

Mainland Wheat Flour and Rice Flour:
Registration Arrangement for Local Importers

To ensure stability of supplies and prices in the domestic market, the Mainland of China has implemented export administration measures for cereals and grain flour, including wheat flour and rice flour, since early 2008. Following consultation with the Mainland authorities, we understand that the Mainland will maintain export administration on wheat flour and rice flour in 2012. The Mainland will also continue to require that the relevant exports should be supplied for local consumption in Hong Kong only and should not be re-exported. The Ministry of Commerce of the Mainland will soon announce details of the export quota measures on wheat flour and rice flour for Hong Kong in 2012.

2. To complement the relevant export quota measures of the Mainland, the Trade and Industry Department of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) (hereafter referred to as “the Department”) will continue to implement a corresponding registration arrangement for local importers of cereals and grain flour from the Mainland. All local enterprises intending to import wheat flour and rice flour from the Mainland (product list at **Annex I**) should apply to the Department for registration as an Importer of Mainland Cereals and Grain Flour (hereafter referred to as “Registered Importer”). In accordance with the agreement between the HKSAR Government and the Mainland authorities, Mainland enterprises allocated with the export quotas for supply to Hong Kong shall present the contracts signed with the Registered Importers of Hong Kong or related proofs in applying to the Mainland authorities for export licences.

3. Transactions between the Registered Importers of Hong Kong and the export enterprises of the Mainland are commercial activities. Under the registration arrangement, there is no guarantee that a Registered Importer will obtain any quantity of cereals and grain flour at any price from the Mainland enterprises.

Registration Conditions

4. Applicants should meet the following conditions:
 - (i) carry on a business registered in Hong Kong under the Business Registration Ordinance (Cap 310) ; and
 - (ii) have engaged in the import business of wheat flour and rice flour from the Mainland during 2007 – 2011.

Application Procedures

5. Applicants should complete the application form at **Annex II** and submit it together with the required supporting documents to the Department in person. Where necessary, the Department may request the applicant to provide additional information and supporting documents. The Department will inform the applicants of the results of their applications **within 4 working days** of the receipt of the duly completed application accompanied by all necessary supporting documents.

Registration Certificate and Validity Period

6. Upon verification by the Department, an applicant who meets the registration conditions will be issued with a Certificate to confirm its Registered Importer status. The Department will promulgate a Register of all Registered Importers through its departmental website (<http://www.tid.gov.hk>). The Certificate is valid for a maximum period of one year (until 31 December of every year).

Obligations and Undertaking

7. Registered Importers should make use of the form provided by the Department and report the monthly quantities of wheat flour and rice flour imported from the Mainland. They should report on or before the 15th day of every month the import quantities of the preceding month. They should also give consent that the HKSAR Government may disclose the relevant information to the Mainland authorities. Such information will only be used for purposes in relation to the Mainland's export administration measures and the registration arrangement for local importers.

8. A Registered Importer should also undertake:
- (i) that all the wheat flour and rice flour imported from the Mainland shall not be re-exported;
 - (ii) to maintain accurate and up-to-date records of purchase, storage and sales. If wheat flour and rice flour are imported from multiple places of origin, stock records should be kept properly to ensure clear differentiation of all the wheat flour and rice flour imported from the Mainland;
 - (iii) to agree, under reasonable circumstances, to provide relevant officers of the HKSAR Government with information relating to (ii) and to give consent that the HKSAR Government may disclose the relevant information to the Mainland authorities. Such information will only be used for purposes in relation to the Mainland's export administration measures for cereals and grain flour and the registration arrangement for local importers;
 - (iv) to permit relevant officers of the HKSAR Government, under reasonable circumstances, to enter its business and storage premises for the purpose of inspection and verification of information relating to (ii); and
 - (v) to take all reasonable and practicable measures in ensuring that the wheat flour and rice flour imported from the Mainland are supplied to Hong Kong customers for local consumption only.

9 If a Registered Importer breaches any of the above undertakings and cannot provide reasonable explanations in writing, the Department may remove it from the Register and revoke the Certificate(s) issued. The Department will update the Register of Registered Importers accordingly.

Renewal Arrangement

10. Existing Registered Importers remaining in conformity with the above-mentioned registration conditions may, starting from today and not later than 29 February 2012, apply for renewal of registration instead of submitting a new application for registration. Renewed registration will be valid for a maximum period of one year (until 31 December of every year). Renewed Registered Importers will be issued with a Certificate with a new validity period. They should continue to abide by the declaration and undertaking of Registered Importers.

11. Registered Importers intending to apply for a renewed registration valid up to the end of 2012 should complete the renewal application form at **Annex III** and submit it together with the required supporting documents to the Department on or before 29 February 2012. The Department will inform the applicants of the results of their applications **within 4 working days** of the receipt of the duly completed application accompanied by all necessary supporting documents. To facilitate the trade, the Department will notify individual Registered Importers before the expiry of their registration and provide them with renewal application form.

Submission of Application

12. Applicants should submit the application form together with the supporting documents to the Department in person (address: Customer Service Centre, 2/F, Trade and Industry Department Tower, 700 Nathan Road, Mongkok, Kowloon).

Review

13. The Department will review the registration arrangement and the implementation details from time to time in light of the latest development of the Mainland's administration measures on cereals and grain flour, and will inform the trade of any revision in advance.

Enquiry

14. For any questions, please visit the Department's website (<http://www.tid.gov.hk>) or contact:

Tel : 2398 5733
Fax : 2309 7744
E-mail : enquiry@tid.gov.hk

Trade and Industry Department
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
21 December 2011

Annexes

- Annex I Categories of Wheat Flour and Rice Flour Subject to the Mainland's Export Quota Administration
- Annex II Mainland Wheat Flour and Rice Flour: Application Form for Registration of Local Importer
- Annex III Mainland Wheat Flour and Rice Flour: Renewal Application Form for Registered Importer