



Foreign Agricultural Service
U.S. Agricultural Trade Office



FAS/Seoul Monitoring of Media Reporting on Agricultural Issues

Today's Date: **Friday, March 20, 2020**

For Coverage: **March 16 ~ 20, 2020**

Travelers through Seoul-Incheon Airport Down 92 Percent ... Outbound Flights Down 88 Percent

<http://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20200319/100246556/1>

Summary: According to Seoul-Incheon International Airport (ICN, the main airport in South Korea), the number of flights it serviced on March 19 was 140 (departure 69, arrival 71), down 88 percent from regular levels. The number of passengers who departed or arrived totaled 14,939, down 92 percent from two month ago. Most of the duty free shops in the airport are closed due to lack of shoppers.

Retailers Promote Prepared HMR Products Targeting People Staying Home

<http://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20200319/100246547/1>

Summary: On March 19, Lotte Mart, a leading hypermarket grocery store chain in South Korea, launched an in-store promotion on Home Meal Replacement products. The event targets consumers who are staying home for COVID19 related concerns.



Shinsegae Department Store Launches 'Spring Flower Gifts' Promotion to Support Local Growers

<http://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20200319/100246507/1>

Summary: Shinsegae Department Store (SDS) launched an in-store promotion that offers free flowers to shoppers who purchase 10,000 won (8 dollar) or more using affiliated credit cards. SDS pointed out that the promotion is intended to support local flower growers who are experiencing a dramatic decline in their sales under the COVID19 outbreak.



China Implements 14 Day Quarantine on Freight Containers from the United States for COVID19 Risk

<https://www.hankyung.com/international/article/2020031952691>

Summary: Bloomberg reported on March 19 that Fuzhou provincial government implemented a two week quarantine hold for all incoming freight containers from the U.S., Japan, South Korea, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Iran and Singapore for COVID19 risk. The government official commented that the 14 day quarantine time was counted from the time that containers departed the port of origin. Marketers are worried that this measure would paralyze international trade.

Capsule Coffee Market Doubles in 4 Years

<https://www.hankyung.com/economy/article/202003177942i>

Summary: EuroMonitor reported that the capsule coffee market in South Korea generated 143 billion won (\$125 million) of sales in 2019, up by more than 4 times from 2015. The number of capsule coffee machines supplied in the market continued a double digit growth over the years, marking 481,700 in 2019. Nestle remains the leading player in the market but other suppliers, including both processors and retail distributors, joined the competition by launching other international brands to capitalize on increased consumer demand.

Enoki Mushroom Price Plunges 22% as U.S. Bans Imports for 4 Deaths

<https://www.hankyung.com/society/article/202003194888i>

Summary: The price of enoki mushroom in Seoul wholesale market fell 7,000 won (about \$5.6 USD) per 5 kilogram box on March 18, down 22 percent from the previous week. The decline was due to an import ban announced by the U.S. FDA on March 10. FDA reported that 40 people in the U.S. got sick from listeria bacteria poisoning allegedly after eating Korean enoki mushroom. Four of them died. Korean enoki mushroom growers argued that the cause of the listeria poisoning in the U.S. was under further investigation without a clear conclusion, so the press should be careful not to mislead consumers at this time.

KRA Decides to Extend No Races Until April 9 ... \$880 Million Loss in Betting Money Revenue

<https://www.hankyung.com/sports/article/2020031953081>

Summary: The Korea Racing Authority (KRA) announced on March 19 that it would continue the suspension of races in all three racetracks in South Korea until April 9 because of COVID19 risk. KRA added that the extended suspension would result in a \$880 million loss in betting revenue. KRA earned \$6.4 billion of betting revenue from local races in 2019.

SIAL China to be Held in May Postponed to September

<http://www.foodnews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=73267>

Summary: With the spread of COVID-19, the FoodEx Japan, one of the world's three largest food shows, was canceled, followed by the cancellation and delay of the global food trade exhibitions. The Seafood Expo North America (formerly Boston Seafood Show) & Seafood Expo Global in Brussels were postponed until further notice and the Shanghai FIC (a food additives exposition) was postponed to June 28-30. SIAL CHINA which was scheduled to be held in Shanghai in May, was also postponed to September 28-30, the Geneva Vita Food Fair to September 1-3, and the Bangkok THAIFEX to September 22-26.

