MARKET NEWS

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Mérieux NutriSciences

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FOCUS ON CHINA

China issues 5-year plan to modernize market regulation

China's State Council has issued a plan to advance the modernization of the country's market regulation over the 14th Five-Year Plan period (2021-2025).

The plan calls for continuously optimizing the business environment in China to fully stimulate the vitality of market entities.

Starting a new business will, for example, become more convenient in China, with average time consumption shrinking from fewer than four weekdays currently to about two weekdays by 2025, according to the plan.

To build a level market playing field, the plan urges efforts to strengthen fair competition and anti-monopoly regulations. Platform companies will be guided to compete in an orderly manner, and practices such as discriminatory treatment and false sales promotions will be investigated in accordance with the law.

New industries and business models will see enhanced supervision, per the plan, underscoring the close monitoring of competition in the "internet plus service" industry and investigating relevant illegal activities.

Efforts should also be made to guarantee food and drug safety, ensure the safe operations of special equipment, strengthen supervision over the quality of industrial products, and further protect the rights and interests of consumers, according to the plan.

Parents warned about imported infant formula

The General Administration of Customs has advised consumers to stop buying and using some infant formulas produced by Abbott Nutrition, a healthcare company based in the United States.

The administration said on Sunday that the US Food and Drug Administration had announced on Feb 18 that it was investigating into

complaints about bacterial infections involving four infants who consumed the products.

They all consumed powdered infant formula produced by a facility in Sturgis, Michigan, including the Similac, Alimentum and Elecare brands, it said.

The customs administration suggested that consumers not purchase or use powdered formula products from the company that meet any of the following conditions: that the first two digits of the product code are numbers 22 through 37; that the code on the container contains K8, SH or Z2; or that the expiration date is April 1,2022, or later.

The products haven't entered China through general trade, the administration said, adding that consumers who bought the products through cross-border e-commerce channels should stop using them.

Similac HMFortifi, a baby nutrition supplement for special medical purposes produced by the company, has been exported to China, but Abbott China had initiated a recall, the administration said.

It said it will keep a close eye on the FDA's investigation.

The FDA and other US authorities are investigating complaints of infant illness related to products from Abbott Nutrition's Sturgis facility received from Sept 20 to Jan 11.

FDA said among the four complaints, three reports were about Cronobacter sakazakii infections and one was about a Salmonella Newport infection, with a Cronobacter infection possibly having caused one death.

On Feb 17, the company recalled powdered infant formulas from the three brands produced at the Michigan facility.

It said the recalled products had been distributed to over 30 countries and regions including Australia, Canada, China and Colombia.

The FDA advised consumers not to use recalled powdered infant formula from the three brands. The recalled products can be identified by the seven to nine-digit code on the bottom of the container and expiration date.

Children who are experiencing any symptoms such as sepsis, meningitis, temperature changes, jaundice or difficulty breathing after using the products need to seek medical care immediately, it said.

The website similacrecall.com offers information for consumers to check if the products they have are on the recall list. As of press time, Abbott China hadn't offered a way for people on the Chinese mainland who bought the products via cross-border e-commerce to return or exchange products.

International News

FDA investigates Abbott infant formula after reports of illness and one death

The US, Canada, Australia and China are sending out warnings to the public over Abbott infant formula products after the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced it was investigating four consumer complaints of Cronobacter sakazakii and Salmonella Newport infections.

" All four cases related to these complaints were hospitalized, and Cronobacter may have contributed to a death in one case," the FDA says.

The investigation so far has been associated with three Cronobacter illnesses and one for Salmonella.

All of the cases are reported to have consumed powdered infant formula produced from Abbott Nutrition's Sturgis, Michigan facility, the regulator adds. The infants were in Minnesota, Ohio and two were in Texas. The complaints were received between September 6 and December 18, 2021. The recalled items have been distributed in more than 30 countries.

Following the FDA's announcement, Abbott has initiated a voluntary recall of potentially affected products, including Similac, Alimentum and EleCare powdered formulas manufactured at the Sturgis facility in Michigan.

Traces of bacteria?

It is reached out to Abbott for comment, which specified that during testing in the Sturgis facility, the company found evidence of Cronobacter sakazakii in the plant in non-product contact areas.

" Retained samples related to the three complaints for Cronobacter sakazakii tested negative for Cronobacter sakazakii, and the retained sample related to the complaint for Salmonella Newport tested negative for Salmonella Newport," says Vicky Assardo, senior director, global public affairs, Abbott Nutrition.

The FDA's statement outlines the regulator initiated an onsite inspection at the facility.

