

Market Monitoring and Inspection Report

Gasa, Punakha, and Wangdue Dzongkhags (September 8 – 27, 2025)

1. Background

To safeguard consumer rights and interests, the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA) coordinated consecutive market surveillance, monitoring, and inspection activities across major marketplaces in Gasa, Punakha and Wangduephodrang Dzongkhags from 8 to 27 September 2025.

The inspections served as a proactive mechanism to ensure compliance with the CPA, 2012 and its associated regulations. The surveillance and monitoring process was guided by the following compliance factors:

- Issuance of Purchase Receipts – ensuring transparency and proof of transactions.
- Display of Selling Prices – preventing overcharging and ensuring price clarity.
- Product Labelling – verifying adequate labelling on goods displayed for sale.
- Use of Calibrated Weighing and Measuring Devices – ensuring accuracy in quantity / volume

2. Coverage

The inspection team covered a total of 507 business establishments across the three Dzongkhags. A total of nine Fuel Retail Outlets (FROs) were also inspected. Most were already calibrated and verified by the Bhutan Standards Bureau (BSB), with validity until August 2026. However, two outlets – one in Gasa and one in Baychu (Wangduephodrang) – had technical defects that prevented calibration.

Table 1: Coverage of business by Dzongkhag

Dzongkhag	Number of other business establishments	Number of FROs
Gasa	92	2
Punakha	203	4
Wangduephodrang	212	3
Total	507	9

Table 2: FROs with defunct equipment

	Dzongkhag	FRO Retail Outlet	Defect Identified
1	Gasa	Bhutan Oil Distributor	Fuel dispensing error (excess release)
2	Wangdue (Baychu)	Damchen Petroleum Distributor Limited	Fuel nozzle pipe leakage

3. Findings and Observations

The inspections revealed encouraging levels of compliance, though some areas required corrective measures.

Fuel Retail Outlets (FROs):

All nine FROs were calibrated and certified by BSB, except the two pumps deemed unsuitable for commercial use. These were sealed barring commercial use jointly by the ROICE, Thimphu and a BSB official.

Issuance of Receipts:

90.1% of business entities provided purchase receipts when requested. The remaining lacked receipts, mainly because they were newly established or had recently changed license ownership.

Price Display:

94.9% of businesses displayed prices prominently. About 5% did not, particularly in Gasa, Serigang, and Gangtey, where shopkeepers were mostly uneducated farmers. Large retailers with computerized billing were advised to ensure price visibility for consumers.

Product Labelling and Expired Goods:

No expired goods were detected. However, large retailers were cautioned against distributing near-expiry goods to smaller retail shops in remote areas such as Gasa, Gangtey and Serigang.

Weighing & Measuring Devices:

All weighing balances were calibrated except for 17 shops in Wangduephodrang. These were later directed to BSB for immediate calibration.

Cement Weights:

Underweight bags of cement (Dragon Cement) were found in the store of the only cement agent in Wangduephodrang. Samples taken from the store as per sampling protocol prescribed by the BSB indicated failure to meet minimum standards.

4. Actions Taken

- FROs were instructed to repair or replace the defective nozzles within two weeks and start commercial use only after certification by the BSB.
- Businesses with uncalibrated weighing machines were directed to refrain from use and directed to get calibrated and certified by BSB. Follow-up confirmed that all affected weighing devices were calibrated.
- The cement agent was ordered to immediately stop selling underweight cement bags and rectify the discrepancies or sell them at adjusted costs (depending on the actual weight).
- A total of 67 business entities that were not fully compliant were directed to rectify within a stipulated time and some were brought into compliance during the inspection period itself.

5. Recommendations

Based on the surveillance findings, the following recommendations are made to strengthen consumer protection and improve market compliance:

- Sustain Regular Inspections – Continue unannounced inspections to ensure traders maintain compliance and deter recurrence of violations.

- Enhance Trader Awareness – Provide targeted awareness programs for rural shopkeepers, particularly in remote areas where literacy challenges limit compliance with display and labelling requirements.
- Strengthen Monitoring of Cement Agents – Institute stricter oversight of cement distributors to prevent underweight packaging from reaching consumers.
- Mandatory Calibration Enforcement – Establish clear penalties for businesses that fail to calibrate weighing and measuring devices on time.
- Near-Expiry Goods Monitoring – Require retailers to maintain proper stock management systems to prevent near-expiry or expired products from being diverted to remote markets.

6. Conclusion

The inspections demonstrated that most businesses in Gasa, Punakha and Wangduephodrang Dzongkhags comply with the CPA, 2012 and Consumer Protection Rules and Regulations 2015, reflecting increasing trader awareness and consumer trust. This positive trend highlights the effectiveness of CCAA's monitoring and education initiatives.

However, sustaining these improvements requires regular surveillance, stricter enforcement, and enhanced trader education. Such measures will safeguard consumer interests, promote fair trade, and strengthen transparency in Bhutan's markets.

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