

An Anonymous Complaint Against Regional Services Department

"Food Hygiene"

An anonymous complainant wrote to COMAC alleging the placing of pig carcasses on dirty ground surface and sale of unstamped pork in the fresh provision shops in an NT housing estate market as well as the use of unwholesome water by fish stall operators for keeping live fish and shell fish in an NT district. As the alleged malpractice could lead to contamination of meat and food poisoning, COMAC invited the Regional Services Department (RSD) to look into the complaint.

RSD conducted a series of inspections and confirmed the alleged improper handling of pig carcasses. The licensees of all the fresh provision shops were summonsed for exposing the meat to risk of contamination. They were also warned to stop such malpractice or risk further prosecution.

As regards the alleged sale of unstamped pork, RSD informed that all the licensed fresh provision shops selling pork were subject to routine inspections, regular scoutings and joint police blitz operations to eliminate the sale of unstamped pork. Enforcement actions would be taken against offenders. Following the cancellation of the licence of an offender in mid 1994, no further sale of unstamped pork was detected in the market.

As regards the source of water supply for keeping live fish, RSD reported that the fish stall operators had taken heed of the health advice given by the Department and had subsequently used water from nearby artesian wells for keeping fish. Water samples taken in recent months from their fish tanks were found to be satisfactory. The Department had pledged continued close surveillance on the operations of all the fresh provision shops and fish stalls.

In this case, COMAC was satisfied with the report made by the Department and that the complaint though made anonymously, was appropriately acted upon.