" Findings to date include several positive Cronobacter sakazakii results from environmental samples taken by the FDA and adverse inspectional observations by the FDA investigators."

Assardo stipulates that "no distributed product has tested positive for the presence of either of these bacteria, and we continue to test."

" Abbott conducts extensive quality checks on each completed batch of infant formula, including microbiological analysis prior to release. All infant formula products are tested for Cronobacter sakazakii, Salmonella Newport and other pathogens, and they must test negative before any product is released."

Destroying the product

The FDA also specifies that a review of the firm's internal records "also indicate environmental contamination with Cronobacter sakazakii and the firm's destruction of product due to the presence of Cronobacter."

Asked to comment on the FDA's point, Assardo notes that the destruction of the product "occurred a while back."

"All our nutrition products undergo rigorous testing for pathogens, and any product that tests positive is destroyed. No finished product that tests positive has been released."

Global governments react

Products made at the Sturgis facility can be found across the US and were likely exported to other countries, the FDA specifies.

According to the firm, recalled products were distributed to Australia, Bahrain, Barbados, Bermuda, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Guam, Guatemala, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Oman, Peru, Puerto Rico, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Taiwan, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and Vietnam.

Australia's department of health on Monday issued an alert to consumers and health professionals, advising that Abbott Australasia Pty Ltd and Abbott US have initiated recalls of certain batches of items due to potential microbial contamination. Parents and carers are advised to change to an alternative product as soon as possible and stop using the Abbott items once an alternative product is obtained.

China Customs also issued a statement warning consumers from buying and eating the Abbott products announced by the FDA. The authority specified that the items have not entered China through general trade but consumers who purchased them through cross-border e-commerce should stop using them.

The Canadian government also issued a recall warning the public not to consume, use, sell, serve or distribute the products in question.

Tracking the bacteria

The FDA specified the investigation is ongoing with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as state and local partners. Abbott is also working with the FDA.

The FDA's advice to consumers is not to use Similac, Alimentum or EleCare powdered infant formulas if:

- the first two digits of the code are 22 through 37; and
- the code on the container contains K8, SH or Z2; and
- the expiration date is 4-1-2022 (APR 2022) or later.

According to the FDA, Cronobacter sakazakii is a germ found naturally in the environment. The germs can live in dry foods, such as powdered infant formula, powdered milk, herbal teas and starches.

Cronobacter can cause diarrhea and urinary tract infections in people of all ages, but infection can be very serious in infants. The germs can cause a dangerous blood infection (sepsis) or make the linings surrounding the brain and spinal cord swell (meningitis).

Salmonella can be spread by food handlers who do not wash their hands or the surfaces and tools they use between food preparation steps and when people eat raw or undercooked foods.

Most people infected with Salmonella will begin to develop symptoms 12 to 72 hours after infection, such as diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps.

Children younger than five, the elderly and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to have severe salmonellosis infections.

Companies have previously described the future of the nutrition industry as one of cautious innovation, with a strong focus on providing highly-qualified food safety.

Study shows aged black garlic demonstrates new potential to balance blood pressure favorably

In a new clinical study of individuals with moderately elevated cholesterol levels, Pharmactive Biotech Products, S.L.U.'s Aged Black Garlic (ABG+®) demonstrated new potential to balance blood pressure favorably.

ABG+ is grown and cultivated locally, just two hours from Pharmactive's facility, and gently processed using green technology. The process generates very low waste and significantly reduces the environmental impact.

Results were published in the science journal Nutrients on January 18, 2022[1], the randomized, double-blind, sustained, crossover-controlled intervention was conducted at the Sant Joan de Reus University Hospital in Barcelona. The study was led by Dr. Rosa Valls, and included 67 adult hypercholesterolemic volunteers with relatively high blood LDL levels.

Each participant consumed 250mg ABG+ or a placebo over six weeks, with a three-week washout period before crossover. Subjects also were assigned a set diet that excluded lipo-lowering and anti-hypertensive foods.

Results at six weeks demonstrated that ABG+ extract significantly reduced diastolic blood pressure (DBP) by 5.85mm Hg on average compared to the placebo. The favorable reaction was particularly evident in men. "A reduction of just 5mm Hg of diastolic blood pressure

lowers substantially the risk of stroke and other vascular events," explains Alberto Espinel, Head of R&D for Pharmactive.

High blood pressure affects nearly a third of adults worldwide and is the leading preventable risk factor for cardiovascular problems and all-cause mortality. The risks associated with common cardiovascular problems and stroke double with every 10mm Hg diastolic increase among people aged 40 to 89.

