



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1974

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DAILY GUIDE TO WHOLESALE PRICES AND SUPPLY OF BASIC
FOOD COMMODITIES

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1974.

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HONG KONG DOLLAR TO FLOAT

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A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN ANNOUNCED THIS EVENING THAT, IN VIEW OF THE UNCERTAIN TRADING CONDITIONS NOW BEING EXPERIENCED ON THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKET, THE HONG KONG DOLLAR WOULD NOT BE MAINTAINED, FOR THE TIME BEING, BETWEEN THE PERMITTED MARGINS OF HK\$4.9706 AND HK\$5.1994 TO US\$1.

THE SPOKESMAN RECALLED THAT THE PRESENT CENTRAL RATE OF HK\$5.085 TO US\$1 WAS SET IN FEBRUARY 1973 AND THE RATE HAD BEEN MAINTAINED WITHIN 2-1/4% ON EITHER SIDE OF THIS CENTRAL RATE FOR THE PAST 21 MONTHS. HE SAID THAT THE US DOLLAR HAD BEEN STEADILY WEAKENING AGAINST THE HONG KONG DOLLAR FOR SOME TIME, BUT THE RATE HAD NOT APPROACHED THE UPPER LIMIT OF HK\$4.9706 UNTIL RECENTLY. THE GOVERNMENT HAD THEN BEEN FORCED TO INTERVENE ON A SUBSTANTIAL SCALE IN ORDER TO MEET ITS OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE RULES OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND. HOWEVER, THE SPOKESMAN ADDED, IN VIEW OF THE SELLING OF US DOLLARS THAT HAD DEVELOPED IN THE LAST FEW DAYS, THE GOVERNMENT HAD DECIDED NOT TO COMMIT STILL FURTHER RESOURCES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THE RATE BELOW THE UPPER LIMIT.

COMMENTING ON THIS DECISION, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR. C.P. HADDON-CAVE, SAID THAT, AS A FIXED RATE FOR THE HONG KONG DOLLAR WAS MORE CONVENIENT FOR EXPORTERS AND INDUSTRIALISTS, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER RE-ESTABLISHING A CENTRAL RATE WITH THE NORMAL OBLIGATION TO MAINTAIN MARKET RATES WITHIN 2-1/4% ON EITHER SIDE AS SOON AS CONDITIONS PERMITTED. WHILE RECOGNISING THAT A STRONGER HONG KONG DOLLAR WOULD AFFECT THE COMPETITIVENESS OF HONG KONG EXPORTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE U.S. MARKET, MR. HADDON-CAVE SAID THAT AN OFFSETTING BENEFIT WOULD BE A REDUCTION IN THE HONG KONG DOLLAR COST OF IMPORTS. HOWEVER, HE ADDED, "ONCE THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE MARKET HAS SETTLED DOWN AND MORE NORMAL TRADING CONDITIONS PREVAIL, I DO NOT THINK WE SHALL SEE A RATE FOR THE HONG KONG DOLLAR ESTABLISHED WHICH WILL MATERIALLY ALTER OUR OVERALL TRADING PROSPECTS+."

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NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEXES
SHOW TWO-POINT INCREASE IN OCTOBER
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THE FIRST OF THE REVISED CONSUMER PRICE INDEX, WHICH AIMS TO PROVIDE AN UP-TO-DATE REFLECTION OF THE MOVEMENTS OF HONG KONG'S COST OF LIVING, WAS ISSUED TODAY.

THE NEW INDEX IS IN TWO PARTS -- NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) WHICH IS BASED ON WEIGHTS DERIVED FROM THE EXPENDITURE OF HOUSEHOLDS SPENDING BETWEEN \$400 AND \$1,499 A MONTH ACCORDING TO THE HOUSEHOLD SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT BETWEEN JULY 1973 AND JUNE 1974= AND NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (B) WHICH IS BASED ON WEIGHTS DERIVED FROM THE EXPENDITURE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH A MONTHLY SPENDING OF BETWEEN \$1,500 AND \$2,999.

THE NEW CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (A) FOR OCTOBER WAS 108, TWO POINTS HIGHER THAN THAT FOR THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

THE INDEX FOR FOODSTUFFS ADVANCED BY THREE POINTS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES OF SALT WATER AND FRESH WATER FISH AS WELL AS FRESH VEGETABLES INCREASED. THIS WAS MAINLY DUE TO THE TYPHOONS WHICH AFFECTED HONG KONG IN OCTOBER. PRICES OF MEALS BOUGHT AWAY FROM HOME WERE ALSO RAISED.

