

MIN19-0203

26 MAR 2019

Chris

fyi-request-9552-65be1995@requests.fyi.org.nz

Dear Chris

Thank you for your correspondence of 9 February enquiring about the authenticity of rice for sale in New Zealand.

Your correspondence has been referred to the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) by Hon Damien O'Connor for response as this is an operational matter managed by my Directorate.

There are strict rules in place covering the import, production and sale of food in New Zealand to ensure that consumers can have confidence that the food they purchase is safe and suitable. In addition consumers can report any concerns about food to MPI for follow up.

In 2017, MPI received a number of enquiries about possible fake or artificial plastic rice being sold in New Zealand. These appeared to be generated by online discussions about reports of "plastic rice" from different countries. At the time, MPI undertook testing on a number of rice samples alleged to be artificial. Testing confirmed that the samples were rice (not plastic) and at the time MPI concluded there was no evidence of adulteration. The reason for the taste or texture of the rice people experience is likely to have been caused by several factors including the age, variety, growth and storage conditions of the rice.

The claims of artificial plastic rice continue to circulate online. Several countries have investigated the reports and have confirmed the claims are not true. In addition, the World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that no claims have been substantiated.

I trust this has addressed your concerns. Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely



Stephanie Rowe
Director Compliance Services