

# MARKET NEWS

July 2023



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MERIEUX NUTRISCIENCES(CHINA)

BETTER FOOD. BETTER HEALTH. BETTER WORLD.

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## Focus on China

### China authority says aspartame safe under nation's standard

China's food safety assessment authority said on Friday it is safe to use aspartame, a common artificial sweetener used in many products, based on China's current standards and regulations.

The announcement followed an article issued by the World Health Organization saying aspartame is "possibly carcinogenic to humans" but "safety is not a major concern" in the quantities people would normally consume.

China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment issued an article explaining how to view the aspartame assessment results by the WHO and other international agencies.

The United Nations Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives, or JEFCA, provided a review of what this means for people's risk, maintaining its existing guidance on acceptable daily intake amounts.

Aspartame is a food additive legally approved by the International Codex Alimentarius Commission and China, the United States, the European Union, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and South Korea.

According to the assessment by China National Center for Food Safety Risk Assessment, National Cancer Center and JEFCA's latest guidance, the use of aspartame under China's standards and regulations is safe.

The center also said they will follow the reactions and measures of other countries to ensure food safety in accordance with the strictest standard.

### Licensing requirements eased for vendors selling cold dishes

China will refine regulations on issuing licenses for food vendors selling cold dishes, and the requirements to obtain licenses to sell such dishes may be simplified for those who serve easy-to-make dishes that bear low safety risks, according to new rules by the State Administration for Market Regulation released on Wednesday.

According to the new regulations, which will take effect on Dec 1, food sellers who make "simple dishes" that have low food safety risks will be subjected to simpler inspection requirements. For example, areas and utensils dedicated to cold-dish making will no longer be necessary, provided local market regulators can guarantee food safety.

Sellers would then be allowed to serve food and drinks made simply by de-freezing, quick heating, washing and cutting, decorating plates and stirring powders.

However, the use of raw seafood, cold cakes and cold meat dishes poses higher risks, so special licenses will still be required to serve these foods.

In an explanatory statement, the State Administration for Market Regulation said the change was made in response to complaints.

"We have further cleared the scope of food license issuing and made the decision to simplify permits for the making of simple foods such as cucumber



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salad," the administration said.

As cold dishes are more prone to food safety hazards, restaurants or diners that serve even simple cold dishes are required to apply for a special permit, according to existing regulations. Those who are not qualified will have their regular restaurant licenses display the words "excluding cold dish" in their approved scope of sales.

To get the permit, restaurants currently must have a staff member dedicated to making cold dishes in an exclusive room of at least 5 square meters. The room has to be equipped with mirrors, automatic handwashing, ultraviolet sterilizing lights, and exclusive refrigeration and mixing utensils.

Due to their complexity, many small diners don't apply for such permits. Diners who ignore such rules are often punished with fines.

For example, in July last year, at least three restaurants in Hefei, Anhui province, were each fined 5,000 yuan (\$700) and had their earnings confiscated by market inspectors for making cucumber or tomato salads in their kitchens, local media Xin'an Evening News reported. Generally, one serving of the dish costs around 15 yuan.

Moreover, some people who knew about the rule ordered cold dishes at unqualified restaurants on purpose and then reported it to authorities afterwards.

Workers' Daily reported in May that the restaurant association in Zhuzhou, Hunan province, received multiple complaints about a local father-and-son duo who had reported the unlicensed selling of cold dishes 49 times in the past three

years.

The report said that in some instances, the duo would order and be served cold dishes that were not even listed on the menus. Local market regulators would ask the restaurants to stop selling those dishes, and the restaurants would comply, but the father and son would then blackmail the restaurants by saying they would report them to higher-level regulators if the restaurants didn't pay them a hefty fee.

In addition, the amended rules also stipulate that for those violations that can be corrected, inspectors should mostly use "soft "methods such as requiring violators to rectify their behavior in a timely manner.

### **China to up food security ahead of Japan releasing radioactive water**

China's Customs authorities will remain highly vigilant regarding the safety of food imports from Japan, and take all necessary measures in a timely manner to ensure the food safety of domestic consumers, said the General Administration of Customs in a statement on Friday.

Earlier on Tuesday, the International Atomic Energy Agency provided a review report to the Japanese government, granting approval for the country to discharge nuclear-contaminated wastewater into the ocean.

