

Surveillance of markets in Wangduephodrang Dzongkhag

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A. Background

Covering a period of ten days starting November 15, 2023, with support from officers of the Bhutan Food and Drug Authority (BFDA) and the Bhutan Standards Bureau (BSB), the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA) carried out surveillance of major markets in Wangduephodrang Dzongkhag. The primary objective was to check businesses' compliance to provisions prescribed in the Consumer Protection Act, 2012 and the Consumer Protection Rules and Regulations, 2015.

B. Coverage

A total of 108 different types of businesses in Baychu, Langla Tshawa, Bajo, Nobding, Khelekha, Tekizampa, Ngawang and Phobjikha were covered (Tab. I)

Table I: Number of types businesses covered

Types of business	Markets
Groceries	43
Restaurants and hotels	38
Garment shops & tailoring services	9
Salon/ beauty parlors	6
Meat shops	6
Petroleum Retail Outlet (PRO)	4
Hardware shops	2
Total	108

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C. Finding and Observations

- 64.8 percent of business issue printed cash memo/ purchase receipts upon consumer's demand.
- 11.6 percent of groceries do not meet the minimum product labeling requirements. The problem of inadequate labeling is mostly prevalent with locally produced dairy products and re-packaged products such as dal, dried fish, rice and *zaw*, dried chili and dried mushroom, *chana* and home-made pickles.
- 57.4 percent of business display the price of the goods and /or the services that is provided.
- Food products including biscuits, Tetra packed milk, noodles, canned fish, chips and sweets past expiration dates were found in 22 businesses.
- From the nine functional fuel dispensing nozzles, spanning four Petroleum Retail Outlets (PROs), dispensed fuel within the permissible range of 0.5%



($\pm 0.5\% = 25\text{ml}$) as per standards set by Bhutan Standards Bureau (BSB).

- The density of Motor Spirit (MS) and High-Speed Diesel (HSD) at all the 4 PROs were within permissible range ($\pm 3 \text{ kg/m}^3$). Likewise, the water content in the storage tanks were all within the maximum acceptable limits (8 cm).

📷 CCAA & BFDA Inspectors checking grocery products

- Measuring jars used at BOD, Bajo and Langlay Tshawa, were found due for recalibration. The hydrometer, thermometer and measuring cylinders used to check fuel density were not calibrated in any of the PROs.
- The thermometer used at DPDPL, Baychu was not working.
- The DPDPL near Wangdue Bridge did not have a consumer safety board within its premise.

- Fire extinguishers at all PROs had passed their expiration dates; which is in contravention to the Guidelines on the Storage, handling and dispensing at Petroleum Retail Outlets.
- The weighing balance for LPG cylinders at BOD, Bajo had technical issues and was not functional.



📷 CCAA & BSB Inspectors checking accuracy of fuel pumps and safety features of PRO premise

D. Action Takens and/ or To be Taken

- A total of 41 weighing balances in 37 businesses including grocery, meat shops, hardware shops and PRO were checked and calibrated.
- 22 business firms that were in violation of selling goods beyond expiration dates were fined a total of Nu. 22,990/-. In addition, expired products were seized by BFDA.

- All PROs were directed to refill expired fire extinguishers within a week from the date of inspection. Further, all PROs were asked to keep a daily density record of MS and HSD using the provided format with immediate effect.
- BOD, Bajo and BOD, Langlay Tshawa were directed to calibrate the 5L measuring can within a week.
- DPDPL at Baychu was directed to replace the thermometer immediately.



📷 Checking fuel quality in one of the PROs in Wangduephodrang Dzongkhag of fuel pumps