

Food and Health Bureau

18/F East Wing, Central Government Offices,

2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

Re: Amendments to Import and Export (general) Regulations (Cap. 60 Sub. Leg A)

Dear Sir/Madam,

My company supplies toiletries, coffee and skin-care products to drugstores, medical halls and pharmacies throughout Hong Kong. I am intimately familiar with the so called shortage of infant formula situation.

The current shortage of powdered infant formula milk in Hong Kong is only affecting the two most popular brands, specifically: Mead Johnson's Enfa series and Friesland's Friso series.

These two companies have always employed the strategy of withholding stock from the general public toward the year end. There are two reasons for this: (1) Annual sales targets have been reached, and (2) To generate demand so that their brands would seem to be extremely popular, and so facilitating future price increases.

There are many other brands of powdered infant formula milk in the Hong Kong market that had readily available stocks during the months of Oct to Dec 2012, and Jan 2013. Reputable brands such as Wyeth's S-26, Promil and Progress, and Meiji's Smart Kids 1,2 and 3, and Nestle's Nan 1, 2 and 3, just to name a few.

The claim by parents with babies under 3 years of age that there was a "milk powder drought" in Hong Kong is simply NOT true. There was, and still is an abundance of infant formula powders in the market. These parents had a choice to switch to other brands of infant formulas; they simply chose not to do so. They instead chose to complain bitterly that they could not purchase their choice of milk, and took to the street to protest.

I do not deny that certain pharmacies exploited and exacerbated the shortage by withholding stock from local mothers so that they could sell the said infant formulas to mainland traders for a higher profit. But these are of the minority. Majority of the pharmacies in Hong Kong kept stock for their regular customers as they know that this so-called shortage is just a passing phase.

To introduce legislation into the buying and selling of infant formula milk powder because of the shortage of stock of two brands would be extremely unfair to all the other lesser known brands. It is akin to "throwing out the baby with the bath water". Hong Kong's reputation as a free port would be severely damaged.

I therefore object to the proposals to amend Import and Export (general) Regulations (Cap. 60 Sub. Leg A). It is misguided and short-sighted.

Please do NOT introduce this amendment.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Richard Yong', written over a faint horizontal line.

Richard Yong

Ming Hui Trading Ltd