

Market Surveillance - Trongsa and Bumthang (April 6-17, 2023)

A. Background

The major markets in Trongsa and Bumthang Dzongkhags were inspected over a period of 12 days starting April 6, 2023; with the support of the Regional Office of Economic Affairs(MoEA), Trongsa, Bhutan Food and Drug Authority (BFDA) and Department of Forestry & Park Services (DOFPS) office based in Bumthang.

The primary objectives of the inspection is to ensure compliance by the business entities with the market regulatory requirements; which are enshrined in the CPA,2012 and CPRR,2015, and to enhance fair trade practices in the market.

The minimum regulatory requirements are as follows:

- All products are adequately labeled and there is a clear and prominent display of price.
- Issuance of money receipts/purchase receipts by the business entity,
- Display of precise weights/measure of the products,
- All weighing balance and measuring devices are calibrated and accurate,
- To ensure all POL products are unadulterated and all pumps are calibrated,
- All PROs meet the minimum safety standards,
- Compliance to fixed selling prices if and when competent Government Agency fixes prices of any goods or services.

B. Coverage

A total of 71 businesses in Trongsa and 111 businesses in Bumthang were covered (Tab. I).

Table I: Number of businesses inspected by type

Type of Business	Trongsa	Bumthang
	Trongsa Town, Sherabling, Langthel, Drakten, Tangsibji	Gaytsa, Chumey, Zurney,Nangar, Chamkhar Town, Dhur,Tang, Ura
Grocery	36	66
Automobile Workshops	5	4
Meat Shop	2	4
Sawmill/WBI	2	5
PRO/ LPG outlets	2	1
Hardware	2	3
Bakery	2	0
Garment shop	5	4
Pharmacy	0	1
Restaurant	15	23
Total	71	111

C. Finding and Observations

- 59.3 percent of all business entities have pre-printed cash memo/ purchase receipts that are provided upon consumers' request.
- From the 102 grocery shops and 2 bakeries, 67.3 percent of business entities does not meet the minimum product labeling requirements. The problem of inadequate labeling was common in locally produced dairy products and re-packed products such as dal, dried fish, zaw (roasted puff rice), dried mushroom, chana (gram) and local rice, pickles, popcorn and dry chillies.
- 35.9 percent of all businesses were using calibrated weighing balances and measuring devices. There was 100 percent compliance by meat shops and hardware shops, while compliance by groceries was very low at 22.2%. Compliance by PROs and LPG outlets was 66.6%.
- Only 35.7 % of businesses in Trongsa and Bumthang display of prices of goods and/or the services provided.
- Of the 9 automobile workshops, 5 were found to be selling spare parts without a valid business license.
- Stocking and sale of goods past their expiration date was common. Noodles, biscuits, soft drinks and chips past their expiration date were found for sale in 13 groceries and 3 restaurants in Trongsa and in 22 groceries and 8 restaurants in Bumthang.
- No incidents of adulteration were observed in fuel in the 3 PROs but fuel dispensed by the Petroleum Retail Outlet based in Dangdung, Trongsa was found to be dispensing less HSD from two nozzles (A1 & B1) by 2 to 3 ml for every 5 L dispensed. Moreover, the Bhutan Standards Bureau (BS) verification certificate records for 2021 shows that nozzle pumps have failed calibration and the Manager failed to show evidence of rectification measures taken to correct the dispensing errors.
- LPG cylinders stocked in all the outlets were not stored in accordance with the SOP on Safe Handling and Storage of LPG 2022. Both the empty and filled LPG were stored in depot without segregation at outlets at Trongsa and Bumthang, while in Dangdung LPG depot, all cylinders, filled or empty were kept in open space.
- The team found 84 expired LPG cylinders in Dangdung LPG Depot. Furthermore, the depot had not installed a weighing device to weigh the cylinders.
- From a total of 7 sawmills in Trongsa and Bumthang, 5 were in adherence to the NRPC rate while 2 were selling beyond the NRPC rate. Further, the measuring tape used was not calibrated by BSB in all of the sawmills.
- Most of the sawmills were burning sawdust and off-cuts openly and none of the sawmills had proper firefighting equipment's installed. Such practice is not only risky but may also be detrimental to the environment.

D. Actions taken/ to be taken

- The Bhutan Standard Bureau (BSB) will be asked to calibrate weighing devices of all businesses using invalid devices.
- RoEA, Trongsa will be asked to take appropriate action against businesses operating without a valid business license.

- All expired products were detained in coordination with BFDA, and a total of Nu.13,076 was imposed on 16 violators in Trongsa Dzongkhag and Nu.16,941 from 28 violators in Bumthang Dzongkhags.
- Conduct a thorough investigation of the non-compliant saw-mills by CCAA jointly with the DOFPS for appropriate action.
- Direct the ROEA, Trongsa to take administrative actions against LPG Depot, Dangdung for failure to comply with the SOP on Safe Handling and Storage of LPG, 2022
- Direct the ROEA, Trongsa to further investigate the issue of inaccurate dispensation of HSD despite earlier observation by BSB.
- Intimate Department of Environment & Climate Change (DECC) and/or DoFPS, MoENR on the observation of samwill practice of burning sawdust and off-cuts.

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