Green Production

The garlic cloves turn dark and assume a soft, jellylike texture while losing the characteristic pungent garlic flavor as it turns sweet. During this process, the aged bulbs undergo substantial biochemical changes. The main organosulfur compounds in fresh garlic—alliin and allicin—are diminished. Yet a powerful bioactive complex of soluble polyphenols, predominantly SAC, flavonoids, and melanoidins, is significantly increased. The synergetic action of these antioxidants is believed to be the primary source of the cardioprotective qualities of ABG+.

Pharmactive's ABG+ extract is standardized to 1.25mg S-allyl-L-cysteine (SAC) polyphenols. It is produced using the company's proprietary ABG Cool-Tech® aging technique. Its rich concentration of SAC is confirmed by HPLC (high-performance liquid chromatography).

"SAC is virtually absent in fresh garlic, yet is synthesized and accumulated during aging under specific ambient conditions," explains Espinel.

"This is some of the first evidence emerging on the blood pressure-balancing effect of an ABG+ extract, as a natural alternative, in a population where the strategies of intervention are based on diet and maintaining a healthy lifestyle," continues Espinel.

Ethylene oxide meeting highlights concerns as recalls continue

A number of European countries have again expressed concerns about how the ethylene oxide contamination incidents are being handled.

Several nations highlighted the high burden of required action as more products are found to be contaminated at low levels from different origins and described it as “no longer manageable.”

A European Union harmonized approach was agreed on in 2021 and while it is supported and followed by the majority of reporting countries, it is not fully applied in practice by all of them. This led to some officials questioning whether there really was a harmonized approach and anger at the non-uniform implementation.

The EU position is that products containing the additive locust bean gum contaminated with ethylene oxide need to be withdrawn or recalled to protect the consumer. It had already been called "disproportionate" with certain countries unhappy with the arrangements, which have led to thousands of products being recalled.

Zero tolerance approach criticized

The problem started in September 2020 with sesame seed products from India. In the EU, the use of ethylene oxide to disinfect foodstuffs is not permitted. In 2020 most RASFF reports related to sesame seed products, but in 2021 a variety of items were reported, including locust bean gum, guar gum and xanthan gum from Turkey, food supplements and spices. There have been close to 50 RASFF reports so far this year because of ethylene oxide.

The latest meeting, in January, included experts on pesticide residues, additives and feed from EU countries, Norway, Switzerland, the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), DG Sante and EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs).

Several EU member states highlighted problems because of different approaches. Information was provided on a RASFF-notified product that

was recalled from consumers in one EU country but not in another. Another EU country had a similar experience for a ready-to-eat meal.

Some EU countries said they were mainly following up on RASFF reports but there was no or a limited amount of samples being taken under their own monitoring programs.

The Association of Producers of Carob Bean Gum (INEC) said it was "very concerned" about the incident with members doing additional analyses and controls to ensure that no carob bean kernels or pods entering the EU were treated with ethylene oxide.

Traceability or detectability?

For composite and processed foods, some countries are using a risk assessment approach from a German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) opinion or a calculated ethylene oxide maximum residue level based on the proportion of the ingredients in the composite product and comparing it with ethylene oxide presence to assess compliance.

There was also concern about the lack of a level playing field in the region for EU manufactured products compared to imports. While for domestic products, non-compliant ingredients can be traced back, it is not possible for imported items.

An EU Plants, Animals, Food and Feed (PAFF) Committee that deals with pesticide residues is set to hear feedback on the ethylene oxide situation at its next meeting on Feb. 22 and 23.

A number of import measures have been taken by the EU Commission with updated regulation applying beginning in early January. However, a

temporary arrangement has since been reached to provide a transitional period until Feb. 17 to exempt newly affected imported products from needing a health certificate if they undergo 100 percent sampling and lab analysis at border control posts.

Discrepancies in the analytical results for ethylene oxide from various labs in the EU and other countries have also been reported.

Traces of 2-chloro-ethanol (2CE) have been found in calcium carbonate, which is often used in food supplements, but it is unclear if contamination was from ethylene oxide use.

Businesses in the supplements sector are worried about the lack of clarity on testing results for ethylene oxide levels on products, according to a paper published in 2021 by the European Federation of Associations of Health Products Manufacturers (EHPM).

The group said detection of 2-chloro-ethanol may not be an indicator of ethylene oxide contamination as assumed and could come from other sources. It urged the EU Commission to review its approach to managing the incident.

Enterprise News

Giant Eagle recalls frozen bags of diced green peppers after testing finds Listeria

Giant Eagle Inc. of Pittsburgh, PA, is recalling frozen bags of Giant Eagle diced green peppers because the product tested positive for Listeria monocytogenes.

