cordyceps*, from shops with good reputation or purchase only those that are not tied in bundles in order to lower the risk of buying any adulterated product.

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