

MARKET September 2024 NEWS



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MERIEUX NUTRISCIENCES(CHINA)

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Focus on China

China to enforce strictest possible arable land protection system

BEIJING -- China on Tuesday made public a guideline on arable land protection, aiming to implement the strictest possible protection system and introducing robust measures with real enforcement "teeth" to combat the erosion of arable land.

The guideline, issued by the general offices of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the State Council, stated that the national arable land area should not fall below 124.33 million hectares, with the area of permanent basic farmland set at no less than 103 million hectares.

To achieve these goals, China will implement the most stringent possible arable land protection policies, introducing robust measures to combat the conversion of arable land to non-agricultural uses and to prevent permanent basic farmland from being utilized for non-grain production.

Local Party committees and governments will be required to treat the protection of arable land and permanent basic farmland as a critical political task. They must ensure that the established protection threshold is never breached, and that strict accountability measures

are in place for violations, including a "one-vote veto" punishment for officials who breach protection guidelines severely.

To boost land quality, the document emphasizes the gradual upgrade of permanent basic farmland to high-standard farmland that is suitable for cultivation, resilient to drought and flooding, and capable of ensuring high and stable yields.

A national plan will be developed for this transformation, with priority given to areas in Northeast China's black soil region, plains and regions with irrigation capabilities.

The government will implement black soil protection initiatives, adjusting protective measures to encompass all necessary areas in a timely manner. Law enforcement combating activities that harm the fertile soil will be intensified.

Legislation governing the protection of arable land quality will be accelerated, with annual surveys of soil quality changes and comprehensive evaluations conducted every five years, along with a national soil census to be conducted at an appropriate time.

Efforts will also be made to develop high-efficiency protected agriculture using non-arable land resources. This will involve exploring the sustainable development of modern protected agriculture in arid and desert regions where water resources allow.

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These initiatives are part of a broader strategy to ensure national grain security and strengthen the agricultural sector.

China continues to prioritize food security, as it feeds over 1.4 billion people with just 9 percent of the world's arable land. An array of measures has been implemented to improve grain output over recent years, including the construction of more high-standard farmland and the promotion of agricultural technologies.

The country has developed about 66.7 million hectares of high-standard farmland as of the end of 2023, with 13 key grain-producing provincial-level regions accounting for around 70 percent of that total.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, China has the sound fundamentals to reap a bumper autumn grain harvest following the summer harvest this year, despite severe disasters triggered by extreme weather in parts of the country.

Hefei company faces probe for allegedly misleading consumers in mooncake sales

Authorities in the High-Tech Zone of Hefei, Anhui province, have launched an investigation into a company accused of misleading consumers during live-stream sales of a brand of mooncakes, according to a Tuesday announcement from the local market

regulation department. The case will be handled based on the findings of the investigation and relevant regulations.

The mooncakes in question, branded as "Hong Kong Meicheng Mooncakes," were sold in live-stream sessions hosted by influencers affiliated with Sanzhiyang Network Technology, a Hefei-registered company. Three packages of the mooncake were sold at 169 yuan (\$23.8).

The brand has sparked controversy after several agents and netizens noted that while the name suggests a Hong Kong origin, no physical stores were found in Hong Kong. Furthermore, the mooncakes' packaging indicated that they were produced in Guangzhou and Foshan, Guangdong province.

Many consumers raised concerns about potential false advertising, claiming their refund requests were denied. Meicheng Mooncakes' customer service responded that "mooncakes are seasonal and special food items" and are therefore not eligible for the 7-day no-reason return or exchange policy.

The packaging of the mooncakes lists "Hong Kong Meicheng Food Group Co" as the manufacturer, while the operator is Guangzhou Meicheng Food Co, a company established in April 2019 with a registered capital of 10 million yuan, according to corporate information provider Tianyancha.

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On Sept 14, Meicheng Mooncakes' customer service explained that the brand is registered in Hong Kong and holds a trademark certificate. They also stated that the brand's research and development team is based in Hong Kong. However, by that evening, live-stream sales of the product had stopped, and major e-commerce platforms like Tmall and JD had removed the mooncakes from their listings.

A representative from Meicheng Mooncakes expressed frustration, noting that no laws prevent a Hong Kong-registered brand from manufacturing in Chinese mainland.

Separately, the market regulation department of Huadu district, Guangzhou, announced on Sept 15 that it had initiated its own investigation into Guangzhou Meicheng Food Co. in response to public concerns. The company provided commercial registration information for Hong Kong Meicheng Food Group Co and trademark registration documents for "MEISUN", "Meicheng", and "Hong Kong Meicheng Mooncakes". Cross-regional coordination among local regulatory authorities will be necessary due to the scope of the investigation.

Several clips from live-streams show hosts promoting the mooncakes using phrases such as "Hong Kong Meicheng", "big brand", "high-end brand", and claiming they would cost over 200 yuan offline in Hong Kong.

