

# DRIED PLUMS AND PRUNES CONTAINING EXCESSIVE LEAD BANNED



*Bernama - Thursday, October 8*

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- The government today banned 16 brands of dried fruits imported from China, Taiwan and several other Asian countries that contained lead above permitted levels.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai said the dried fruits, among them dried plums and prunes, contained high lead content of between 0.11 and 30.3 parts per million (ppm) or milligram (mg)/kilogramme (kg).

He said the level of lead set was two ppm or mg/kg under Regulation 38 of the Food Regulations 1985 and if the content exceeded that level action would be taken.

"If charged under Section 13(1) of the Food Act 1983 one can be fined not more than RM100,000 or jailed for not more than 10 years or both," he told reporters after officiating the Health Ministry Management Conference 2009 here today.

Liow said this when asked to comment on a U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) report on their website <http://www.fda.gov> titled "Consumers Warned Not to Eat Certain Imported Dried Plums" on Oct 1.

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LIOW-DRIED 2 KUALA LUMPUR

Liow said the products concerned were The Original Chinese Candy, Dried Plums with Pickle and Lemon, Saladitos Con Pepino Y Limon, Saladitos 6 Count, Saladitos Salted Prunes, Saladitos Chinese Candy, Its Fruit Chinese Style Dried Prune and Salted Plum Suckers.

The other products were Salados Salted dried plums, 7 Salted Plums, Preserved Liquefied Prune, Preserved Plums:Preserved Salted Prunes, Preserved Plums:Preserved Red Prunes, Preserved Fruit Pitted Prunes, Chan Pui Mui Preserved Plum and Ka Po Preserved Plum.

Liow said his ministry will continue to monitor to ensure the products were not in the local market.

He said the ministry will also monitor the country's entry points by putting inspection at Level Five (Detain, Test and Release) in the Food Safety Information System of Malaysia (FoSIM) for the products concerned.

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Lead is a pollutant in food that can cause health problems in the long run by accumulation.

Liow said the problems that may occur were nervous system disorders and distortion to brain development, especially in children.

"In that regard, the ministry advises consumers not to buy these products and sellers are advised to report to the nearest district health office or the state health department if they have stock," he said.

Liow said importers or agents who import the products concerned were asked to stop distribution and inform the nearest health or district office for further action.

-- BERNAMA

HAZ MOK PST