AS FOR SERVICES, THE INDEX ROSE BY FIVE POINTS. IN FACT, ACCORDING TO A SURVEY RECENTLY CONDUCTED BY THE DEPARTMENT, THERE WAS AN UPWARD REVISION IN SCHOOL FEES AND PRICES OF TEXTBOOKS AND STATIONERY.

MOVEMENTS IN THE INDEXES FOR OTHER SECTIONS OF COMMODITY WERE INSIGNIFICANT.

THE NEW CONSUMER PRICE (B) FOR THE SAME MONTH ALSO STOOD AT 108, TWO POINTS HIGHER THAN THAT FOR THE PREVIOUS MONTH.

THE INDEX FOR FOODSTUFF ROSE BY TWO POINTS WHILE INCREASES WERE RECORDED IN THE AVERAGE RETAIL PRICES OF SALT WATER AND FRESH WATER FISH AS WELL AS FOR FRESH VEGETABLES AND MEALS BOUGHT AWAY FROM HOME.

THE INDEX FOR SERVICES ADVANCED BY SIX POINTS MAINLY BECAUSE OF THE UPWARD REVISION IN SCHOOL FEES AND PRICES OF TEXTBOOKS AND STATIONERY.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE INDEX FOR MISCELLANEOUS GOODS DECLINED SLIGHTLY BY ONE POINT WHILE MOVEMENTS IN THE INDEXES FOR OTHER SECTIONS OF COMMODITY WERE INSIGNIFICANT.

PUBLISHED CONCURRENTLY WITH THE NEW SET OF INDEXES TODAY WAS THE OLD GENERAL CONSUMER PRICE INDEX WHICH PUT THE INDEX FOR THE MONTH AT 194, SEVEN POINTS (OR 3.7 PER CENT) HIGHER THAN THAT FOR SEPTEMBER.

THE OLD INDEX WILL CONTINUE TO BE PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH THE NEW ONES FOR A FURTHER PERIOD OF FIVE MONTHS TO GIVE USERS TIME TO CHANGE OVER.

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'FLYING AMBULANCES' HAVE BUSY YEAR

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HONG KONG'S OWN AIR CORPS -- THE ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY AIR FORCE -- HAS HAD A BUSY TIME THIS YEAR, AIRLIFTING MORE THAN 100 PEOPLE REQUIRING URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION FROM REMOTE AREAS TO HOSPITALS IN THE CITY.

WITH THREE HELICOPTERS AND A GROUP OF +ALWAYS-READY AND WILLING+ VOLUNTEERS, THE FORCE HAS CARRIED OUT SUCH MERCY MISSIONS MOSTLY FOR INJURED OR SERIOUSLY ILL PEOPLE FOR YEARS.

ON MARCH 3 ALONE, THE RHKAAF RESPONDED TO FOUR CALLS FOR ASSISTANCE, THE HIGHEST IN A DAY THIS YEAR.

MANNING THE +FLYING AMBULANCES+ OF THIS MINIATURE AIR FORCE IS A COMBINATION OF VOLUNTEER AND FULL-TIME AIRCREW WHO OFTEN FOREGO THEIR EVENING ENTERTAINMENT IN ORDER TO BE ON 'STANDBY' AT HOME. FOR, AS ALWAYS, THEY ARE READY FOR DUTY AT ANY HOUR OF THE DAY AND NIGHT, AND GET THEMSELVES AIRBORNE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER A CALL.

INDEED, ANSWERING AN ELEVENTH-HOUR PLEA ON A COLD MISTY EVENING WITH AN OVERCAST SKY IS BY NO MEANS UNUSUAL TO THE AIRCREW OF THE RHKAAF.

+CHALLENGING AS IT OFTEN IS, AN EMERGENCY FLIGHT IS PARTICULARLY HAZARDOUS DURING ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS,+ COMMENTED WING COMMANDER SIMON ELLIS, COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG AUXILIARY AIR FORCE.

ON ONE OCCASION, HE SAID, A HELICOPTER OF THE FORCE ENGAGED IN A MERCY ERRAND HAD TO MAKE A LANDING ON THE BEACH AT A REMOTE OUTLYING ISLAND BECAUSE OF POOR WEATHER AND LOW VISIBILITY TO WAIT FOR AN IMPROVEMENT BEFORE IT WAS POSSIBLE TO CONTINUE TAKING THE PATIENT TO HOSPITAL.

