



Foreign Agricultural Service
U.S. Agricultural Trade Office



FAS/Seoul Monitoring of Media Reporting on Agricultural Issues

Today's Date: **Tuesday, April 25, 2017**

For Coverage: **April 12 ~ 25, 2017**

Korean Farm Family Revenue Income Marks 37 Million Won in 2016, Slight Decline from the Previous Year

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170425/84050137/1>

Summary: According to the Korea National Statistics Office, annual revenue income of a Korean farm family amounted to 37.2 million won (about \$33,000) in 2016 on average, slightly down from 37.3 million in the previous year. The main cause of the decline was revenue from farm production sales which declined 6.2 percent from the previous year.

E Mart Considers Withdrawal from China

<http://www.hankyung.com/news/app/newsview.php?aid=2017042439541>

Summary: According to industry sources, E Mart (the leading hypermarket grocery retailer in Korea) is planning to close down all of its 6 stores in China within this year. E Mart entered into China in 1997 and once operated as many as 27 stores. However, E Mart saw a significant loss over the years in China and reduced its presence down to the current 6 stores.

Retail Industry Stages Upscale Sales Promotions Targeting Golden Week in May

<http://www.hankyung.com/news/app/newsview.php?aid=2017042312131>

Summary: The first week of coming May is named as "Golden Week" as it has three national holidays: Labor Day (May 1), Buddha's Birth Day (May 3), and Children's Day (May 5). It is likely that consumer spending during the week will surge. As a result, the entire retail industry in Korea has planned for aggressive sales promotions under the theme of Golden Week. For example, Lotte Group is scheduled to launch 'Lotte Play Festa' event in all of its retail outlets, including Lotte Department Store, Lotte Mart, and Lotte Super. During the event, consumers will find heavy price discounts on related products together with various cultural and amusement programs in the store.

On-line E Mart Mall Partners with Cacao Talk to Expand Mobile Shopping

<http://www.hankyung.com/news/app/newsview.php?aid=2017041925321>

Summary: E Mart Mall, the on-line retail business under E Mart (the leading grocery retail chain in Korea), announced on April 19 that it has developed a partnership with Cacao Talk, the leading smart phone messenger app in Korea. E Mart pointed out that the consumers who use Cacao Talk can easily make grocery purchases in the app. E Mart added that this partnership will help the consumers enjoy the convenience of on-line shopping through their smart phones. Sales of E Mart Mall through mobile channel (smart phone) exceed desktop PC channel for the first time in 2016. Mobile channel currently accounts for 61 percent of the sales of E Mart Mall.

IMF Raises 2017 Economic Growth Forecast for Korea from 2.6% to 2.7%

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170418/83931796/1>

Summary: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) raised its 2017 Economic Growth Forecast for Korea by 0.1 percent to 2.7 percent on April 18. The Korea Development Institute (KDI), a Korean government think-tank, also revised its annual Korean GDP growth forecast by 0.2 percent to 2.6 percent on April 18.

Cham-E-Seul, Leading Soju Brand Marks 1 Trillion Won Sales for the First Time in 2016

<http://www.hankyung.com/news/app/newsview.php?aid=2017041893741>

Summary: Hite Jinro Co. reported that its Cham-E-Seul soju brand marked 1 trillion won of annual sales for the first time in 2016. The volume of sales amounted to 1.7 billion bottles (360 ml bottle) in 2016. Cham-E-Seul's market share in the soju market was about 50 percent, followed by Cheo-Um-Cheo-Rum by Lotte Liquor (17 percent).

E Mart to Close A Dozen Stores

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170416/83890489/1>

Summary: E Mart, the leading hypermarket grocery store chain in Korea, is reportedly in the process of closing about a dozen stores within this year. Under the plan, E Mart Jangnan store in Seoul ended operation on March 31. E Mart commented that some of its stores face tough competition from both conventional and on-line competitors so it has come to a decision to close those under-performing stores. E Mart pointed out that this will help divert more of its resources to new growth areas such as "No Brand" private label business, warehouse discount store business, and on-line e-commerce. During the first quarter this year, E Mart saw 27.3 percent and 30.6 percent sales growth in its warehouse discount store business (Traders) and e-commerce business respectively. On the other hand, sales of conventional E Mart stores saw only 1.8 percent growth.

E Mart Opens 2,000th 'With Me' Convenience Store

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170416/83890708/1>

Summary: E Mart reported that its 2,000th 'With Me' convenience store will open on April 19. E Mart pointed out that it took 2 years and 9 months for its 'With Me' convenience store division to reach 2,000th store.

Retail Sales of Table Sugar Declines 40% During the Last 3 Years

<http://www.hankyung.com/news/app/newsview.php?aid=2017041636621>

Summary: According to the Food Industry Statistics for 2016 released recently, retail sales of table sugar in Korea amounted to 143 billion won in 2016, down 38.1 percent from 2013. Marketers commented that the decline was mainly due to the consumers' increased health concerns. On the other hand, sales of artificial sweeteners are on a solid growth to mark 230 billion won in 2016.

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"