Wen Xiaofeng, a lawyer at Guangdong Bingjia Law Firm, said whether false advertising occurred depends on whether the live-stream hosts

emphasized the mooncakes' Hong Kong origin and whether consumers believed they were purchasing a product made in Hong Kong. If consumers were led to believe the product was produced in Hong Kong, it could constitute false advertising, he noted.

The practice of "overseas trademark registration with domestic production" is common in branding, Wen added. Whether this constitutes fraud depends on whether the marketing aligns with the actual origin of the product.

China launches investigation into goji berry farms after chemical use allegations

Authorities in China's Qinghai and Gansu provinces announced on Monday that they will investigate the planting and processing of goji berries following a media report alleging that farmers used chemicals to enhance the berries' appearance.

The Golmud city government in Qinghai said in a statement that a special task force has been established to conduct overnight inspections of the production, processing, and sales of goji berries in response to a report by China Media Group (CMG). The report accused some merchants of illegally using sodium metabisulfite, a chemical with whitening and preservative properties, to process goji berries.

"Those found responsible for illegal activities will be severely punished according to the law," the Golmud city government said. The

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results of the investigation and any subsequent actions will be promptly disclosed to the public, it added.

The food safety authority in Jingyuan County, Gansu, also announced the formation of a joint investigation team to examine the planting and processing of goji berries. A special inspection will be conducted throughout the county, and the findings will be made public, the authority said in a statement.

The CMG report, which aired Monday evening, revealed that some farmers in Golmud and Jingyuan were adding sodium metabisulfite or industrial sulfur during the production of goji berries to improve their color and appearance. In Golmud, local regulations explicitly prohibit the use of sodium metabisulfite and its substitutes in the production and processing of goji berries and related products.

Despite the regulations, farmers at a farm in Golmud admitted to using the chemical to enhance the appearance of goji berries that were otherwise unsellable due to poor quality. The farmers claimed they would suffer financial losses without the use of sodium metabisulfite.

In Jingyuan, where goji berry cultivation covers approximately 280,000 mu (about 18,667 hectares), the CMG investigation found that freshly picked goji berries were being washed with sodium metabisulfite and fumigated with sulfur to maintain their appearance during unfavorable weather conditions.



Sulfur, which is toxic and poses health risks, should not be used in food processing. Some merchants in Jingyuan were reportedly using industrial sulfur to cut costs. The investigation uncovered several plastic sheds set up by merchants in Jingyuan villages for the purpose of sulfur fumigation. These sheds, emitting pungent gases that made breathing difficult, were dismantled by daylight.

The CMG report indicated that sulfur-treated goji berries were sold to hot pot restaurants and pharmacies, and used to make goji berry wine.

International News

FDA Issues Updated Small Entity Compliance Guide for Produce Safety Regulation

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is announcing the availability of an updated guidance for industry entitled “[Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption: What You Need to Know About the FDA Regulation: Small Entity Compliance Guide](#)” (SECG). This update aims to assist small entities in complying with the revised requirements related to pre-harvest agricultural water for covered produce (other than sprouts) under the Produce Safety Rule.

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The SECG reflects changes made to the Produce Safety Rule by the May 2024 final rule, [“Standards for the Growing, Harvesting, Packing, and Holding of Produce for Human Consumption Relating to Agricultural Water”](#). Compliance dates for the pre-harvest agricultural water requirements for covered produce (other than sprouts) begin on April 7, 2025, with date staggering based on farm size.

EU sees rise in food safety alerts and fraud investigations

The number of food safety alerts and fraud investigations exchanged between European member states went up in 2023.

The European Commission, which manages the Alert and Cooperation Network (ACN), said there was a significant increase in notifications compared to 2022.

The network includes the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed Network (RASFF), the Administrative Assistance and Cooperation Network (AAC), Agri-Food Fraud Network (FFN) and the Plant Health Network (PHN).

There was an 8 percent rise in RASFF notifications to 4,695 notices, of which almost 4,200 mentioned food. The most notices by origin involved Turkey, China, Poland, India, Netherlands, and France.

As in previous years, more than a third of notifications were border rejections, involving mainly pesticide residues in fruit and vegetables

from Turkey, followed by Egypt and India. The most common pesticides were chlorpyrifos, acetamiprid, ethylene oxide, and 2-chloroethanol.

Salmonella in Polish poultry

More than 150 notifications were for Salmonella in poultry products from Poland. 85 alerts mentioned aflatoxins in nuts and seeds from the United States.

Pathogenic microorganisms were the second most common hazard category in food. Salmonella was the most frequent, followed by Listeria monocytogenes, E. coli, and norovirus, all primarily in products of animal origin.