In response to this development, the head of the GAC's bureau of import and export food safety said that Chinese Customs has taken note of the recent review report released by the IAEA.

The official said the report did not fully reflect the opinions of all experts

involved in the report and its conclusions did not gain unanimous approval from the experts.

There are still many issues concerning the legitimacy of the ocean discharge, the reliability of purification devices and the completeness of monitoring plans on the part of the Japanese side, the official added.

Since the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in 2011, the GAC has consistently attached great importance to the issue of radioactive contamination in Japanese food imports after the accident, according to the statement.

Chinese Customs authorities have closely monitored the measures taken by the Japanese government in response to this accident and conducted continuous assessments of the radiation risks associated with Japanese food.

In order to safeguard the food safety of Chinese consumers, the GAC has banned the importation of food products from 10 prefectures, including Fukushima, in Japan since 2011. It has also intensified scrutiny and strict verification of accompanying documents for food imports from other regions of Japan, especially aquatic products including edible aquatic animals.

Chinese Customs authorities have strengthened supervision, implemented full inspection on these imported products and continuously enhanced the detection and monitoring of radioactive substances since 2011. These measures are aimed at ensuring the safety of food imports from Japan and preventing the entry of products with potential risks, said the GAC.

### **Outsourcing no excuse for mouse-head food**

Days after a student at the Jiangxi Industry Polytechnic College found a mouse head in his canteen meal — and was told by his college and local market supervisors that it was an edible duck neck before higher authorities confirmed it was a mouse head — another mouse head was found, this time on a canteen plate in Xiushan Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital, in Chongqing municipality.

This time the local market supervisors were quick to confirm that it was a mouse head. However, the hospital responded saying they don't run the canteen; a third-party beverage company was providing the services.

While a third-party contract should never be an excuse for a college or hospital to shrug off responsibility in such cases, its existence confirms the need to regulate such outsourced services. Running a canteen is no child's play, so colleges or hospitals outsource the job to professionals sometimes, but their responsibility should not be limited to signing a contract and paying the money.

Colleges, hospitals, companies or other agencies that outsource the responsibility of running their canteens should all bear in mind that food safety remains their responsibility even after outsourcing the task and they still need to take proper supervision measures.

In the Jiangxi case, the local authorities have vowed to punish those responsible for wrongdoings, including college authorities and members of supervisory departments who failed in their duty. That should ring the alarm bells for all agencies doing similar duty.

Ever since the Jiangxi incident, several domestic toy factories have been making toys with a duck's body and a mouse's head as a sarcastic reminder of what happened in the canteen there. It's time the sarcasm teaches all those who are responsible a much-required lesson.

## International News

### **The FDA Announces Alignment Findings from Voluntary Pilot Program to Evaluate Third-Party Food Safety Standards**

Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is announcing the findings from the voluntary pilot program to evaluate alignment of private third-party food safety audit standards with the food safety requirements in two regulations issued to implement the FDA Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) - the Preventive Controls for Human Food (PC Human Food) and the Produce Safety rules.

Buyers and others in the food supply-chain often use third-party audits to assess the quality and safety of a product. For example, buyers, such as importers and receiving facilities, might stipulate an audit as part of a purchase agreement. In addition, under FSMA, the PC Human Food rule, Preventive Controls for Animal Food (PC Animal Food) rule, and Foreign Supplier Verification Programs (FSVP) rule – allow for third-party audits to be used as supplier verification activities.

The FDA understands that a finding of third-party audit standards alignment with the FSMA regulations could help give importers and receiving facilities confidence that the standards used to audit their suppliers adequately address

applicable FDA food safety requirements. This information, along with results of a firm's audits, also could help inform the FDA in determining risk prioritization and resource allocation.

As part of the pilot the FDA selected and assessed third-party food safety standards for alignment with the requirements in the PC Human Food or Produce Safety rules. Although the specific elements of the third-party food safety standards and the FSMA implementing regulations may not be identical, a finding of alignment indicates that the relevant technical components of the PC Human Food or Produce Safety rules have been addressed. The reviews focused on assessing third-party food safety standards and not the overall quality of the audit programs or qualifications of auditors. The FDA's review and the findings from this pilot do not constitute an endorsement of any one food safety audit standard, nor do they constitute an endorsement of audits conducted under such standards.

