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Retailers Deploy Aggressive 'Golden Pig' Promotions as the Year of Golden Pig Approaches

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20181230/93494805/1>

Summary: Year 2019 is a 'golden pig' year according to the traditional Korean lunar calendar. As the name suggests, 'golden pig' year is interpreted as a year of economic prosperity and good fortune to the consumers. Korean retailers have launched numerous consumer promotions under the golden pig year theme. For example, Lotte Mart has launched 'Wolf Blass Gold Label' wine (limited 7,700 bottles only). Tsingtao Beer has launched Golden Pig Year Special Edition package with unique label design and glass gift.



Imports of Wine and Beer Mark Record High in 2018

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018123055341>

Summary: Korea's wine imports in 2018 through November amounted to a record high, \$220 million which already exceeded the overall 2017 imports. Small package, sparkling, natural, and new world wines were the driving force behind the import growth. Korea's beer imports also marked a record high this year through November, amounting to \$287 million. Increased sales through convenience stores was the key for the import growth.

Angel-in-Us Café Renews Bean Blending for its Basic Espresso Coffee after One Year-long Efforts

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20181223/93422640/1>

Summary: Angel-in-Us, a leading café franchise in Korea, announced on December 23 that it has renewed the blending of coffee beans for its basic espresso coffee. The new blending incorporates beans from three origins: Ethiopia Sidamo, Colombia Supremo, and Brazil NY2. Angel-in-Us added that the new blending was an outcome of a year-long effort that included the participation of a good number of coffee experts and regular consumers.

SSG Food Market Opens Dogok Store, Gangnam

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20181223/93422691/1>

Summary: SSG Food Market, a premium grocery store chain under Shinsegae group, has opened its third store in Dogok-dong, Seoul. The new store features many premium food ideas for affluent consumer groups under the theme of 'The Love of Good Food'. In particular, the new store has allocated 30 percent of its space for in-store kitchens that offer a wide variety of quick meal solution products.

Exports of Korean Instant Noodles Expand ... \$400 Million for 2018

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018121942051>

Summary: According to the Korea Agro-Fishery Marketing Corporation, Korea's exports of instant noodle products have amounted to \$385 million through November. Yearly exports for 2018 is forecast to reach \$400 million, up more than 10 percent from the previous year. China is the leading export market followed by the U.S., Japan, and Indonesia. Major Korean instant noodle manufacturers have also established processing facilities in key export markets. If the sales of these foreign facilities are added, overall sales of Korean instant noodles in export markets would exceed \$800 million.

Consumers Demand Tighter Origin Labeling on Processed Foods Imported from Fukushima Japan]

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20181219/93363317/1>

Summary: Korea has imported 162 metric tons of Japanese processed food and beverage products from Fukushima origin through November this year. Although these products are subject to radiation safety inspection to enter the market, many Korean consumers are concerned about the safety of the Fukushima products. In particular, consumers and NGO groups point out that the label of the imported Fukushima products is misleading as the products are simply labeled as 'Product of Japan'. NGO groups also argue that the Korean government inspection is testing a small part (sample) of the shipment only and there remains potential safety risk in the shipment as a result. NGO groups are voicing for more specific origin labeling on the imported Fukushima products for consumers' safe choices and 100 percent radiation safety inspection on the products.

Seven Eleven Korea Launches Fresh Produce Section [Korean, OSY]

<http://news.mk.co.kr/newsRead.php?year=2018&no=787029>

Summary: Seven Eleven Korea announced on December 18 that it has launched a fresh produce section in 200 stores in the Seoul metropolitan market. The section offers 9 seasonal fruits and vegetables in small volume packages which are supplied by the Korea National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives (NFAC). Seven Eleven Korea added that the fresh produce section would expand to over 1,000 stores in early next year if the launching program shows further business potential. Marketers point out that convenience stores are becoming key grocery shopping venues for small size families.



ROKG Provides 22.7 Billion Won of Subsidy to Local Environment-Friendly Farms, Up 27% [Korean, OSY]

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018121620621>

<http://www.korea.kr/briefing/pressReleaseView.do?newsId=156308982>

Summary: Korea Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) announced that its subsidy program for local environment-friendly farms would amount to 22.7 billion won (about \$19.7 million) this year, up 27 percent from last year. The subsidy program provides partial financial compensation for reduced income in local farms incurred by transition to environment-friendly farming. According to MAFRA, the increased subsidy amount this year was mainly due to increased acreage of environment-friendly farms in Korea which totaled 31,685 hectares. In addition, MAFRA's subsidy program for environment-friendly livestock farms will pay a total of 13.5 billion won (about \$11.7 million) this year. Hanwoo cattle farms account for 37 percent of the program payment, followed by chicken farms (20 percent) and swine farms (17 percent).

Squid Price Soars as Catch in Local Sea Plummets [Korean, OSY]

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018121620301>

Summary: The average price of fresh squid in the retail market marked 20,068 won per kilogram during November, up 26 percent from the same month last year. Price of frozen squid also went up 18 percent from a year ago to 12,882 won per kilogram. The price hike of squid is due to reduced catch in local seas. The squid catch in local seas in the past ran around 200,000 metric tons a year. However, increased sea water temperatures in local seas has caused a dramatic decline of the catch in recent years down to 87,000 metric tons in 2017. The catch this year has even halved from last year's catch. To fill the gap, imports of squid has shown a rapid growth this year, amounting to 136,000 metric tons through November, up 41 percent from last year.

ROKG Deregulation to Include Fruit Wine under Small-scale Alcohol Beverage Processor Definition [Korean, OSY]

<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2018121354521>

Summary: The Korean government announced on December 13 that its 33 new deregulation initiatives included expansion of small-scale alcohol beverage processing to fruit wine. So far, the scope of products allowed to be processed by small-scale alcohol beverage processors has been limited to rice wine (yakju, cheongju, and makgeolli) and beer. The inclusion of fruit wine will promote launchings of many local craft fruit wineries in Korea such as craft apple wine.

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."