



JOINT MEDIA RELEASE

AVA, Singapore Customs stop 45 tonnes of red sandalwood from transshipment

The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority (AVA) and Singapore Customs conducted a series of operations over the past two weeks to interdict three containers containing 45 tonnes of red sandalwood.

The three 40-foot containers, transiting through Singapore from India, were interdicted on 30 October, and 13 and 14 November 2013 when they arrived in Singapore.

The consignments were declared as “hot lime pickles” and “casting wheels”. However, AVA and Singapore Customs officials recovered a total of 45 tonnes of red sandalwood logs from the containers instead, making this the largest seizure since 2011. The red sandalwood seized is estimated to have a value of about \$5 million.

“Acting on a tip-off, AVA and Singapore Customs conducted several joint operations to interdict these shipments,” said Mr Gerald Neo, Senior Executive Manager of AVA’s Wildlife Section.

“We found a total of 1,329 logs of red sandalwood,” said Mr Neo. “AVA is working with local and international agencies to investigate this case.”

Red sandalwood (*Pterocarpus santalinus*) is listed in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Under the convention, of which Singapore is a signatory to, trading of red sandalwood requires a valid CITES export or re-export permit, licence, certificate or written permission issued by the competent authority of the country of export or re-export.

Under the Endangered Species (Import and Export) Act, the maximum penalty for illegal trade (import, export and re-export) of red sandalwood is a fine of \$50,000 per scheduled specimen (not exceeding an aggregate of \$500,000) and/or imprisonment of up to two years. The same penalty applies to any transshipment of red sandalwood through Singapore without proper CITES permits from the exporting/importing country.

The Singapore Government will not condone illegal wildlife going through our country. AVA will continue to cooperate and collaborate with Singapore Customs and other national and international enforcement agencies to curb wildlife trafficking. Anyone with information on illegal trade of red sandalwood may contact AVA on 63257625. All information shared with AVA will be kept in strict confidence.

**Jointly issued by the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority and Singapore Customs
On 22 November 2013**

ANNEX

PHOTOS OF SEIZURES ON 30 OCTOBER, 13 AND 14 NOVEMBER 2013

