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20% of Traditional Korean Fermented Sauces in the Market Contain Excessive Amount of Risky Nitrogen Compounds, MFDS

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20181002/92234781/1>

Summary: Korea Ministry of Food & Drug Safety (MFDS) reported that its lab tests in 2016 found 41 of 206 Korean traditional fermented sauces (including soy sauce/ganjang, bean paste/doenjang, hot chili paste/gochujang, and fish sauce/ekjut) processed by local processors containing excessive amount of biogenic amines (such as histamine) over MFDS's recommended safety limit (500mg per kg), which can cause various health problems such as high blood pressure. Biogenic amines, nitrogen compounds, are by products generated when proteins are fermented. MFDS pointed out that processors should take extra efforts to minimize biogenic amines in their products by introducing more advanced production methods, such as lower temperature fermentation/aging. The percentage of products that failed MFDS tests has been on a continuous increase over the years (6.5 percent in 2015 for example). Currently a safety limit for biogenic amines is not a mandatory standard for processors and some opinion leaders are asking MFDS to introduce a mandatory standard.

G Market Reports Strong Sales Growth of Health Functional Foods

<http://news.donga.com/List/EconomyMarket/3/all/20181002/92234488/1>

Summary: G Market (www.gmarket.co.kr), a leading on-line retailer in Korea owned by ebay USA, reported on October 2 that its sales of health functional foods targeting the silver population were on a strong growth so far this year. Outstanding products included glucosamine (up 90 percent), calcium (193 percent), lutein (275 percent), multi-vitamin (120 percent). G Market added that other products for elderly consumers showed robust sales growth, such as wheel chairs (89 percent). G Market pointed out that sales of products for the silver population should continue a solid growth for years to come as the elderly population will further expand.

Weight Loss Claims by "Cleanse Juices" are False Advertisements, MFDS

<http://news.hankyung.com/health/article?aid=2018100269001>

Summary: Korea Ministry of Food & Drug Safety (MFDS) reported on October 2 that it had indicted 97 suppliers of "cleanse juices" for false or exaggerated advertisements. MFDS explained that its tests found no scientific proof to accept the nutritional or health functional benefits claimed by the products in their consumer advertisements. Products and suppliers indicted include some of most popular "cleanse juices" in the market such as Heiri Calamansi juice and Yokmang Smoothie.

Korean Functional Food Industry Saw Stagnant Production Growth Due to Reduced Chinese Tourists

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018091926031>

Summary: According to Korea's Ministry of Food & Drug Safety (MFDS), functional food processors in Korea generated a total of 1.5 trillion won (about \$1.3 billion USD) of production in 2017, up 0.7 percent from the previous year which was the least annual growth reported in years. In particular, red ginseng processors, which accounted for 35.5 percent of the functional food industry production, saw 9.8 percent production decline in 2017. MFDS pointed out that the stagnant growth of the Korean functional food industry was mainly due to a significant decline in the number of Chinese tourists who traveled to Korea. The number of Chinese tourists traveled to Korea totaled 4.2 million in 2017, down 48.3 percent from the previous year. According to MFDS, Chinese tourists have been a key buyer for Korean functional food products, including red ginseng.

New Store Opening by Major Convenience Store Franchises Plunges This Year

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018091138421>

Summary: The number of new stores opened by the top three convenience store franchises in Korea (CU, GS25, and 7-Eleven Korea) during the first half this year totaled 1,007, which was about 50% less than the same period last year. The reduced new store opening is due to reduced profitability of the convenience store industry. Marketers point out that existing stores in the market face limited growth opportunity as a result of increased competition with a rapid increase of convenience stores in major metropolitan areas. In addition, the increased minimum wage has added a financial burden to the industry. Major convenience store franchises are employing a conservative approach this year when approving a new store.

Paris Baguette Bakery Store Introduces AI Robot Assistant

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018091138371>

Summary: Paris Baguette, the leading bakery shop chain in Korea under SPC Group, announced that 7 of its shops started to operate a 'Smart Bakery' program on September 11. According to SPC Group, the program is an outcome of strategic partnership with LG U Plus, a major mobile telecommunication company in Korea. The Smart Bakery program includes an artificial intelligence robot assistant that provides catered assistance to shoppers such as suggesting specific breads through personal interaction.



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