For more information about the findings and to learn more about how the pilot was conducted, visit: [The FDA Concludes Voluntary Pilot Program to Evaluate Alignment of Third-Party Food Safety Standards with FSMA Rules](#).

### **FDA Update on Post-market Assessment of Certain Food Ingredients**

Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) released a public inventory of certain food ingredients that the agency has determined to have unsafe uses in food because they are unapproved food additives and lists of select chemicals currently under the agency's review. The FDA also released a Conversations with experts about the agency's work to enhance the assessment of ingredients in

foods on the market. These resources are intended to provide more insight on the FDA's post-market assessments.

In addition to the FDA's pre-market programs, the agency's active post-market monitoring of new safety information related to food ingredients is also essential to the safety of the U.S. food supply. Under the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic (FD&C) Act, any ingredient used or intended for use in food must be authorized by the FDA for use as a food additive unless that use is Generally Recognized As Safe or GRAS by qualified experts or meets a listed exception to the food additive definition in the FD&C Act. An unapproved food additive is deemed to be unsafe under the FD&C Act.

The inventory includes some of the FDA's post-market assessments of food ingredients and may include links to some activities related to such an ingredient since 2004. When the FDA becomes aware of an ingredient for which there is no authorization as a food additive, the FDA reviews the regulatory status of this ingredient, including whether the publicly available data and information show the use is safe and meets the GRAS standard. This determination informs the agency's actions to protect public health, including enforcement actions and other post-market activities that warn manufacturers and the public of unsafe food additives and can result in the removal of unsafe products from the market.

This inventory is not intended to be a complete list of food ingredients that may be unlawful if used in food and may not include all post-market activities the agency has taken with respect to unsafe food additives. Specifically, the inventory includes the name of the unsafe food additive, information about some post-market activities and public communications, and the FDA's memo

that describes reviews in which the agency concluded the use of the ingredient did not meet the GRAS standard. The post-market activities include warning letters, import alerts, seizures, and injunctions.

The lists that were also made available today, include select ingredients considered GRAS, food and color additives, food contact substances, and contaminants currently under FDA review. These represent some of the chemicals of interest to the agency and those that are of high interest among stakeholders who have asked the FDA to review their safety. The FDA anticipates updating the inventory and these lists periodically.

Lastly, the Conversations with Experts features Dr. Kristi Muldoon-Jacobs, acting Director of the Office of Food Additive Safety, sharing her insight about the FDA's current post-market assessment of ingredients and food contact substances and how we envision enhancing our approach to support this work.

The FDA's assessment of chemicals in the food supply is part of our commitment to food safety.

### **CDC just now releases information on 2022 outbreak from foodborne parasite in salad**

An outbreak of infections from the Cyclospora parasite that sickened hundreds in Florida in 2022 is just now being reported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC report did not say why the agency delayed revealing information about the outbreak, which it attributed to an unnamed brand of packaged salad.

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In its Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report released on July 7, the CDC says 486 people in Florida were infected by the microscopic parasite in the outbreak. In total, Florida posted 513 confirmed infections from the parasite in 2022, according to the CDC report.

“The Florida Department of Health required that county public health personnel complete the CDC Cyclosporiasis National Hypothesis Generating Questionnaire for all patients with illness onset dates during May 1-August 31, 2022,” according to the CDC report this week.

“Among 457 completed questionnaires . . . 200 reported exposure to bagged salad, a commercially produced package of prewashed salad greens. Among respondents reporting exposure to bagged salad, 85 (43%) noted a specific brand of Caesar salad kit containing only romaine lettuce, from a specific grocery store chain.”

Cyclosporiasis was first reported in 1979, and the organism was identified and named in 1994, according to the CDC outbreak announcement. In recent years, the number of reported U.S. cases has been increasing: cases more than doubled from 537 in 2016 to 1,194 in 2017, and then nearly tripled, to 3,519 cases in 2018; in 2019, 4,703 cyclosporiasis cases were reported.

Recently, the parasite has been found on domestically grown produce, and infections have been attributed to these foods. Produce washing may decrease but will not eliminate the parasite.



### **WHO turns foodborne estimates focus to heavy metals**

WHO is looking for experts to work on the burden of disease caused by foodborne exposure to cadmium, methylmercury, arsenic, and lead.

It is part of the World Health Organization (WHO) Department of Nutrition and Food Safety's process to collect and assess evidence to estimate the global burden of foodborne diseases.

