



Foreign Agricultural Service
U.S. Agricultural Trade Office



FAS/Seoul Monitoring of Media Reporting on Agricultural Issues

Today's Date: **September 11, 2018**

For Coverage: **September 1 ~ 11 2018**

Korean Grocery Retailers Expand HMR Section

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018091095291>

Summary: GS Supermarket, a leading grocery supermarket chain in Korea, reported that its new store in Sadang-dong, Seoul, started operation on September 10. GS pointed out that the new store has much larger space and product assortment for HMR (home meal replacement) section than its existing stores. According to GS, stronger HMR program will be its key growth strategy for the coming years. GS added that in launching daily sales at the new Sadang store it saw 101 percent growth of food products compared to other GS stores.



"Gov't Reference Price for Local Rice for 2018-2022 Term should be 194,000 Won or Higher", MAFRA Minister

http://biz.khan.co.kr/khan_art_view.html?artid=201809101609001&code=920100

Summary: Gaeho Lee, Minister of Korean Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA), disclosed in a press conference on September 10 that MAFRA was targeting to set the new reference price for local rice for year 2018-2022 term to a minimum of 194,000 won (per 80 kg bag), which was 3.2 percent higher than the previous term reference price set back in 2013 (188,000 won). The rice market reference price, set every five years, is the basis for government rice subsidy provided to local rice farmers. The government rice subsidy program allows local rice farmers to earn a minimum of 99 percent of the reference price for the rice that they produce regardless of actual market price.

Revised Anti-Graft Act Increases Sales of Premium Ag Gift Sets for Coming Korean Thanksgiving Day

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180909/91905524/1>

Summary: Sales of premium agricultural gift sets for the coming Korean Thanksgiving Day (September 24) have reported significant growth from last year in retail stores as the price ceiling set for a gift item under the Korean Anti-Graft Act was revised earlier this year to 100,000 won (about \$90) for agricultural products (from 50,000 won previously). EMART, the leading hypermarket grocery store chain in Korea, reported that its on-line Thanksgiving gift set sales (for home deliveries) between August 2 through September 6 saw 50 percent increase on average from the same period last year. According to EMART, gift sets between 50,000 won up to 100,000 won generated 109 percent growth. Gift sets over 100,000 won also generated outstanding, 65 percent growth. On the other hand, gift sets below 50,000 won generated weaker, 45 percent growth. EMART pointed out that most ordered premium agricultural gift sets over 100,000 won were local Korean beef. Other premium local agricultural

products, including Yellow Corvina (local fish under croaker family), apple and pear also reported outstanding sales growth.

HMR Market to Generate 4 Trillion Won of Sales This Year, aT

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018090958131>

Summary: Korea Agro-Fishery Marketing Corporation (aT) reported that the Home Meal Replacement (HMR) market in Korea (except instant noodle products) would generate 4 trillion won (about \$3.6 billion USD) this year, up 60 percent from last year. aT pointed out that busier consumer lifestyles and the rapid increase of small-size families should fuel continuous growth of HMR market in Korea in the coming years. According to aT, the outstanding outcome is attributable to the Korean HMR industry's long-term research and innovation efforts to offer high quality products that satisfy the unique taste of local consumers.

Blue Bottle • CONG CAPHE - Foreign Specialty Coffee Shops Landing in Korea

<http://hankookilbo.com/v/17ad37eddd0e4536a98007b588a6cddb>

Summary: The Vietnamese coffee shop chain 'CONG Caphe' has recently opened its first store in Korea and the local specialty coffee industry is getting nervous as plans are announced that the U.S. premium café brand 'Blue Bottle' will open its first store in Seoul by the end of the year. According to the coffee shop industry on September 5, Blue Bottle plans to make its first full-fledged entry into the Korean market by opening its first store in Gangnam, Seoul this year. One of the high-rise buildings on the Teheran Road between Gangnam Station and Yeoksam Station is known as strong candidate for the first store's location.

Korean Retail Stores Adopt New Info-Technologies

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20180904/91838492/1>

Summary: Korean retail stores are adopting new information technologies to offer more efficient shopping experiences to consumers. For example, EMART, the leading hypermarket grocery store chain in Korea, announced that its Sungsu store adopted Pepper, a robot shopping assistant, on August 29. According to EMART, Pepper has the capacity to interact with shoppers proactively based on artificial intelligence technology and provide assistance such as locating products and suggesting recipes. EMART has also introduced electronic price tags in its Sungsu store that are updated in real time. Lotte Mart, another leading hypermarket grocery store chain, has been adding automated check-out counters in its stores.



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