The product was distributed to Giant Supermarkets in Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Indiana.

There is concern that consumers may still have possession of some of the recalled products because of the best by date, which is 10/14/2023. Listeria is not killed by freezing temperatures.

Consumers can determine whether they have the recalled frozen peppers in their homes by looking for the following label information:
Giant Eagle Diced Green Peppers, 1
0 oz. 283 g, Frozen bag,
Best By 10/14/2023 .
Consumers should check to see if they have the recalled product in their home. Recalled products should be thrown out or returned to the location where they were purchased.

About Listeria infections

Food contaminated with Listeria monocytogenes may not look or smell

spoiled but can still cause serious and sometimes life-threatening infections. Anyone who has eaten any recalled products and developed symptoms of Listeria infection should seek medical treatment and tell their doctors about the possible Listeria exposure.

Also, anyone who has eaten any of the recalled products should monitor themselves for symptoms during the coming weeks because it can take up to 70 days after exposure to Listeria for symptoms of listeriosis to develop.

Symptoms of Listeria infection can include vomiting, nausea, persistent fever, muscle aches, severe headache, and neck stiffness. Specific laboratory tests are required to diagnose Listeria infections, which can mimic other illnesses.

Pregnant women, the elderly, young children, and people such as cancer patients who have weakened immune systems are particularly at risk of serious illnesses, life-threatening infections, and other complications. Although infected pregnant women may experience only mild, flu-like symptoms, their infections can lead to premature delivery, infection of the newborn, or even stillbirth.

Recalled dried plums sold in California, Nevada and Utah

Candies Tolteca of Fresno, CA, is recalling its 1.5-ounce packages of Saladitos (salted dried plums) and its 1.5-ounce packages of Saladitos con Chile y Limon (dried plums with chili and lemon) because of potential lead contamination.

The recall was initiated after it was discovered that dried plums, or saladitos, containing lead were distributed in packaging that did not reveal the presence of lead, according to a company recall notice posted by the Food and Drug Administration.

There is concern that consumers may still have possession of some of the recalled plums because of their long shelf life, which reaches into May.

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) is warning consumers not to eat at least eight other types of dried plum snacks, also known as Saladitos, imported from China and Taiwan. The full list can be found here.

This recall was initiated after the California Attorney General Rob Bonta issued the public notice.

The company discontinued its sale of the saladitos salted dried plums and saladitos con chile y limon, dried plums with chili and lemon in California since about June 23, 2021, immediately after having received a Notice of Violation. Immediately thereafter the company elected to remove the tolteca brand saladito items from the shelves and displays of the market places in California. The Independent Distributors and Route Sales Representatives gave their full cooperation in removing the items from the reach of consumers and returning them and their own unsold inventory of Saladitos to the company's warehouse for full credit refund, according to a recall notice.

The recalled products were sold and/or distributed in California, Nevada and Utah through Independent Distributors and company Route Sales Representatives who in turn, sold to many retail stores, including supermarkets, gas stations and convenience stores.

Recalled product:
Both Saladitos items come in 1.5 oz portions packaged in clear cellophane bags approximately (4" x 8").
The words SALADITOS Salted Dried Plums appear on a Blue Tolteca brand label and identified with UPC number 704927600694.
The words SALADITOS CON CHILE Y LIMON, dried plums with chili and lemon, appear on green Tolteca brand labels and identified with UPC number 704927600700.
The lot number 21019 is stamped on the front of the packages, along with the expiration dates of 05/20/2022 for the Saladitos (Salted Dried Plums) and 01/20/2022 for the Saladitos Con Chile y Limon (Dried Plums with Chili & Lemon.

As of the posting of this recall, no illnesses have been reported due to the distribution of this product, according to the recall notice.

Consumers who have purchased the recalled products should return them to the place of purchase.

About lead contamination
Lead is a toxic substance present in our environment in small amounts and everyone is exposed to some lead from daily actions such as inhaling dust, eating food, or drinking water.

Exposure to larger amounts of lead can cause lead poisoning. While lead can affect nearly every bodily system, its effects depend upon the amount of and duration of lead exposure and age of the person exposed.

Symptoms can include abdominal pain, vomiting, lethargy, irritability, weakness, behavior or mood changes, delirium, seizures, and coma. However, infants, young children and the developing fetus can be affected by chronic exposure to amounts of lead that may not result in obvious symptoms of lead poisoning. A child with lead poisoning may not look or act sick. Lead poisoning in children can cause: learning disabilities, developmental delays, and lower IQ scores.