+IN FACT,+ WING COMMANDER ELLIS WENT ON, +IN THE DARK AND MOUNTAINOUS REGIONS OF HONG KONG, NIGHT-FLYING ITSELF CAN BE DIFFICULT FOR EVEN THE BEST OF PILOTS. HOWEVER, ARMED WITH EXPERIENCE, AND IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT LIFE MAY BE AT STAKE, OUR CREWS WILLINGLY FACE THE HAZARDS INVOLVED.+

THE RHKAAF MAINTAINS THE EMERGENCY SERVICE DURING WORKING HOURS, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK.

BUT TO EXTEND THE COVERAGE TO TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, THE OVERNIGHT DUTY IS SHARED WITH NO. 28 SQUADRON, ROYAL AIR FORCE, EACH UNIT STANDING BY IN ALTERNATE MONTHS. THUS A HELICOPTER IS ON CALL FOR THIS SERVICE ALL THE TIME.

+IT IS CLEAR THAT THE TIME ELEMENT IS CRUCIAL IN SAVING THE LIFE OF ONE SUFFERING FROM ACUTE ILLNESS OR ACCIDENTAL INJURY IN A PLACE FAR AWAY FROM HOSPITAL, AND THIS IS WHERE OUR SERVICE COMES IN,+ WING COMMANDER ELLIS SAID.

/HE ADDED THAT

HE ADDED THAT WHERE NECESSARY DOCTORS WOULD BE FLOWN ON BOARD, BUT USUALLY FIRST-AID TREATMENT WOULD BE RENDERED BY THE CREW IF REQUIRED.

CASUALTY EVACUATION IS NOT THE ONLY FUNCTION OF THE FLEET OF HELICOPTERS. OCCASIONALLY, THEY HELP IN SEARCHES FOR LOST HIKERS AND CLIMBERS AS WELL AS ESCAPED PRISONERS. OTHER GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS ALSO MAKE FREQUENT USE OF THEIR SERVICE.

THE POLICE, FOR INSTANCE, ENGAGE THE HELICOPTERS AND FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT FOR A WIDE RANGE OF ROUTINE DUTIES INCLUDING AIR LIFTING OF PATROLS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES, TRAFFIC SURVEY AND SURVEILLANCE OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES SUCH AS NARCOTIC SMUGGLING.

ACCORDING TO WING COMMANDER ELLIS, VOLUNTEER MEMBERS OF THE RHKAAF NORMALLY TRAIN AT WEEKENDS AND ONE EVENING DURING THE WEEK. THEY ARE READY TO TAKE ON FULL-TIME DUTIES IN AN EMERGENCY, AND RECEIVE MUCH COOPERATION FROM THEIR EMPLOYERS.

WHEN ALL ITS MEMBERS ARE IN ATTENDANCE, THE FORCE CAN OPERATE ALL ITS HELICOPTERS AND FIXED-WING AIRCRAFT ROUND-THE-CLOCK FOR A SUSTAINED PERIOD.

FORMED IN 1949, THE RHKAAF AT PRESENT OPERATES A FLEET OF FIVE AIRCRAFT -- THREE HELICOPTERS, A TWIN-ENGINED AIRCRAFT AND ONE LIGHT AIRCRAFT.

IT HAS A STRENGTH OF SOME 130 PEOPLE, OF WHOM 110 ARE VOLUNTEERS, BOTH EUROPEAN AND CHINESE, WHO HAVE A PENCHANT FOR FLYING AS WELL AS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE.

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LAICHIKOK TRAFFIC CHANGES
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MOTORISTS ARE ADVISED THAT A NUMBER OF TRAFFIC CHANGES WILL BE INTRODUCED IN LAICHIKOK ON WEDNESDAY (NOVEMBER 27) TO FACILITATE TRAFFIC FLOW TO AND FROM THE LAICHIKOK TRAINING CENTRE.

AS FROM 10 A.M. THAT DAY THE LOOP ROAD, BETWEEN CASTLE PEAK ROAD AND THE ACCESS ROAD LEADING TO THE LAI CHI KOK TRAINING CENTRE IN KOWLOON, WILL BE ROUTED ONE-WAY CLOCKWISE= WHILE THE ACCESS ROAD TO THE LAI CHI KOK TRAINING CENTRE WILL BE ROUTED FOR TWO-WAY TRAFFIC.

TRAFFIC SIGNS WILL BE POSTED TO GUIDE MOTORISTS.

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HEALTH REPORT FOR OCTOBER
FURTHER DROP IN INCIDENCE OF MEASLES

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HEALTH RETURNS FOR OCTOBER ISSUED TODAY BY THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT SHOW THAT THERE WAS ANOTHER FALL IN THE INCIDENCE OF MEASLES.