SPC Samlip Acquires Dealership of 'Just Egg' Products in Korea

<http://www.foodnews.co.kr/news/articleView.html?idxno=73248>

Summary: SPC Samlip entered into a strategic partnership with Eat JUST, Inc., a foodtech company based in California, to distribute 'Just' brand food products made of plant based ingredients in Korea. SPC Samlip Company plans to manufacture Just Egg, Just Mayo, and Just Dressing products in its SPC Fresh Food Factory and to sell them in Korea second half of the 2020.

ROKG Provides 90 Billion Won of COVID19 Support Funds to Farmers and Fishermen

<http://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20200318/100208709/1>

Summary: The Korea Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) reported on March 18 that it started to provide 60 billion won (\$50 million) of 'disaster relief' financial support to local farms that have been affected by COVID19 outbreaks. Ministry of Marine & Fisheries (MMF) also announced allocation of 30 billion won (\$25 million) of financial support to fishermen affected by COVID19 outbreaks.

Home Delivery Orders Surge ... Coupang Saw 140% Sales Growth in February ... BDM Saw 9% Growth in March 2-15

<http://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20200317/100208172/1>

Summary: As consumers are opting for "untact" (non-personal contact) shopping tools amid COVID19 concerns, on-line retailers have seen strong growth in their business. Coupang, the leading on-line retailer in Korea, reportedly generated 1.6 trillion won (\$1.4 billion) of sales in February, up 140 percent from the same month last year. BDM, the leading on-line restaurant meal delivery service, reported that its sales during the first two weeks in March increased 9 percent from the same period last year. Consumers are even requesting that deliveries be left in front of their doors so that they can avoid contacts with the delivery crews.

Five Star Hotels in Seoul Launch Premium Lunch Boxes for Delivery

<http://www.donga.com/news/List/EconomyMarket/article/all/20200317/100208009/1>

Summary: Leading five star hotels in Seoul, including Westin Chosun Hotel, Lotte Hotel, and JW Marriott Seoul, have introduced premium lunch boxes for delivery. This is to cope with reduced consumer traffic to their restaurants but at the same time to meet increased demand from corporations that opted for in-house meetings and events amid the COVID19 outbreaks. Lotte Hotel even offers 'drive through' pick up option to minimize personal contacts.



LS Tower Introduces 'COVID19 Safety Divider' on Restaurant Tables

<https://www.hankyung.com/economy/article/2020031786101>

Summary: LS Tower introduced 'COVID19 safety dividers' on restaurant tables on March 18 as a measure to prevent COVID19 infection. LS Tower was closed for two days for disinfection earlier in February when an employee got infected with the virus.



Retailers Report Strong Sales Growth for HMR Foods and Healthy Foods during COVID19 Outbreak

<https://www.hankyung.com/economy/article/202003130254i>

Summary: More people are dining at home during the COVID19 outbreak, generating strong demand for Home Meal Replacement products. Increased health concerns are also resulting in strong sales of health functional foods. GS25, a leading convenience store chain, saw 176 percent sales growth for packaged chicken salad in February. Wemakeprice, a major on-line retailer, saw 321 percent sales growth for packaged chicken ginseng soup in February. Korea Ginseng Corporation saw 95 percent on-line sales growth for processed red ginseng products in February.

Last Winter in Korea was the Warmest on Record ... Average Temperature was 3.1 Degree Celsius

<http://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20200317/100189595/1>

Summary: Korea National Weather Service reported that the last winter (December 2019 through February 2020) was the warmest winter in Korea since the government started nationwide weather survey in 1973. The average temperature last winter was 3.1 degree Celsius, 2.5 degrees higher than average for the last 20 years.

Foodservice Companies Launch Spring Promotions under the Theme of Seasonal Ingredients

<http://www.donga.com/news/article/all/20200316/100189153/1>

Summary: Leading Korean foodservice companies have launched numerous in-store promotions under the theme of fresh spring ingredients. Key ingredients highlighted in the promotions include strawberries, Jukumee octopus, asparagus, dalrae (local spring vegetable), naengee (local spring vegetable), and cherry flowers.

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."