There were 48 foodborne outbreaks posted in RASFF. Norovirus was identified as the probable cause in 17 cases, Salmonella in 11, Listeria in five, histamine poisoning in two, and E. coli in two cases. Eighteen incidents involved multiple countries.

As part of investigations into a multi-country Salmonella outbreak traced to chicken kebab from Poland, defects on traceability were also detected and a suspicion of forged labels was raised. Two notifications were created by Poland to investigate the fraud angle of the cases.

Data analysis on kebab products revealed 61 cases across RASFF, AAC and the FFN in 2023. One issue was undeclared meat species such as

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chicken, turkey or horse. Eleven alerts had a suspicion of fraud. Some notifications were related to meat substitution with the presence of chicken meat, turkey, pork, and horse meat in kebabs.

In October 2023, Switzerland issued a RASFF notification triggered by high levels of capsaicinoids in hot chip tortillas manufactured by a Czech company. The product was distributed via many European wholesalers to 23 countries and three non-EU countries, and was also available online.

Czech authorities initially said consumers were sufficiently informed of the extreme spiciness by the manufacturer, highlighting that each package contains gloves to handle the chip. However, German authorities said the warning in English was not sufficient. In November, the Czech Republic suspended sales of the product. A chip with lower capsaicin content was sold afterwards.

AAC and fraud highlights

The Administrative Assistance and Cooperation system allows member states to notify violations of EU food safety legislation which do not constitute a health risk. There was a 24 percent increase with 3,166 notifications.

The majority were linked to non-compliant fruits and vegetables, mainly due to pesticide residues, followed by mislabeling, such as unauthorized health claims for food supplements. Germany created the most notifications, followed by Bulgaria, and Austria.

The Agri-Food Fraud Network (FFN) registered a 26 percent rise in notifications, with 758 fraud suspicions. Belgium, Germany, and France notified the most. The illegal trade of cats and dogs remained a major issue. Other suspicions related to meat substitution, honey adulteration, and mislabeled olive oil.

The most notified product category was meat and meat products other than poultry. Common issues were ingredient or species substitution and misleading labeling.

Live animals (excluding pets) were the second most reported category and like in previous years, it concerned mainly horses. Fraud suspicions were divided between smuggling and forgery of mandatory documents, like animal passports and health certificates.

Honey and royal jelly remained in the top three notified product categories. The main practice notified was adulteration of honey by dilution with sugar syrups. An increase of cases on fats and oils was seen. The majority concerned quality or mislabeling, where lower quality olive oil was sold as extra virgin olive oil.

The top reported suspected fraud for fish products was substitution with lower value species or undeclared addition of water. The EU Commission has started planning an EU Coordinated Action on short weighting of fishery products. Short-weighting is when there is a misrepresentation of the weight by including any extra weight gained through various practices to the net weight. It will focus on practices

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such as the use of undeclared glazing, water addition, additives, and breeding.

Also, 1,075 AAC notifications and 1,625 RASFF alerts were flagged as potential fraud, prompting deeper inspections or investigations by member states.

FDA Releases FY 2022 Pesticide Residue Monitoring Report

Today, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration made available its annual [Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program Report for Fiscal Year 2022 \(FY 2022\)](#), summarizing findings from FDA testing of human and animal foods for 757 different pesticides and selected industrial compounds from October 1, 2021, through September 30, 2022.

Companies that grow and produce foods and manufacture products intended for use as food that are sold in the U.S. are responsible for following applicable Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and FDA regulations. To protect public health, the FDA's pesticide residue monitoring program tests FDA-regulated foods shipped in interstate commerce to determine whether they comply with the [pesticide tolerances](#), or maximum residue levels, set by the EPA. If the FDA finds that the amount of pesticide residue on a food is over the tolerance, or when a pesticide is found and there is no tolerance established, the FDA can take action. For FY 2022, findings show that the levels of pesticide chemical residues in the U.S. food supply are generally in compliance with EPA pesticide tolerances.

Sample collection and analysis in FY 2022 was moderately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 35% fewer human food samples and 37% fewer animal food samples were collected in FY 2022 compared with FY 2019, the most recent year not impacted by the global pandemic. Sample collection and analysis increased in FY 2022 relative to the FY 2020 and FY 2021 collections.

Overall Findings

Human Food Samples: 2,800 total samples (731 domestic food samples from 41 states and 2,069 imported food samples from 81 countries/economies).

- 96.2% of domestic samples and 89.5% of imported samples were compliant with federal regulations (below EPA tolerances).
- No pesticide chemical residues were detected in 42.7% of domestic samples and 44.6% of imported samples.

Historically, the violation rate for imported foods is higher than for domestic foods, and the FY 2022 report results continue that trend. The higher violation rate affirms the risk-based approach of targeting imported food products that are more likely to contain violative pesticide chemical residues, and the countries more likely to export them. In determining which products to sample, the FDA may consider past problem areas, findings from state and federal monitoring, and foreign pesticide usage data.

