



Foreign Agricultural Service  
U.S. Agricultural Trade Office



## FAS/Seoul Monitoring of Media Reporting on Agricultural Issues

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### ***ROKG to Inspect Imported Bottled Water for Potential Contamination by Micro-Plastic***

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180326/89292959/1>

Summary: The Korean Ministry of Environment (ME) is planning to inspect imported bottled water for potential contamination by micro-plastic (particles of 5 mm in diameter or smaller). ME's current inspection list (66 potential health risks) for imported bottled water does not include micro-plastic. ME's internal inspection of 6 local bottled water products found only one product containing very small amount of micro-plastic (0.2 particles per one liter) which was well below food safety concern level. However, a recent report by New York State University has indicated that a large number of bottled water marketed around the world, including Evian, may contain harmful micro-plastic. ME says it will soon revisit last year's inspection outcome on local products and will consider including imported products for an extended inspection this time.

### ***CU Convenience Store Introduces 'Automated IOT Vending Machine for Pork Meat'***

<http://www.sedaily.com/NewsView/1RX2WDZN43>

Summary: CU, the leading convenience store chain in Korea, announced that an 'automated IOT vending machine for pork meat' was test introduced in its store in Samsong, Gyeonggi-do on March 22. The IOT meat vending machine was an outcome of a partnership with the Korean Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives (KFAC), Korea Telecom (KT), and Fameat Korea. The machine offers an easy shopping tool for fresh, grade 1 local pork meat. CU pointed out that the vending machine targets people living alone or small families, offering small package pork meat (300 gram) of various cuts. CU added that introduction of the meat vending machine was in line with its strategy to turn its convenience stores as key grocery shopping venue for people living alone or small families.



### ***Korea's Aquaculture Production Exceeds 60 Percent of Total Fishery Production***

<http://www.yonhapnewstv.co.kr/MYH20180319013600038/print/>

Summary: As the consumption of fishery products is increasing every year, the proportion of aquaculture in Korea's total fisheries production has exceeded 60 percent. According to the data released by Korea's Ministry of

Oceans and Fisheries, total fisheries production in 2017 reached 3.74 million tons, a 14.5 percent increase over the previous year. Out of this, aquaculture production soared 24.3 percent to 2.31 million tons over the previous year, accounting for 62 percent of total fisheries production.

#### ***Department Stores Make Efforts to Expand Food Business***

[http://biz.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2018/03/18/2018031801754.html](http://biz.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2018/03/18/2018031801754.html)

Summary: Food is becoming a more important business for Korean department stores. Food accounted for 13.3 percent of sales in Lotte Department Store (the leading department store chain in Korea) in 2017, which was a significant increase from 11.8 percent in 2013. Other major chains, Shinsegae Department Store and Hyundai Department Store, also reported that the share of food in their total sales increased significantly from 13.5 percent and 16.8 percent in 2013 to 15.1 percent and 17.9 percent, respectively. Marketers point out that department stores are making extra efforts to expand their upscale food sections to attract affluent consumers as they see stagnant growth of non-food sections, particularly fashion products, due to elevated competition from on-line retailers.

#### ***ROK to Expand Mandatory Distribution Traceability Labeling to Chicken, Duck and Eggs by 2022***

[http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html\\_dir/2018/03/20/2018032000259.html](http://news.chosun.com/site/data/html_dir/2018/03/20/2018032000259.html)

Summary: The Korean government announced on March 19 that its new policy initiative includes expansion of mandatory distribution traceability labeling to chicken meat, duck meat and eggs by 2022. The traceability labeling will allow consumers to obtain detailed information about the product by a quick scan with their cell phones. Additionally, the Korean government plans to come up with a list of the 177 most consumed consumer food products in the market, including livestock and seafood products, and have them disclose the residue amount of harmful substances contained, such as heavy metals and fungi.

#### ***Korean Consumers' Direct Imports from Foreign On-line Stores Exceed \$2 Billion in 2017***

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180320/89196697/1>

Summary: According to the Korean Customs Office, Korean consumers' direct imports from foreign on-line stores amounted to \$2.1 billion in 2017, up 29 percent from the previous year. The number of shipments totaled 24 million, up 36 percent. The U.S. was the leading origin of the products imported by Korean consumers by accounting for 58 percent of the purchases, followed by China (13 percent) and Japan (6 percent). Health functional foods were the most imported products by Korean consumers accounting for 21 percent of purchases, followed by cosmetics (12 percent), clothes (12 percent) and electronics (9 percent).

#### ***Pulmoowon Launches Pet Food Business***

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018032081791>

Summary: Pulmoone, a leading food processor in Korea, announced that its first pet food brand, Amio Cat Food, was launched on March 20. Pulmoone pointed out that Amio cat foods are premium products that do not use any grain ingredients. The pet food market in Korea generated \$750 million of cash-register sales in 2017 and is expected to show double digit growth in the coming years. The market has been driven by large-scale multinational suppliers, including Nestle, Royal Canine and Mars, who reportedly account for over 60 percent of market sales. Many major Korean food companies, including CJ, Dongwon, and Harim have entered the market with premium products in recent years.

*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](http://www.fas.usda.gov) by clicking on "attaché reports."*