WHO is seeking support from independent consultants or groups of experts with relevant expertise and experience to undertake systematic reviews to gather the evidence for different topics.

Other calls have covered 14 pathogens commonly transmitted by food, aflatoxin B1 and M1 as well as *Taenia solium* infection and cysticercosis.

Expressions of interest should cover collecting data suitable for estimating the disease burden of chronic kidney disease caused by dietary exposure to cadmium; of intellectual disability caused by dietary exposure to methylmercury; of lung, bladder and skin cancer due to exposure to inorganic arsenic and intellectual disability and cardiovascular diseases caused by exposure to lead.

Systematic reviews will identify the burden associated with a specific hazard and how much disease associated with the hazard was due to contaminated food.

Deadline for [applications is July 21](#). Work is expected to start in September 2023 and end by February 2024.

The Foodborne Disease Burden Epidemiology Reference Group (FERG) will publish revised estimates by 2025. The fifth meeting of the group was held



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virtually during two days in June.

FERG revealed estimates in 2015 using 2010 data. Updated figures will be released in a couple of years but the reference year has not yet been decided, with the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic being taken into account.

### Enterprise News

#### Mint recalled in Canada over E. coli



Green Garden is recalling its brand of Mint because of generic E. coli contamination.

According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, the recalled product has been sold in Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Canada.



Brand	Product	Size	Codes	UPC
Green Garden	Mint	8 lbs	None	None

Consumers and retailers should not use, sell, serve or distribute the affected product.

#### Martinelli's apple juice recalled over potential glass chips in the product



S. Martinelli Harvest Facility of Watsonville, CA, is recalling nearly 60,000 units of Martinelli's Gold Medal 100 percent apple juice because of a potential glass quality issue that may result in glass chips in the product.

According to details published online by the FDA, the recall was initiated on June 12, 2023, and is ongoing.

The recalled product was shipped directly to 3 customers located in Rhode

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Island, New York and California. It is unclear from the recall if there was further distribution after this.

### Recalled product:

Product Description	Recall Number	Classification	Code Information	Product Quantity	Reason for Recall
Martinelli's Gold Medal 100% Apple Juice 10 oz. glass bottles, 24 units per case Apple shaped glass bottles Shelf stable UPC: 041244000098	F-1017-2023	Class II	Production Date 5/4/2023 Pallet/Batch 0001100265, 0001100276, 0001100290, 0001100294, 0001100305, 0001100357, 0001100365	2,387 Cases; 57,288 units.	Potential glass quality issue that may result in glass chips in the product

			, 0001100372, 0001100377, 0001100406 Production Date 5/5/2023 Pallet/Batch 0001101144, 0001101148, 0001101154, 0001101160, 0001101166, 0001101168, 0001101177, 0001101182, 0001101189, 0001101198, 0001101199, 0001101207, 0001101211, 0001101212 0001101214, 0001101234,		
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			0001101235, 0001101236, 0001101278, 0001101332, 0001101358		
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Anyone who purchased the recalled product should immediately dispose of it and not consume it.

### Mini Fruit Jelly Cups recalled because of potential choking hazard



Foremost Foods Corporation, of Pomona, CA, is recalling its Mini Fruit Jelly Cup (35.27oz.) because products are a potential choking hazard based on the

product size. Small jelly cups have previously been implicated in choking deaths of children.

The potential choking hazard was confirmed after a discussion with a representative from the Food and Drug Administration.

The recalled jelly cups were distributed nationwide in Seafood City supermarkets and are sold in large clear jars.

#### Recalled products:

1. Pamana Mini Fruit Jelly Cup (Assorted Flavors); UPC 795981293038; Net Weight 35.27 oz.
2. Pamana Mini Fruit Jelly Cup (Mango Flavor); UPC 795981293045; Net Weight 35.27 oz.
3. Pamana Mini Fruit Jelly Cup (Lychee Flavor); UPC 795981293021; Net Weight 35.27 oz.

As of the posting of this recall, no incidents of consumers choking have been reported in connection with these products.

Consumers who have purchased the above products are urged to return them to the store of purchase for a full refund or dispose of them in a sealed package inside a secure garbage can with a tight-fitting lid.

## MARKET NEWS - REPLY

If you have any views or comments on the articles in the marketing news please feel

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free to contact us on the following email address: [sales.china@mxns.cn](mailto:sales.china@mxns.cn)

