

## **My Paper**

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### **Bear gall bladder seized from Food Expo Stall**

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#### **ACRES goes undercover impromptu to gather evidence against bear parts trader**

An alleged bear gall bladder has been seized on the last day of the Singapore Food Expo, thanks to a tip-off from a member of the public.

Wildlife-rescue group Animal Concerns Research and Education Society (ACRES) said in a statement yesterday that it received a call on Tuesday on its hotline about a stall selling the item at the fair.

Acres staff went to the fair and spoke to the seller, who said that the gall bladder, priced at \$700, was from a bear and came from China. He had only one gall bladder left as he had already sold the rest at the fair, he said.

He also told the Acres staff that more such products could be ordered and delivered to Singapore upon request.

ACRES passed a video of the exchange to the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA), which seized the product the same day.

An AVA spokesman told my paper: "The alleged bear gall bladder was seized and AVA is investigating the case. It was sent to AVA's laboratory to determine its authenticity and results would be known within two weeks."

Ms Anbarasi Boopal, director of Acres' Wildlife Crime Unit, said: "This continued trade creates a demand for bear products and fuels the exploitation of bears held in bear farms.

"The practice of farming bears for their bile is inhumane (as) it severely compromises the health of bears."

Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, it is illegal for any person to possess any bear parts and/or products that have been illegally imported, whether genuine or fake.

Those convicted face a maximum fine of \$50,000 for each species, capped at a total aggregate of \$500,000, and/or a maximum of two years' jail.

An ACRES undercover investigation in 2006 found that 20 per cent of 115 traditional Chinese medicine shops it surveyed sold alleged bear products.

The five-day Singapore Food Expo, which began last Friday and ended on Tuesday, was held at the Singapore Expo. The organisers could not be reached for comment.