IN SEPTEMBER, THERE WERE TWO NOTIFICATIONS OF THE DISEASE, AND NO DEATHS. LAST MONTH, REPORTED CASES DROPPED TO ONE, AGAIN WITH NO DEATHS.

+THIS IS THE LOWEST MONTHLY FIGURE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR,+ A SPOKESMAN FOR THE DEPARTMENT SAID, +AND IT IS VERY GRATIFYING.+

ANOTHER YEAR'S LOW OCCURRED DURING THE MONTH IN THE INCIDENCE OF CHICKENPOX. REPORTED CASES DROPPED FROM NINE IN SEPTEMBER TO SEVEN.

REPORTS OF BACILLARY DYSENTERY DROPPED FROM 34 TO 26, AND ENTERIC FEVER FROM 55 TO 32.

TWO CASES OF CEREBROSPINAL MENINGITIS WERE REPORTED IN OCTOBER, BRINGING THE TOTAL TO 11 SINCE JANUARY 1, 1974.

FOUR CASES OF AMOEBIASIS WERE NOTIFIED, 42 OF FOOD POISONING, ONE OF OPHTHALMIA NEONATORUM, FOUR OF SCRUB TYPHUS, 50 OF VIRAL HEPATITIS, FIVE OF TETANUS, AND ONE OF TETANUS NEONATORUM.

OF THE 72 DEATHS RECORDED DURING OCTOBER, 64 WERE CAUSED BY TUBERCULOSIS -- AN INCREASE FROM THE 56 DEATHS FROM THE SAME DISEASE RECORDED IN SEPTEMBER -- ONE BY LEPROSY, THREE BY VIRAL HEPATITIS, THREE BY TETANUS, AND ONE BY TETANUS NEONATORUM.

NO CASES OF DIPHTHERIA WERE NOTIFIED. THE RECORD FOR POLIOMYELITIS ALSO REMAINED CLEAN. THE INCIDENCE OF OTHER COMMUNICABLE DISEASES SHOWED NO APPRECIABLE VARIATION.

DURING THE MONTH, HONG KONG REMAINED FREE FROM CHOLERA AND OTHER QUARANTINABLE DISEASES.

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WATER SITUATION REPORT

THE TOTAL WATER STORAGE IN ALL RESERVOIRS AS AT 9 A.M. TODAY (MONDAY) STOOD AT 54,067 MILLION GALLONS, REPRESENTING 80.3 PER CENT OF THE FULL CAPACITY OF 67,300 MILLION GALLONS. AT THIS TIME LAST YEAR THERE WERE 57,476 MILLION GALLONS IN STORE.

THIS MORNING'S STORAGE AT PLOVER COVE WAS 38,596 MILLION GALLONS, COMPARED WITH 45,059 MILLION GALLONS ON THE SAME DAY LAST YEAR. PLOVER COVE'S PRESENT STORAGE REPRESENTS 76.4 PER CENT OF ITS FULL CAPACITY OF 50,500 MILLION GALLONS.

NO RAINFALL WAS RECORDED AT THE ROYAL OBSERVATORY DURING THE PAST 24 HOURS ENDING AT 9 A.M. TODAY. TOTAL RAINFALL RECORDED SO FAR THIS YEAR IS 2,112.3 MM (83.16 IN).

THE MEAN AVERAGE RAINFALL SINCE JANUARY 1 STANDS AT 2,134.9 MM (84.05 IN), REPRESENTING A SHORTFALL OF 1.06 PER CENT.

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HONG KONG FOOTWEAR EXPORTS TO E.E.C.

FURTHER DETAILS OF THE RECENT E.E.C. DECISION TO INCLUDE CERTAIN ITEMS OF HONG KONG FOOTWEAR IN ITS GENERALISED PREFERENCES SCHEME HAVE BEEN CONVEYED TO LOCAL EXPORTERS.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY DEPARTMENT SAID TODAY THAT A CIRCULAR CONTAINING INFORMATION ON THE ITEMS ELIGIBLE FOR PREFERENCE WAS ISSUED DURING THE WEEKEND.

THESE INCLUDE TWO OF HONG KONG'S MAIN FOOTWEAR ITEMS : RUBBER AND PLASTIC FOOTWEAR. EXPORTS OF THESE ITEMS TO EEC COUNTRIES IN 1973 AMOUNTED TO \$149 MILLION. LEATHER FOOTWEAR WILL HOWEVER NOT BE ACCORDED PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT. LEATHER FOOTWEAR ONLY ACCOUNTED FOR 1.5 PER CENT OF HK'S FOOTWEAR EXPORT TO THE EEC LAST YEAR.

