



Foreign Agricultural Service
U.S. Agricultural Trade Office



FAS/Seoul Monitoring of Media Reporting on Agricultural Issues

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ROKG Resumes Market Distribution of European Hams and Sausages

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170906/86186145/1>

Summary: Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) announced on September 5 that market distribution of imported hams and sausages from EU origin was allowed as its inspections since August 24 found no evidence of harmful hepatitis virus contamination in the products. MFDS added that it would continue to monitor imported products for any food safety risks.

Low Price Gift Sets Under 50,000 Won Expand Sales for Coming Korean Thanksgiving Day Season

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170905/86185840/1>

Summary: According to E Mart, products under 50,000 won accounts for 86 percent of the gift sets that it offers for coming Thanksgiving Day season (October 3-5) this year. E Mart pointed out that products under 50,000 won accounted for 67 percent of the gift sets that it offered for Thanksgiving Day season last year. Anti-graft Act implemented in 2016 is the main cause of the expanded sales of low price gift sets in the market as the Act prevents gifting over 50,000 won to the people in the public service, schools and press.

Trump Administration to Discuss Abolition of KORUS FTA This Week

<http://www.yonhapnewstv.co.kr/MYH20170903000100038/?did=1825mSummary>:

Donald Trump, USA president, said in a press interview on September 2 that he had ordered his cabinet staffs to prepare to abolish the Korea-United States Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA). U.S. government officials commented that the process to abolish the KORUS FTA would start as early as in the week of September 4.

The U.S. Demands Immediate Abolition of Import Duties on All American Agricultural Products in KORUS FTA Renegotiation Meeting ...

The U.S. Demands Extended Duty Phase-out Schedule on Korean Agricultural Products at the Same Time

<http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2017/09/04/0200000000AKR20170904162400003.HTML?input=1195m>
<http://news.hankyung.com/article/2017090429681>

Summary: It is reported that the United States demanded immediate abolition of all import duties that Korea charged to American agricultural products entering Korea during the bilateral meeting held in Seoul on June 21 to renegotiate Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA). At the same time, the U.S. demanded in the meeting that import duty phase-out schedules established under current KORUS FTA for Korean agricultural products entering the U.S. should be extended by five to ten years. It is likely that the high demand of the U.S. on agricultural products will meet a strong opposition and controversy in Korea as the renegotiation progresses.

Mobile Shopping on a Surge ... Marks 4 Trillion Won Sales in July This Year

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170905/86167524/1>

Summary: According to the Korea Statistics Office (KSO), Korean consumers' shopping via mobile gears (such as smart phones) amounted to 4 trillion won in July 2017, up 35 percent from the same period in 2016. Mobile shopping accounted for 62 percent of overall on-line shopping sales in Korea. Overall on-line shopping sales amounted to 6.5 trillion won in July, up 16 percent from the previous year.

McDonald's Korea Stops Selling Bulgogi Burger After a Food Poisoning Incident in Jeonju

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170904/86148602/1>

Summary: A group of 8 elementary students in Jeonju city reportedly had a food poisoning incident after eating McDonald's Bulgogi burgers last week. McDonald's Korea announced that as a result of the incident it had stopped selling Bulgogi burger in all stores from September 2. The local health authority has started an investigation.

ROKG Posts Daily Chicken Meat Price to Pressure Fried Chicken Restaurant Franchises Not to Increase Consumer Price

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170831/86111819/1>

Summary: The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) reported that it started to post the daily price of chicken meat on its internet website from September 1. The price information includes ex-farm price paid to farmers, wholesale price charged by the franchise headquarter to franchisee restaurants, and consumer price of fried chicken offered by franchisee restaurants. MAFRA pointed out that disclosure of the price information will show the large amount of mark-ups taken by franchise headquarters and franchisee restaurants in the supply chain and will eventually pressure fried chicken restaurant franchises not to increase the consumer price above a reasonable level.

Sodium Saccharin Recovers the Tarnished Reputation ... Number of Food Products Allowed to Use This Increases from 29 Food Products to 35 Food Products

<http://www.yonhapnews.co.kr/bulletin/2017/08/31/0200000000AKR20170831130400017.HTML?input=1195m>

Summary: According to the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety on September 1, it plans to add 6 food items, such as rice cake, mayonnaise, composite seasoning food, fruit and vegetable product, sugar product, boiled or steamed corn, etc., to the group of food products in which an artificial sweetener, sodium saccharin, can be used as a food ingredient by making partial amendment to the standards and specifications of food additives. With this revision, food products that sodium saccharin can be added have been increased to 35 food items from existing 29 items. Sodium saccharin fell into disrepute as a bladder tumor was found in mice injected with saccharin in the 1970s in Canada. But the Codex Alimentarius Commission currently allows the use of sodium saccharin in all food products based on research results conducted by international research agencies that saccharin is not a carcinogenic substance.

47 Products are Listed for 'Small to Medium Business Only'

<http://news.donga.com/3/all/20170830/86089055/1>

Summary: Co-Growth Committee under the Korean government announced on August 30 a list of 47 products that was designated as businesses for small-to-medium companies only. Large-scale companies will not be allowed to enter these businesses. Listed products included many food products, such as tofu, kimchi, soy sauce, bean paste sauce, hot pepper sauce, rice cake, and fish cake. Korean government has been implementing the product listing for small-to-medium business only since 2011. A product can be listed for up to 6 years under the current regulation. But Korean government is planning to introduce another regulation that can limit large-scale company's business entry into the listed products permanently.

As a Coffee Republic, Korea Saw a 20 Percent Increase in Coffee Imports during the First Half of This Year

<http://www.munhwa.com/news/view.html?no=2017082901071603016001>

Summary: According to the Korean Customs Service on August 29, Korea's coffee imports during the first half of this year amounted to \$350 million, 55 percent of last year's total imports (\$631 million), and is expected to reach a record high level this year. The demand for coffee in Korea is showing an explosive increase, while exports of Korean traditional tea such as green tea, red ginseng tea, etc. have been declining for years. In terms of imported coffee items, 19.5 percent of green coffee beans were imported from Brazil, Colombia (19.3%) and Vietnam (12.5%). On the other hand, the United States accounted for 44.4 percent of roasted beans, followed by Swiss (18.0%) and Italy (15.7%). The International Coffee Organization report indicated that Korea had ranked seventh in coffee imports, following the European Union, the United States, Japan, Russia, Canada, and Algeria.

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."