Royal Ice Cream expands recall related to possible Listeria contamination

The Royal Ice Cream Company, Inc. of Manchester, CT is expanding its

recall to include all products manufactured at the facility within expiry, because they have the potential to be contaminated with Listeria monocytogenes.

About the Expanded recall

All effected recalled products have the manufacturing plant number "CT121" or "CT#121".

The effected brands manufactured at Royal Ice Cream Company, Inc in Manchester, CT with the above plant number are:

- Batch brand pints, all flavors
- Royal Ice Cream Brand half Gallons, pints, cakes, all specialties.
- Ronny Brook Ice cream all flavor pints & 3 gallon tubs
- New Orleans Ice cream all flavor pints & 2.5-gallon tubs
- Maple Valley Ice Cream all flavor pints
- Art Cream all pint Flavors
- Sweet Scoops Yogurt all pint Flavors
- Gelato Fiasco all pint Flavors
- Biggy Iggy's Ice Cream Sandwiches
- Munson Chip Wich Ice Cream sandwiches
- Giffords Ice cream Sandwiches all flavors
- Chewy Louie Ice Cream Sandwiches
- Snow Wich Ice Cream Sandwich
- Newport Creamery – Crazy Vanilla, Van & Choc, Vanilla & Coffee HG – only

The recall is for all product that is within expiry. The effected ice cream was distributed in retail stores in MA, CT, RI, VT, NY, LA, FL, TX, NH. Products are packaged in pints, half gallons, Sandwiches, portion control slices.

To date, no illnesses have been reported.

The recall was initiated by Royal Ice Cream after FDA sampling revealed the presence of Listeria monocytogenes on processing equipment. The company is holding future product and testing before releasing distribution of the products as FDA and the company continue their investigation as to what caused the problem.

Chicken Nuggets recalled in Canada after testing finds Salmonella

JD Sweid Foods Ltd. is recalling Hampton House brand Chicken Nuggets because of possible Salmonella contamination.

According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), this recall was triggered by test results.

The recalled product has been sold in Canada in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

There is concern that consumers may have the recalled product in their home freezers because of its long shelf life. Consumers can use the following information to determine whether they have the implicated chicken nuggets.

Brand	Product	Size	UPC	Codes
Hampton House	Chicken Nuggets	3 kg	0 66123 52102 0	3141 Best Before 2022 NO 10

As of the posting of this recall, there have been no reported illnesses associated with the consumption of this product.

Consumers should check to see if they have the recalled product in their home. Recalled products should be thrown out or returned to the location where they were purchased.

About Salmonella infections

Food contaminated with Salmonella bacteria does not usually look, smell, or taste spoiled. Anyone can become sick with a Salmonella infection. Infants, children, seniors, and people with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of serious illness because their immune systems are fragile, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Anyone who has eaten any of the recalled products and developed symptoms of Salmonella infection should seek medical attention. Sick people should tell their doctors about the possible exposure to Salmonella bacteria because special tests are necessary to diagnose salmonellosis. Salmonella infection symptoms can mimic other illnesses, frequently leading to misdiagnosis.

Symptoms of Salmonella infection can include diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and fever within 12 to 72 hours after eating contaminated food. Otherwise, healthy adults are usually sick for four to seven days. In some cases, however, diarrhea may be so severe that patients require hospitalization.

Older adults, children, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems, such as cancer patients, are more likely to develop a severe illness and serious, sometimes life-threatening conditions.

Some people get infected without getting sick or showing any symptoms. However, they may still spread the infections to others.

Soda recalled after consumer complains of glass in product

Following a consumer complaint, Loblaw Companies Ltd. is recalling PC brand Lemon & Ginger Sicilian Soda from the marketplace because of the possible presence of glass.

The company reports that the soda was sold nationwide in Canada, according to a recall notice posted by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

"Do not consume recalled products," the recall notice advises. "Recalled products should be thrown out or returned to the location where they were purchased."

There is concern that consumers may have the recalled product in their homes because of its long shelf life. The recall notice did not include a product photograph.

To determine whether they have the recalled soda consumers can look for the following label information:

Brand	Product	Size	UPC	Codes
PC	Lemon & Ginger Sicilian Soda	4 x 200 mL	0 60383 02157 3	• P 2021 SE 24 • BB/MA 2023 SE 24

There have been no reported injuries associated with the consumption of this product.

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is conducting a food safety investigation, which may lead to the recall of other products. If other high-risk products are recalled, the CFIA will notify the public through updated food recall warnings. The CFIA is verifying that industry is removing recalled products from the marketplace.

MARKET NEWS - REPLY

If you have any views or comments on the articles in the marketing news please feel free to contact us on the following email address:

sales.china@mxns.cn