MARKET NEWS

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BETTER FOOD. BETTER HEALTH. BETTER WORLD.

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Focus on China

National standards issued on food, goods

National standards on food, consumer goods, work safety and cross-border e-commerce have been issued recently, the State Administration for Market Regulation announced at a news conference in Yiwu, Zhejiang province, on Nov 24.

According to the administration, three new national standards for food container safety have been rolled out in a bid to improve the monitoring of products to ensure quality and food security.

As new materials and techniques are being used in food packaging, the standards aim to enhance quality control for metal containers and fill the current gap in quality assessment.

Regarding consumer goods, two national standards related to clocks and watches have been announced in an effort to help promote the global competitiveness of Chinese products.

In terms of cross-border e-commerce, the administration said four national standards have been formulated to solve problems such as a lack of clarity in product descriptions.

International News

FDA Reminds Manufacturers of Effective Date for Sesame as a Major Food Allergen

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is reminding manufacturers that effective January 1, 2023, foods containing sesame will be subject to specific food allergen regulatory requirements, including labeling and manufacturing requirements. Sesame is joining the list of major food allergens defined in the law as the result of the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research (FASTER) Act, which was signed into law April 23, 2021. Sesame joins eight other major food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, Crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans.

We remind consumers that foods already in interstate commerce before 2023, including those on retail shelves, do not need to be removed from the marketplace or relabeled to declare sesame as an allergen. So depending on shelf life, some food products may not have allergen labeling for sesame on the effective date. Consumers should check with the manufacturer if they are not sure whether a food product contains sesame.

FAO and WHO publish full E. coli and Listeria reports

Two final reports on controls measures for E. coli and for Listeria in ready-to-eat food have been unveiled by FAO and WHO.

The World Health Organization (WHO) and UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) published the complete reports as part of the

microbiological risk assessment series.

One Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA) in June 2020 covered Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) in meat and dairy products while the other meeting in October and November 2020 looked at Listeria monocytogenes in ready-to-eat (RTE) food.

In 2019, the Codex Alimentarius Commission approved the development of guidelines to control STEC in beef, raw milk, and cheese produced from raw milk, leafy greens, and sprouts. JEMRA was asked for scientific advice on the effectiveness of control measures against STEC during primary production and processing of raw meat, raw milk, and raw cow's milk cheeses. Interventions were scored as high, medium, or low based on evidence in the literature.

Evidence for control measures

Farm-based practices can reduce STEC carriage, excretion, and transmission within a herd. But this can be negated at later stages of the processing chain due to mixing with other animals. Good practices include hygienic housing and bedding, low animal density, clean drinking water, biosecurity, safe and effective sanitation, and manure management. The impact of feed additives, vaccines and nutrition strategies was mixed.

There is wide variation in reported reductions when using organic acids and other chemical agents to decontaminate pre-chill carcasses. Processing measures that reduced STEC on carcasses included steam vacuuming, hot potable water, steam pasteurization, and 24-hour air chilling. Evidence supporting bacteriophage, lactic acid treatments, and irradiation is mixed. High-pressure processing, gamma irradiation, and eBeam were effective at reducing STEC in retail packs.

The efficacy of interventions during the production of raw milk and raw milk cheeses depends on the animal origin of milk, manufacturing practices, the scale of production, and microbial load.

For raw milk, interventions using bactofugation, microfiltration, bacteriophages, eBeam, and high pressure reduced bacteria levels but they all come with logistical issues. Pasteurization is very effective.

For raw milk cheeses, the cooking, acidification, and ripening steps, or a combination of these, may reduce E. coli; however, the level of decline varied by serotype and type of cheese.

Testing is complex and STEC levels are usually low in food. A sampling of beef and raw milk products helps to verify that food safety programs are working, according to the report.

Experts said producers and processors must consider their ability and logistics to use the control measure, its practicality, regulatory status, occupational health and safety issues, and cost. They added the introduction of many interventions applied in sequence as a "multiple-hurdle scheme" to reduce STEC at several points throughout the food chain would be most effective.

Listeria findings

The Listeria meeting identified gaps in the FAO/WHO risk assessment model and

agreed that updating it would help inform risk analysis strategies.

