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ATO Guangzhou's Food Safety Update Report

Report Categories:

Agriculture in the News

Policy and Program Announcements

Food Processing Ingredients

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Report Highlights:

Summary: This report includes a summary of the recent onslaught of media reports concerning food safety irregularities in Mainland China. Hyperlinks to the actual stories are also provided though many of these stories are removed or censored by local authorities.

- 1- **Formaldehyde cabbage in East China:** On May 22, high levels of formaldehyde were recently detected in fresh cabbages sold in two Shanghai wholesale vegetable markets. Formaldehyde was used by the distributor as a preserving agent given the high temperatures and long distance between the production area in Shangdong province and the wholesale markets in East China. Formaldehyde is highly toxic and lethal to humans and animals, regardless of method of intake. Ingestion of as little as 30 mL (1 oz.) of a solution containing 37%

formaldehyde has been reported to cause death in an adult human. Certain forms of cancer have also been tied to formaldehyde exposure as well as impotence. Water solution of formaldehyde is very corrosive and its ingestion can cause severe injury to the upper gastrointestinal tract.

<http://roll.sohu.com/20120522/n343776015.shtml>

- 2- **Hormones in South China's Milk:** On May 22, the Guangdong Provincial Health Bureau tested for 20 different types of hormones in fresh milk distribution centers in western Guangdong province. According to the report, the authorities were tipped off by an anonymous whistleblower. Although the 20 kinds of hormones were not found, about seven banned hormone residues were detected in the milk of these distribution centers. National authorities will conduct further investigations to identify which farmers are supplying the tainted milk and where they purchased the illegal hormones.
<http://finance.ifeng.com/news/industry/20120522/6496948.shtml>
- 3- **False advertising of fresh ingredients:** On May 31, a consumer report exposed Nanjing's largest gelatin producers: Xizhilang. The company falsely advertised their products were made from fresh fruit ingredients; however internal sources later revealed that Xizhilang used food additives and canned fruit into their product mix and never actually used any fresh ingredients. Though no harm was caused by the company's misleading claims, many bloggers posted infuriated messages calling for government intervention.
<http://finance.sina.com.cn/consume/puguangtai/20120531/085812188626.shtml>
- 4- **Fake pig ears in Jiangxi:** On May 4, fake pig ears were found in a Jiangxi Province wet market. The fake ears were made of gelatin, edible vegetable dye, and plastic by-products. The producer was reportedly arrested and fined USD\$794 (RMB 5,000) by the local police bureau; however, the local industrial and commercial bureau which was responsible for prosecuting the culprits failed to provide the inspection methodology for developing fake pig ears to provincial authorities and are now themselves being investigated by national authorities. Online bloggers raised comments suspecting the local industrial and commercial bureau might have been complicit in the crime.
<http://news.39.net/hsp/201254/2018403.html>
- 5- **Enokitake mushrooms preserved in toxic acid:** On June 7, the municipal quarantine and inspection bureau of Ningde City (Fujian Province) seized a factory based in Gutian County producing enokitake mushrooms preserved in toxic citric acid. A total of 35 tons of toxic mushrooms were seized who supplied two canned food companies in Fuzhou (Fujian's provincial capital).

<http://health.people.com.cn/GB/18098985.html>

- 6- **Gutter oil in the PRD:** On June 6, Guangzhou Huangpu District Food and Drug Administration (FDA) cracked down on a gutter oil producer. The report does not specify how this company has been passing off gutter oil as vegetable oil but nearly 1,190 kg of gutter oil was seized in early June. The gutter oil was entering the Pearl River Delta's food service industry via wet market sales. Based on repeated issues regarding gutter oil scandals, the Shenzhen government is teaming up with the Guangzhou FDA to issue new regulations for waste management from restaurants intend to curb this practice and prevent the resale of used cooking oils.

<http://news.hexun.com/2012-06-06/142162616.html>

<http://news.hexun.com/2012-06-06/142158639.html>

- 7- **Heavy metals in Guangxi rivers:** On June 4, according to the Director General of the Guangxi Provincial Environmental Policy Department, Mr. Liang Bin, the bureau completed the risk assessments over the factories along the Long Jiang River and out of the 1,516 factories investigated, 1,085 were identified as producing serious environmental risks. The prime pollutant remains toxic heavy metals. According to the report, among these 1,085 factories, 321 were temporarily suspended, and 128 were permanently closed.

<http://news.sohu.com/20120604/n344750922.shtml>

General Information: