

# MARKET NEWS

April 2026



04  
2026



MERIEUX NUTRISCIENCES CHINA

BETTER FOOD. BETTER HEALTH. BETTER WORLD.

## CONTENTS

<b>FOCUS ON CHINA</b> .....	2
<i>China tightens food safety checks ahead of May Day, Dragon Boat Festival holidays</i> .....	2
<i>Seven food platforms penalized 3.6b yuan</i> .....	2
<i>Strict rules for kindergarten food planned</i> .....	3
<i>Regulators probe false claims on 'imported' goods</i> .....	5
<b>INTERNATIONAL NEWS</b> .....	7
<i>FDA Seeks Public Input on Potential Market Name Change for Certain Rockfish Species</i> .....	7
<i>IFSAC Releases Annual Report for 2023 on Sources of Foodborne Illness</i> .....	8
<b>ENTERPRISE NEWS</b> .....	8
<i>USDA issues public alert on beef and pork with undeclared sesame</i> .....	8
<i>Chocolate products recalled because of undeclared male enhancement drugs</i> .....	9
<b>MARKET NEWS - REPLY</b> .....	10

## ***Focus on China***

### **China tightens food safety checks ahead of May Day, Dragon Boat Festival holidays**

China's food safety authority has urged local governments to strengthen supervision and enforcement ahead of the upcoming May Day and Dragon Boat Festival holidays, aiming to prevent food safety risks and ensure a safe festive period for consumers.

In a notice issued recently, the State Council's Food Safety Office called on authorities nationwide to make early arrangements and intensify oversight across the food production, distribution and catering sectors during the peak holiday consumption season.

Regulators are urged to focus on widely consumed foods, seasonal holiday products, internet trending foods and health foods, while stepping up inspections at wholesale markets, retail chains and major e-commerce platforms.

Food producers and sellers should strictly fulfill their primary responsibility for food safety, while regulators will intensify inspections and crack down on violations such as the production or sale of counterfeit or substandard products, false advertising and illegal additives.

The notice also calls for stronger oversight of the catering sector, particularly chain restaurants, tour group catering services and popular online restaurants. Special attention will be given to problems linked to "ghost kitchens" — delivery-only operations without proper physical dining facilities.

Schools and other institutions that provide meals to large groups are required to reinforce food safety management and thoroughly examine potential risks. Local authorities are also tasked with tightening supervision over rural group banquets to prevent large-scale foodborne incidents.

In addition, regulators will expand food safety sampling inspections during the holiday period. Targeted testing will be conducted on high-risk foods and seasonal products such as zongzi, the traditional sticky rice dumpling eaten during the Dragon Boat Festival.

The notice also calls for smoother consumer complaint and reporting channels to better protect public rights and interests.

### **Seven food platforms penalized 3.6b yuan**

China's top market regulator fined seven major e-commerce and food delivery platforms a combined total of 3.59 billion yuan (\$530 million) on Friday for violations related to "ghost kitchen" operations, in one of the country's largest penalties regarding online food safety.

## April 2026 MARKET NEWS

Ghost kitchens are unqualified food preparation facilities that produce meals exclusively for delivery and have no dine-in seating for customers.

The State Administration for Market Regulation announced that it had penalized Pinduoduo, Meituan, JD, Alibaba-backed delivery service Ele.me, short video platform Douyin, as well as Taobao and Tmall, for failing to properly vet food vendors operating on their platforms.

The fines and confiscations totaled 3.597 billion yuan, and an additional 19.69 million yuan in personal fines was levied on the seven companies' legal representatives and food safety executives for failing to fully discharge their management responsibilities.

The administration found that the platforms did not adequately verify the business licenses of online food merchants, thus failing to meet their legal obligation to perform qualification checks, which led to problems with ghost kitchens.

The companies entered into cooperation agreements with third-party order-routing intermediaries and failed to take the necessary measures despite knowing that such practices could harm consumer rights.

The SAMR said the penalties were imposed under China's food safety and e-commerce laws.



In addition to ordering the companies to rectify their conduct, the regulator suspended the onboarding of new cake and dessert vendors on the platforms for periods ranging from three to nine months.

Following the launch of the investigation, the administration said that all seven platforms had removed unverified ghost kitchen vendors and halted cooperation with third-party order-routing platforms involved in the violations.

### **Strict rules for kindergarten food planned**

China's top market regulator released a draft regulation recently aimed at tightening food safety oversight in kindergartens nationwide, introducing strict requirements that range from ingredient bans to real-time kitchen monitoring.

The proposed rule, jointly drafted by the State Administration for Market Regulation and the Ministry of Education, mandates a principal responsibility system for kindergarten food safety and establishes daily, weekly and monthly control and inspection mechanisms designed to create a comprehensive risk-prevention framework across the entire food supply chain.

China has 253,300 kindergartens serving nearly 35.84 million children, according to official data.

## April 2026 MARKET NEWS



The move follows a series of alarming food safety incidents at kindergartens in recent years that have sparked widespread public concern.

In one case, more than 200 children at a kindergarten in Tianshui, Gansu province, were found to have elevated lead levels in their blood in July 2025. Investigators determined that the kindergarten had added industrial pigments to food to make it more visually appealing. Some samples contained lead levels more than 2,000 times above the national safety limit. Six suspects were arrested and 17 officials faced disciplinary investigation.

In another incident in October 2024 at a kindergarten in Xi'an, Shaanxi province, 48 children contracted norovirus after experiencing vomiting and diarrhea. Parents who reviewed kitchen surveillance footage reported serious hygiene violations, and the kindergarten was later found to be operating without a valid license.

In line with the draft regulation, kindergartens would be required to appoint dedicated food safety personnel with clearly defined responsibilities.

A dynamic risk management system would mandate daily inspections, weekly risk analysis and monthly summary reports, with all documentation archived for regulatory review.

The regulation comes with a "negative list" which explicitly bans high-risk foods from kindergarten kitchens. Prohibited items include

nitrites, bulk edible oils, bulk salt, cold meats and ingredients known to pose food poisoning risks such as green beans, wild mushrooms and sprouted potatoes.

To enhance transparency and oversight, the draft encourages kindergartens to implement "smart kitchen" systems with real-time video monitoring covering the entire food preparation process, from receiving and storing ingredients to cooking, distribution and dining.

A mandatory meal accompaniment system would require kindergarten principals or other responsible officials to eat with children at every meal and maintain detailed records.

The draft regulation also stipulates that food must be consumed within two hours of preparation. For meals distributed outside designated food handling areas, specialized sealed and insulated equipment would be required, accompanied by thorough cleaning and disinfection after each use.

In a separate but related development, four central government institutions — education, emergency management, market regulation and public security authorities — jointly announced on March 25 a comprehensive campaign to strengthen safety management across all primary and secondary schools and kindergartens in 2026.

The initiative includes measures addressing a wide range of student safety concerns, including mental health services, bullying prevention,

## April 2026 MARKET NEWS



traffic safety, cybersecurity and enhanced emergency response capabilities, alongside stricter food safety enforcement.

### **Regulators probe false claims on 'imported' goods**

Chinese authorities have launched a joint investigation into the operator of the health supplement brand YouthIt after media reports raised concerns over allegations related to false claims about product origin and misleading advertising.

The State Council's food safety office, the State Administration for Market Regulation, and the General Administration of Customs said they had instructed local regulators and customs authorities to verify the facts and crack down on illegal activities. The move follows reports alleging that some cross-border e-commerce products sold under the "imported" YouthIt brand involved false origin labeling and deceptive promotion.

According to the China Media Group, the brand's lutein supplements, marketed as Australian products, rank among the top imported lutein products on several e-commerce platforms. Some were shipped from bonded warehouses in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, and labeled as being made in Australia. The brand's full lutein line has reportedly sold more than 4 million bottles across the country.

The case drew wider attention after consumers questioned whether the products were genuinely imported. One consumer said an iron

supplement purchased under the brand turned out to be domestically made. A product traceability screenshot shared online identified the manufacturer as a Chinese company based in Anhui province. The platform later responded that while the brand was Australian, the product itself was made in China.

Reports also raised doubts about the brand's claimed Australian origin. One product carried an English-only label naming "Australia Yarra Vibe Health Group" and listing an address in Melbourne. Reporters found the address corresponded to an auto repair shop in Melbourne and not a health supplement facility.

YouthIt's official website lists a company in Guangzhou as its operator in China.

Market regulators in Guangzhou have opened a case after finding suspected illegal advertising on the company's online stores. During an on-site inspection, enforcement officers found the company employed more than 100 employees, operated a livestreaming studio and stored large quantities of related products in its warehouse. Officials collected evidence, reviewed documents related to product sources and conducted spot checks.

Authorities said the company's online stores were suspected of publishing illegal advertisements and that a formal investigation had been launched. Customs officers and police have also examined some

## April 2026 MARKET NEWS



of the company's import and export documents and business activities.

The reports cited a representative of a Hangzhou marketing planning company as saying the brand and products were essentially from Guangzhou but packaged as Australian. The strategy reportedly included using overseas experts and international awards to boost both product and brand credibility.

In Hangzhou, market regulators have launched a parallel investigation into the marketing firm, obtaining materials related to its services and fund transfers and questioning relevant personnel. Investigations have also been opened into two other companies over suspected advertising violations.

Several celebrities and livestreamers on major e-commerce platforms had promoted the products. After the reports emerged, a number of them reportedly issued public apologies and promised refunds.

Zhang Xin, a law professor at the University of International Business and Economics, said such cases typically involve false labeling and false advertising. Under Chinese law, imported prepackaged food must carry standardized Chinese labels and instructions, clearly stating the true place of origin as well as the name, address and contact details of the domestic agent.

Zhang said current rules define how a product's country or region of origin should be determined, making origin a legally verifiable labeling

item rather than a marketing claim. Merchants found to have engaged in false promotion may face administrative penalties, civil liability and, in serious cases, criminal punishment.

She added that e-commerce platforms should establish full-chain compliance systems covering qualification checks, monitoring, risk screening and rapid response, tailored to food safety risks.

From a regulatory perspective, Zhang said curbing fake imported health supplements requires strict enforcement of existing laws through coordinated oversight among customs, market regulators and other authorities, along with tighter scrutiny of platform responsibilities in merchant verification and risk control.

She advised consumers to protect themselves by verifying product categories, requesting registration or filing documents, preserving evidence such as product pages and receipts, and reporting suspected violations to platforms or regulators.

The State Council's food safety office, the State Administration for Market Regulation and the General Administration of Customs called in operators of e-commerce services providers Douyin, Alibaba's Taobao and Tmall, and Xiaohongshu following the report by the China Media Group that raised concerns about the promotion of the imported YouthIt brand.

Regulators told the companies to strictly comply with laws including the Anti-Unfair Competition Law, the Consumer Rights Protection

## April 2026 MARKET NEWS

Law and the Food Safety Law, and to fulfill their responsibilities as platform operators.

They were also instructed to strengthen vetting of cross-border e-commerce merchants, tighten management of products sold on their platforms, step up efforts to curb harmful or misleading information, and improve channels for consumer inquiries, complaints and reports.

### *International News*

#### **FDA Seeks Public Input on Potential Market Name Change for Certain Rockfish Species**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is issuing a [Request for Information](#) today on a potential update to the acceptable market name for eighteen species of *Sebastes*, commonly known as rockfish. This action follows a congressional directive and aims to balance food safety, regulatory clarity, and industry interests through an evidence-based determination.

In November 2025, [Public Law 119-37](#) was enacted, directing the FDA to engage with stakeholders regarding a potential name change for specific *Sebastes* species. The FDA maintains "[The Seafood List](#)," a guide for the food industry on acceptable market names for seafood sold in interstate commerce, to ensure that labeling is accurate.



Currently, the acceptable market name for the genus *Sebastes* is "rockfish." However, the FDA has received inquiries from industry stakeholders requesting that the name be changed to "snapper." The FDA has identified several critical issues for consideration before any changes are made to the acceptable market name for these rockfish species. These include issues related to scientific classification, food safety and hazard identification, and labeling and allergens concerns.

The FDA is seeking comprehensive information from all interested parties, including industry members, consumer groups, and state regulatory agencies. Through the RFI, the agency is posing a series of questions to gather data on the potential impacts of a potential name change. This information will be essential for making an informed decision that upholds public health, adheres to statutory authority, and preserves transparency for consumers while considering industry interests.

- For a full list of the questions and species in question, and to provide comment, please visit [Regulations.gov](#) Docket No. [FDA-2026-C-3071](#).

Submit written/paper submissions to:  
Dockets Management Staff (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

## April 2026 MARKET NEWS

All submissions received must include the Docket No. FDA-2026-C-3071

### **IFSAC Releases Annual Report for 2023 on Sources of Foodborne Illness**

The Interagency Food Safety Analytics Collaboration's newest annual report, "[IFSAC 2023 annual report: Foodborne illness source attribution estimates for Salmonella, Escherichia coli O157, and Listeria monocytogenes, United States, a weighted approach using 1998–2023 outbreak data](#)" is now available.

The IFSAC is a collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service. The group was established in 2011 to improve coordination of federal food safety analytic efforts and address cross-cutting priorities for food safety data collection, analysis, and use.

The IFSAC analyzes foodborne illness outbreak data for priority pathogens and specific foods and food categories that are responsible for foodborne illnesses in the United States. The data are analyzed by calendar year and released in [annual reports](#) as part of ongoing efforts to understand sources of foodborne illness in the United States. The CDC estimates that, together, these three pathogens — *Salmonella*, *Escherichia coli* O157, and *Listeria monocytogenes* —



plus *Campylobacter* cause more than three million cases of foodborne illnesses in the U.S. each year.

The updated estimates, combined with other data, can help shape agencies' priorities and inform the creation of targeted interventions that may help reduce foodborne illnesses caused by these pathogens. These estimates also inform stakeholders and improve our ability to assess whether prevention measures are working. For more information, visit [IFSAC projects](#) or email [IFSAC@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:IFSAC@fda.hhs.gov).

## **Enterprise News**

### **USDA issues public alert on beef and pork with undeclared sesame**

The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) has issued a public health alert for raw beef and pork products because of misbranding and an undeclared allergen.

The products may contain sesame, a known allergen, which is not declared on the product label. A recall was not requested because the products are no longer available for purchase.

The raw beef and pork items were produced from December 1, 2025, through April 6, 2026. The following products are subject to the public health alert:

## April 2026 MARKET NEWS



- 1.5-lb. clear plastic containers with safety lids containing “QUALITY MEAT SKY RANCH PREMIUM PROVISIONS MARINATED BEEF RIBEYE ROLL /BULGOGI” with “SELL BY” dates of “DEC.11.25” through “APR.16.26”.
- 1.5-lb. clear plastic containers with safety lids containing “QUALITY MEAT SKY RANCH PREMIUM PROVISIONS MARINATED PORK TENDERIZED CT BUTT” with “SELL BY” dates of “DEC.11.25” through “APR.16.26”.
- 1.5-lb. clear plastic containers with safety lids containing “QUALITY MEAT SKY RANCH PREMIUM PROVISIONS MARINATED BEEF SLICED SHORT RIBS /LA STYLE” with “SELL BY” dates of “DEC.11.25” through “APR.16.26”.
- 1.5-lb. clear plastic containers with safety lids containing “QUALITY MEAT SKY RANCH PREMIUM PROVISIONS MRN PORK SINGLE BELLY CHOP / JUMULLEOK” with “SELL BY” dates of “DEC.11.25” through “APR.16.26”.

The products have establishment number “EST. 1377” printed inside the USDA mark of inspection. These items were shipped to Lotte Plaza Market retail locations in Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, and Virginia.

The problem was discovered by FSIS personnel during a routine label review. FSIS personnel noticed the use of sesame oil in the products, but sesame was not declared as an ingredient on the label.

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

FSIS is concerned that some product may be in consumers’ refrigerators or freezers. Consumers who have purchased these products are urged not to consume them. These products should be thrown away or returned to the place of purchase.

### **Chocolate products recalled because of undeclared male enhancement drugs**

Gear Isle is voluntarily recalling chocolate products because they have been found to contain undeclared active pharmaceutical ingredients, sildenafil and tadalafil.

The recalled products are: Gold Lion Aphrodisiac Chocolate Sachet, UPC 795847916279, LOT# no lot number, Expires: 06/2027; and I Lum Sex Chocolate, UPC 1002448578911, LOT# no lot number, Expires: 12/25/2027.

Use of products with undeclared active ingredients sildenafil and tadalafil may pose a threat to consumers because the active ingredient may interact with nitrates found in some prescription drugs, such as nitroglycerin, and may cause a significant drop in blood pressure that may be life-threatening. Among the adult male population who are most likely to use these products, adult males

## April 2026 MARKET NEWS

who use nitrates for cardiac conditions are most at risk from these products. To date, Gear Isle has not received any reports of adverse events related to this recall.

The product is labeled as a dietary supplement. The products were distributed nationwide via internet sales.

Gear Isle is notifying its customers by notification letter and is arranging for returns and refunds of all recalled products. Consumers who have the products that are being recalled should stop using them.

Consumers should contact their physician or healthcare provider if they have experienced any problems that may be related to taking or using this drug product.

Adverse reactions or quality problems experienced with the use of this product may be reported to the FDA's MedWatch Adverse Event Reporting program either online, by regular mail or by fax.

- Complete and submit the report  
Online: [www.fda.gov/medwatch/report.htm](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch/report.htm)
- Regular Mail or Fax: Download form [www.fda.gov/MedWatch/getforms.htm](http://www.fda.gov/MedWatch/getforms.htm)2 or call 1-800-332-1088 to request a reporting form, then complete and return to the address on the pre-addressed form, or submit by fax to 1-800-FDA-0178



## 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](mailto:sales.china@mxns.cn)