



Foreign Agricultural Service
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TPP to Move Further Without USA Participation ... 11 Countries Agree to Establish One of the Largest Free Trade Markets in the World

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2017111225691>

Summary: Trade representatives of 11 countries, including Japan, Canada, Australia, Chile, Mexico, Singapore and New Zealand, gathered in Danang, Vietnam on November 11 and agreed that they would continue to work together to establish a Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement (TPP) despite the United States' withdrawal from the negotiation earlier this year. The TPP intends to create one of the largest free trade markets in the world that accounts for 12.9 percent of world GDP by 2019.

Micheline Guide Seoul 2018 Appoints 24 Restaurants

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20171109/87178100/1>

Summary: Micheline Guide announced its Seoul 2018 edition on November 8. In the 2018 Guide, Micheline appointed 24 restaurants in Seoul with stars. Two restaurants received the prestigious three stars; four restaurants received two stars; and 18 restaurants received one star. The total number of restaurants appointed was the same as last year's guide but two of the one star restaurants were upgraded to two star in this year's guide. Thirteen of the restaurants appointed were Korean cuisine restaurants.

Obesity Continues to Rise

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20171107/87138800/1>

Summary: According to a recent report by the Korean Disease Control Office (DCO), 34.8 percent of Korean adults over 18 years old were obese (Body Mass Index 25 or higher) in 2016, up 3.9 percent point from 2010. DCO pointed out that increased consumption of fat was a key cause of the increased obesity. Fat accounted for 22.4 percent of the daily diet of Korean adults in 2016, up from 18.8 percent back in 2010. However, the ratio of Korean adults who were exercising on a regular basis was on a decline from 58.3 percent in 2014 down to 49.4 percent in 2016.

Convenience Store Chains Pilot Test "No Staff, Self-Service" Stores ... a Solution for Increased Labor Cost

<http://news.naver.com/main/read.nhn?mode=LSD&mid=sec&sid1=101&oid=020&aid=0003106089>

Summary: All five leading convenience store chains are reportedly pilot operating "no staff, self-service" stores as labor costs continue to rise. For example, E Mart 24, a leading convenience store chain under the umbrella of E Mart, Inc., has launched 4 self-service stores this year. According to E Mart 24, the stores run without managing staffs in the evening from 11 p.m. until 6 a.m. The consumer should go through a verification process using his/her credit card first to enter into the store. Then the customer would pick up the products in the store and check them out on his/her own. The pilot-test has so far identified both pros and cons of the self-service operation. In particular, the sales from self-service stores was lower than regular stores as tobacco and liquor were not allowed to be sold during the self-service operation hours. Many consumers also found the access to self-service stores inconvenient and confusing. However, in terms of profit levels, self-service operations generated a higher profit due to the elimination of labor costs. The minimum hourly wage mandated by the Korean government has

increased 16.4 percent to 7,530 won for 2018.

ROKG Mandates Temperature-Controlled Distribution of Washed Table Eggs

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20171103/87091576/1>

Summary: The Korean Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) announced in a public notice on November 2 that all washed table eggs shall be distributed under chilled temperatures starting from January 1, 2019. According to MFDS, washed eggs account for about 70 percent of all eggs distributed in the market currently. MFDS pointed out that the requirement was to lower food safety risk from table eggs. The notice also included a standard for washing of table eggs. The temperature of the washing water should be five degree Celsius higher than the temperature of the eggs.

McDonald's Korea Marketed 55 Metric Tons of Risky Hamburger Patties with Potential E-Coli Contamination

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20171101/87052781/1>

Summary: According to a report of the Korea Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) submitted to the National Assembly Audit on October 31, McDonald's Korea marketed 55 metric tons of risky hamburger patties in 2016 and 2017. The patties were tested positive for a harmful e-coli bacteria in McDonald's Korea's internal tests but McDonald's Korea distributed the products to its stores before the test results became available. Current MFDS regulations does not require foodservice operators to wait until the internal food safety test results become available before distributing products to their stores.

2 out of 3 Koreans disapprove of KORUS FTA renegotiation

http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/biz/2017/11/367_238541.html

Around two out of three respondents opposed the renegotiation of the Korea-US free trade agreement (FTA) _ 65 percent were against it while 29.1 percent were for it..The bilateral trade deal went into effect in 2012 to significantly increase trade volumes between the two countries. Dubbing it a "job killer," however, U.S. President Donald Trump has claimed that it should be renegotiated. After his inauguration early this year, he even threatened that Washington will terminate it all together if Seoul does not make consideration concessions.

Korean Government to Purchase 4,900 Metric Tons of Local Pears to Support the Market Price

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2017103130231>

Summary: The price of local pears this year has marked a significant decline due to increased competition in the market from imported fruits. A 15 kg box of local pears was offered at 28,751 won on average in early October this year during local Thanksgiving Day season, which was 25 percent lower than the previous 5 year average price. The Korea Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) has announced that it will purchase 4,900 metric tons of local pears for processing uses to support the market price of local pears.

It Costs 240 Thousand KRW for a Family of Four Members to Make Kimchi for This Winter

<http://www.asiae.co.kr/news/view.htm?idxno=2017102709454652274>

Summary: According to the Korean Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) on October 27, it will cost about 240 thousand KRW (\$215) for a family of four to make kimchi for this winter, down 10.8 percent over the same period last year. Although cultivation areas of cabbage and white radish for kimchi-making (aka kimjang*) have slightly decreased compared to the average year, a stable supply of cabbage and radish is expected to be available due to a good crop this year. On the other hand, red pepper and garlic production has been reduced by 34% and 6% respectively over the average year.

* 'Kimjang' is an annual event for making kimchi in large quantities so that it may be stored and eaten during the winter. Since kimchi is the most basic side dish in Korean dining, this is considered a major family event in preparation for the cold season.

Retail Price of Local Squid Rises to a 10 Year High

<http://news.jtbc.joins.com/html/258/NB11498258.html>

Summary: According to the Korea Agro-Fishery Marketing Corporation, the retail price of local squid marked 4,434 won per head on average in October, which was the highest level since 2007. The hike in squid prices is due to a reduced catch. Local catch of squid amounted to 20,000 metric tons during the first half this year, down 29 percent from the same period last year. In addition, an increased catch by Chinese fishing boats in the North Korean sea has reportedly reduced squid resources swimming down to the South Korean sea. Increased sea water temperatures around the Korean peninsula under the global warming trend have also driven some of the squid resources to the north.

The information in this report was compiled by the [Agricultural Trade Office](#) (ATO) at the U.S. Embassy in Seoul, South Korea. The press summaries contained herein do NOT reflect USDA, the U.S. Embassy, or other U.S. government agency official policy or view point. U.S. food exporters can learn more about market opportunities in South Korea by reviewing ATO Seoul's [Exporter Guide](#) and other reports available at www.fas.usda.gov by clicking on "attaché reports.