The expert group recommended that leafy greens, cantaloupe, ready-to-eat (RTE) seafood, and frozen vegetables such as peas and corn were the focus of future risk assessments. They noted fresh produce has emerged as an important source of listeriosis.

Global control of Listeria monocytogenes should continue to use an approach that does not consider subgroups while allowing risk managers in some countries to use subtype information to inform their decisions.

Efforts should be focused on the management and control of Listeria by having a comprehensive food safety management system (FSMS). A key component is environmental monitoring. Regulatory agencies were advised to use a combination of finished product testing and environmental monitoring to verify proper implementation of control strategies by businesses.

Regulation should encourage aggressive environmental monitoring to eliminate sources of Listeria. Microbiological criteria such as zero tolerance can negatively impact the implementation of FSMS and the way environmental monitoring programs are employed and reported said, experts.

Public communication should focus on informing vulnerable groups about their susceptibility and about foods that have a high risk of containing Listeria.

Scientists have since developed risk assessment models for Listeria monocytogenes in certain foods. The focus was on leafy greens, frozen vegetables, cantaloupe, and RTE seafood. Models will be tested and reviewed and then made public.

FDA Releases Data on Economic Adulteration in Honey

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is releasing data from a sampling assignment carried out in 2021 and 2022 to test imported honey for economically motivated adulteration (EMA). EMA occurs, for example, when someone intentionally leaves out, takes out, or substitutes a valuable ingredient or part of a food or when a substance is added to a food to make it appear better or of greater value. The sampling was designed to identify products that contained less expensive undeclared added sweeteners, such as syrups from cane and corn. The agency collected and tested 144 samples of imported honey from bulk and retail shipments from 32 countries. The FDA found 14 samples (10%) to be violative. The agency refused entry of violative shipments into the U.S. and placed the associated company and product on an import alert.

The FDA routinely assesses imported honey products to ensure accurate product labeling and otherwise help keep consumers from being deceived. The agency will continue to test honey for EMA under the agency's import sampling and risk-based import entry screening program. Violative samples are subject to agency action, such as recall and import refusal, consistent with the agency's mission to ensure that food is safe, wholesome and properly labeled. When appropriate, the agency may consider pursuing criminal investigations. The FDA also collaborates with international counterparts to detect and combat EMA related to imported products, including honey.

FDA Amends Standard of Identity for Yogurt

Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration responded to several objections and requests for a hearing on provisions in the yogurt standard of identity final rule, published on June 9, 2021. The FDA denied the requests for a hearing and modified certain provisions in the final rule. Specifically, the FDA is modifying the yogurt standard of identity to allow the use of all safe and suitable sweeteners, including non-nutritive sweeteners, and to make the minimum optional fortification of Vitamin D 10% of the Daily Value, consistent with our food additive regulations. The FDA is also modifying the general definition and standard of identity under 21 CFR 130.10 to permit the use of fat-containing flavors (such as coconut flakes, chocolate, etc.) in lower fat yogurt. This rule is effective on January 17, 2023, and the compliance date is January 1, 2024. Additional details can be found in the Federal Register notice.

FDA Issues Guidances on Food Allergen Labeling Requirements

Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued two guidance documents about food allergen labeling requirements to help the food industry meet the requirements to list any major food allergen on the labels of FDA-regulated foods. Food labels are a powerful tool to help protect consumers with food allergies. Consumers can avoid ingredients they may be allergic or sensitive to in a food by looking for specific allergen labeling and reading the ingredient list.

One of the guidance documents is a draft guidance titled *Questions and Answers Regarding Food Allergens, Including the Food Allergen Labeling Requirements of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (Edition 5); Guidance for Industry*. This draft guidance updates the previous edition (Edition 4) with new and revised questions and answers related to the labeling of food allergens, including requirements in the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research Act of 2021 (FASTER Act) and the Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA).

The FALCPA amended the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (FD&C Act) by defining the term "major food allergen" and requiring that foods or ingredients that contain a major food allergen be specifically labeled with the name of the allergen source. This law identified eight foods as major food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans. The FASTER Act, among other things, adds sesame to the list of major food allergens effective January 1, 2023, which will make it the ninth major food allergen recognized in the U.S.