THE D.C. AND I. SPOKESMAN ADVISED EXPORTERS, NEEDING FURTHER INFORMATION, TO CONTACT ASSISTANT TRADE OFFICER, MR. RONALD WONG, AT TELEPHONE NUMBER 5-252858.

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CONSUMER ADVISORY SERVICE

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THE FOLLOWING PRICES WERE REALISED TODAY (MONDAY) AT SALE UNDER THE RICE CONTROL SCHEME AND AT THE VEGETABLE MARKETING ORGANISATION WHOLESALE MARKET AND THE FISH MARKETING ORGANISATION WHOLESALE MARKET AT CHEUNG SHA WAN, KOWLOON :

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF RICE

<u>GRADE OF RICE</u>	<u>AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY</u>	<u>WHOLESALE PRICE (\$/CATTY)</u>
<u>CHINA RICE</u>		
SEE MEW	GOOD	1.89
S.C. JIEN	GOOD	1.73
PO NGAI	GOOD	-
CHU CHO	GOOD	-
<u>THAI RICE</u>		
100% WHOLE	GOOD	1.77
10-15% BROKENS	GOOD	-
A1 SUPER EXTRA	GOOD	1.62
A1 SUPER	GOOD	1.37
WHOLE GLUTINOUS	GOOD	1.72
<u>U.S. RICE</u>		
	GOOD	1.91
<u>AUSTRALIAN RICE</u>		
	GOOD	1.84
<u>PAKISTAN RICE</u>		
	GOOD	-
<u>TAIWAN RICE</u>		
	GOOD	-

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF SWINE

(ALL SOURCES)

AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY	-	GOOD
WHOLESALE PRICES OF PORK (\$/PICUL-LIVE WEIGHT)	-	340 (AVERAGE)

/SUPPLIES AND

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1974

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF MARINE FISH

(FMO CHEUNG SHA WAN WHOLESALE FISH MARKET)

SPECIES	AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY	WHOLESALE PRICE (\$/CATTY)		
		HIGH	LOW	MODE
GOLDEN THREAD	GOOD	4.60	1.10	3.20
BIG-EYES	GOOD	3.00	0.70	1.80
SQUID	NORMAL	5.80	3.00	4.70
HAIR-TAILS	GOOD	2.20	0.60	1.20
LIZARD FISHES	GOOD	3.70	1.00	2.50
CROAKERS	NORMAL	1.80	1.00	1.40
CONGER-PIKE-EELS	NORMAL	3.90	2.00	2.70
MELON COAT	NORMAL	2.20	1.30	1.80
BREAMS	LIMITED	5.80	3.50	4.20
YELLOW BELLY	NORMAL	2.20	1.00	1.50
MACKERELS	SCARCE	5.40	2.00	4.00
RED GOAT FISH	SCARCE	3.40	0.70	1.40
FORK-TAIL	LIMITED	1.20	0.60	0.90
HORSE-HEAD	LIMITED	5.20	2.50	4.00
MELON SEED	SCARCE	2.60	1.20	1.80
POMFRETS	LIMITED	9.00	3.70	7.00
GARROUPAS	NORMAL	8.30	5.50	7.20
YELLOW CROAKER	GOOD	5.80	3.80	5.50

SUPPLIES AND WHOLESALE PRICES OF LOCALLY PRODUCED VEGETABLES

(V.M.O. CHEUNG SHA WAN WHOLESALE VEGETABLE MARKET)

TYPE OF VEGETABLE	AVAILABILITY OF SUPPLY	WHOLESALE PRICE (\$/CATTY)		
		HIGH	LOW	MODE
FLOWERING CABBAGE	LIMITED	2.60	1.00	2.20
WHITE CABBAGE	NORMAL	1.60	0.40	1.00
CHINESE LETTUCE	LIMITED	1.80	0.60	1.20
WATER SPINACH	SCARCE	0.60	0.20	0.40
CHINESE KALE	LIMITED	2.80	1.00	2.20
STRING BEANS	SCARCE	2.30	1.50	1.80
SPRING ONION	LIMITED	1.80	0.40	1.20
SPINACH	SCARCE	3.20	1.20	2.50
WATER CRESS	LIMITED	3.00	1.50	2.40
LEAF MUSTARD CABBAGE	LIMITED	1.40	0.50	1.00
CHINESE SPINACH	---	---	---	---
TOMATO	SCARCE	4.50	2.50	3.50