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'Simply Cook', Ready-to-cook Meal Kits by GS Retail Reports Early Success

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180530/90329964/1>

Summary: GS Retail, a leading grocery retail company in Korea, reported that its 'Simply Cook' ready-to-cook meal kit products launched earlier in January this year had sold 70,000 units so far. 'Simply Cook' currently offers some 20 recipes. A 'Simply Cook' package includes half prepared ingredients needed to cook the recipe in 20 minutes at home. According to GS Retail, women in their 30's and 40's were the leading buyers of 'Simply Cook' products by accounting for 37 percent and 33 percent of the sales, respectively. GS Retail plans to expand the recipes offered by 'Simply Cook' line to 100 by the end of this year. Other competitors are also planning for more aggressive marketing of their ready-to-cook meal kit products. 'Eats On' by Yakult Korea and 'Chef Box' by Hyundai Department Store are reportedly generating solid sales growth.

Gout Patients among Males in 20's Up 82% over the Last Five Years ... Beer and Fried Chicken could be a Cause

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180528/90275552/1>

Summary: According to the Korea Health Insurance Service, the number of gout patients in Korea totaled 390,000 in 2017, up 49 percent from 2012. Ninety percent of the patients were male. It was notable that the higher increase of gout patients were younger males. Gout patients among males in their 20's and 30's during the period increased 82 percent and 66 percent, respectively. Medical experts pointed out that increased consumption of beer and high fat/protein (such as fried chicken) could have been a key cause of the increased gout patients among young males.

Sales of Ice Cream in Korea Declines ... But Premium Ice Cream Shops Report Solid Growth

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018052494101>

Summary: The Korean Ago-Fishery Marketing Corporation (aT) reported that sales of ice cream in Korea amounted to 1.6 trillion won in 2017, down 16.6 percent from 2015. aT pointed out that expansion of ice cream alternatives in the market such as smoothie beverages was the cause of the ice cream market decline. On the other hand, premium ice cream shops are reportedly enjoying a solid growth. Baskin Robins saw 5.7 percent sales growth in 2017 to 350 billion won. Baemidang, an organic milk ice cream shop by Maeil Dairy Co., has made a quick expansion since its launching in 2014 and it now operates 75 stores in Korea. Oslow, a premium milk ice cream by Shinsegae Co., saw 31 percent sales growth in 2017 due to aggressive new store openings (14). Cold Stone Creamery relaunched its Korean business this year by opening a store in Seoul in April. According to AC Nielsen Korea, sales of premium ice cream in Korea amounted to 176 billion won in 2017, up from 171 billion in 2015.

Premium Single Malt Scotch Whiskey Reports Strong Sales Growth Despite Stagnant Growth of Overall Whiskey Market in Korea

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018052348061>

Summary: Premium (aged for 21 years) single-malt Scotch whiskey sales in Korea amounted to 2,402 liters during the first four months of this year, up 55 percent from the same period of last year. Major suppliers, including Macallan, have been upscaling their supply capacity and market promotions to capitalize on increased demand for premium Scotch whiskey in Korea.

Binggre Enters Pet Food Business

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018052348031>

Summary: Binggre, a major snack food manufacturer in Korea, launched its pet food business under the 'Ever Grow' brand name on May 23. Three different types of pet milk were the first Ever Grow products offered to the market. Binggre pointed out that its pet milks, made from lactose free milk and functional ingredients, offer unique health and nutritional benefits to the pet.

"Delicious American Avocado", Lotte Mart Promotes American Avocado

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180522/90198417/1>

Summary: Lotte Mart, a leading hypermarket grocery chain in Korea, is staging a sales promotion on American avocado from May 24 through 30 in all its stores in Korea. During the promotion, avocados will be offered at 1,200 won (\$1.1) each.

"California Almonds are Beauty Secret", Local Research Confirms Health Benefits

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180522/90188653/1>

Summary: Almonds are recognized as key healthy food among the Korean consumers as they contain 11 vital nutrients. Furthermore, almonds are emerging as "beauty food" among Korean women due to high amount of Vitamin E, protein and dietary fiber contained in Almonds. A research by Sookmyeong University Seoul published in December 2017 found that eating almonds help reduce body fat and blood cholesterol level among the Koreans surveyed. Additionally, the research pointed out that timing of almond consumption in the day may lead to different health benefits. For example, eating almonds before meal showed higher decline of body fat. On the other hand, eating almonds between meals as snacks resulted in higher decline of cholesterol and LDL level.

Poolmoowon Danon Launches 'Activia Ultimate' that Contains Prune, "the King of Dietary Fiber"

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180522/90188703/1>

Summary: Poolmoowon Danon (PD) launched 'Activia Ultimate' yoghurt on May 9. PD pointed out that the product is made with special ingredient, prune from Taylor Farm USA, the leading supplier of organic prune in the world. Prune is a super food that contains five times more dietary fiber than apple. Prune also contains five times and 24 times more Potassium and vitamins respectively than apple. PD says 'Activia Ultimate' will attract consumers who are concerned about improving their intestine health.

Korea's First Shipment of Rice Donation under Food Assistance Convention (FAC)

Joining the Food Assistance Convention (FAC) in early 2018, Korea allocated 50,000 MT of domestic rice (milled basis) to four countries in Africa; 17,000 MT to Yemen, 15,000 MT to Ethiopia, 13,000 MT to Kenya and 5,000 MT to Uganda, respectively, through the World Food Program (WFP). Korea made the first shipment of 22,000 MT (milled basis) drawing from the 2016 rice crop in Kunsan Port on May 10, 2018, being delivered to the four countries.

The Number of Convenience Stores in Korea Exceeds 40,000 as of March 2018

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018051765391>

Summary: The number of stores under the top five convenience store chains in Korea totaled 40,192 as of March 2018, up from 39,277 at the end of 2017. The convenience store industry in Korea has been on an explosive expansion since its birth back in 1989. The industry has also enjoyed solid increase of consumer traffic and sales as convenience stores became a key retail outlet for small groceries and quick meals. However, marketers point out that the growth rate of new store openings in the industry is likely to slow down significantly in the coming years.

CJ Daehantongwoon to Operate iHerb's Asia Distribution Center in Incheon Airport

<http://www.fnnews.com/news/201805171021189140>

Summary: CJ Daehantongwoon, a leading logistics service company in Korea, signed a contract with iHerb (a leading American internet shopping mall that offers over 30,000 health functional products to global consumers) on May 17 to operate iHerb's distribution center for Asian market. According to CJ, the center located in Incheon international airport is 30,000 sq. meter size and will distribute shipments of iHerb products ordered by Asian consumers. CJ pointed out that iHerb picked Incheon international airport as the most efficient location to service

its consumers in Asia.

Sales of EMART On-Line Store Marks 300 Billion Won in the First Quarter, Up 25%

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180516/90116005/1>

Summary: EMART, the leading hypermarket grocery store chain in Korea, reported that sales of its on-line store (emart.com aka EMART Mall) exceeded 300 billion won (about \$280 million) in the first quarter this year, up 25 percent from the same period last year. EMART also pointed out that the on-line business achieved operation profit for the first time in the first quarter. On-line orders are currently filled by two on-line distribution centers and over 100 EMART stores throughout the country. EMART plans to invest \$1 billion into the on-line retail business under the goal of generating \$10 billion of sales by 2023.

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.