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Animal Food Samples: 230 total samples (113 domestic food samples from 26 states and 117 imported samples from 13 countries).

- 95.6% of domestic samples and 100% of imported samples were compliant with federal regulations (below EPA tolerances).
- No pesticide chemical residues were detected in 38.1% of domestic samples and 50.4% of imported samples.

Focused Sampling

In FY 2022, the FDA conducted pesticide analyses for the “Domestically Produced Animal-Derived Foods” assignment. The FDA collected and analyzed 96 samples of selected animal-derived domestic foods, consisting of 36 milk, 30 shell egg, 15 honey, and 15 game meat samples. No violative pesticide chemical residues were found in 99% of the animal-derived foods, and 90.6% of the samples contained no pesticide residues.

Additional Information

- [Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program Reports and Data](#)
- [Pesticide Residue Monitoring Program Questions and Answers](#)
- [Pesticides](#)
- [Total Diet Study](#)



Enterprise News

2% milk recalled in Canada because of spoilage

Agropur Coopérative is recalling Central Dairies brand and S'Milk brand 2% Partly Skimmed Milk because of spoilage.

According to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) the recalled product was distributed in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada.

Recalled products:

Central Dairies – 2% Partly Skimmed Milk

- Size – 2 L
- Codes – BB SEP 20, 24, 25, 27 and 30
- UPC – 0 57498 01032 5

Central Dairies – Partly Skimmed Milk 2%

- Size – 1 L
- Codes – SE 20, SE 24, SE 25, SE 27, SE 30
- UPC – 0 57498 01042 4

Central Dairies – Partly Skimmed 2% Milk

- Size – 500 ml

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- Codes – SE 27, SE 30
- UPC – 0 57498 01052 3

Central Dairies – 2% Partly Skimmed Milk

- Size – 250 ml
- Codes – SE 20, SE 24, SE 25
- UPC – 0 57498 01073 8

S'Milk – 2% Partly Skimmed Milk

- Size – 250 ml
- Codes – SE 20, SE 24, SE 27, Product code contains 4605
- UPC – 0 57498 01058 5

Hotels, restaurants, institutions, retailers and consumers should not use, sell, serve or distribute the affected products.

Alabama company recalls jerky because of lack of inspections

Hickory Hollow Jerky, a Eufaula, AL, establishment, is recalling 6,229 pounds of ready-to-eat jerky products that were produced without the benefit of federal inspection, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) announced today.

The beef jerky and bacon jerky products were produced on various dates between Jan. 19, 2024, and Aug. 21, 2024.



The products were produced without the benefit of inspection by two different owners of the establishment. Ownership changed hands on June 11, 2024. The name of the establishment and the products have remained the same. The products subject to recall are listed [here](#), and the product labels can be viewed [here](#).

The products subject to recall bear establishment number "EST. NO. 34550" inside the USDA mark of inspection. These items were shipped to retail locations in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and through internet sales.

The problem was discovered during routine FSIS surveillance activities when it was determined that the establishment continued to produce these jerky products and label them with the USDA mark of inspection after requesting to voluntarily stop FSIS-inspection activities.

There have been no confirmed reports of adverse reactions related to consumption of these products. Anyone concerned about a reaction should contact a healthcare provider.

FSIS is concerned that some product may be in consumers' pantries. These products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase.

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Company recalls cinnamon after state testing shows elevated levels of lead

Asli Fine Foods of Woodridge, IL is recalling Asli Cinnamon Powder after testing showed elevated levels of lead.

Short term exposures to low levels of lead may not elicit any symptoms. It is possible that increased blood lead levels may be the only apparent sign of lead exposure. Additional signs and symptoms of lead exposure are more likely with acute exposure to higher levels of lead or chronic exposure to lead. While lead can affect nearly every bodily system, its effects depend upon the amount and duration of lead exposure and age/ body weight.

If a child is exposed to enough lead for a protracted period of time (e.g., weeks to months) permanent damage to the central nervous system may occur. This can result in learning disorders, developmental defects, and other long- term health problems. For adults, chronic lead exposure is associated with kidney dysfunction, hypertension, and neurocognitive effects.

The recalled cinnamon was distributed Minnesota, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and Ohio through retail stores.

The cinnamon is packaged in 7-ounce plastic bags with Asli Cinnamon Powder and LOT# DDDLUS UPC# 703440150723 printed on the labels.

No illnesses have been reported as of Aug. 29.

The recall was the result of a routine sampling program by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services which revealed that the finished products contained lead.

The company has ceased the production and distribution of the product as FDA and the company continue their investigation as to what caused the problem.

Consumers who have purchased Asli Cinnamon Powder are urged to return it to the place of purchase for a full refund. Consumers with questions may contact Asli Fine Foods at 630-739-1599.

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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