The draft guidance includes:

- New questions and answers about food allergen labeling requirements, such as the labeling of sesame, milk, and eggs; the labeling of major food allergens in the labeling of dietary supplement products; and other technical labeling issues.
- Revised questions and answers to update and clarify information presented in earlier editions of the final guidance, such as the labeling of tree nuts, fish, and crustacean shellfish.
- Images that show examples of labeling requirements.

The agency also issued a final guidance with the same title to preserve the questions and answers from the previous edition (Edition 4) that were not changed, except for editorial changes such as renumbering the questions and reorganizing the information in the guidance.

Enterprise News

Baby formula recalled after third-party testing finds Cronobacter

ByHeart is recalling five batches of ByHeart Whole Nutrition Infant Formula because of the potential for cross-contamination with Cronobacter sakazakii.

ByHeart is taking this measure because one test sample collected from the third-party packaging facility tested positive for Cronobacter sakazakii. All product packaged that day, and the first production on the next day was isolated for destruction and not distributed.

The company says that no distributed ByHeart product has tested positive for the bacteria. The production plant runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The formula under voluntary recall was distributed directly to consumers in the U.S. and can be identified by the number on the bottom of the can.

Recalled product:

- The product being recalled is ByHeart Whole Nutrition Infant Formula, Milk Based Powder with Iron for 0-12 Months in 24 oz containers.
- Recalled product batches are 22273 C1, 22276 C1, 22277 C1, 22278 C1, and 22280 C1 printed with use by 01 JAN 24 or 01JUL 24.

As of the posting of this recall, no consumer complaints have been received that would indicate any illness.

According to the company announcement, the recall is not related to ByHeart's own manufacturing facility in Reading, PA in any way. The facility continues to run 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and re-stock is expected in January.

What customers should do

Customers who purchased ByHeart products should check the bottom of the can and dispose of products from batches 22273 C1, 22276 C1, 22277 C1, 22278 C1, and 22280 C1. ByHeart has set up a webpage at https://byheart.com/notices with additional information about its measures.

If your infant is experiencing symptoms related to Cronobacter infection, contact your healthcare provider to report their symptoms and receive immediate care. To report an illness or adverse event, you can

- Call an FDA Consumer Complaint Coordinator if you wish to speak directly to a person about your problem.
- Complete an electronic Voluntary MedWatch form online.
- Complete a paper Voluntary MedWatch form that can be mailed to the FDA.

More than 250 ill in UK E. coli outbreak linked to salad

More than 250 people are sick in an E. coli O157 outbreak in the United Kingdom that may have been caused by salad.

There have been 259 confirmed cases in the UK with sample dates ranging from late August to the end of October, although most people fell ill in August and early September.

Shiga toxin-producing E. coli (STEC) O157 has affected people in England, Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales. The majority of those sick are adults.

Food Standards Scotland (FSS), the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and Food Standards Agency (FSA) are investigating the outbreak.

It is the largest E. coli outbreak since Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) started to be used in 2014, according to UKHSA.

Produce link but investigation ongoing

The number of patients is up from 192 in September when health officials said there had been no deaths and no reported cases of the hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS). HUS is a type of kidney failure associated with E. coli infections that can result in lifelong, serious health problems and death.

Some patients have been interviewed to try to find the source of the infection. Investigations suggest UK-produced lettuce and salad leaves may be implicated but this has yet to be confirmed.

Dr. Lesley Larkin, head of surveillance, gastrointestinal infections, and food safety at UKHSA, said the increase in reports was driven by a particular strain of E. coli O157.

"Making sure you wash your hands with soap and water is the best way to stop this bug from spreading. When preparing food make sure you thoroughly wash salad, fruit, and vegetables and follow all the safe cooking instructions for meat," she said.

Earlier this year, a STEC O103 outbreak with 11 cases was associated with raw milk cheese from a dairy farm in the East of England, and a STEC O145 outbreak with 10 patients was linked to milk products from a farm in North West England.

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