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China's First Organic Life Service Platform Launched

China's first organic life service platform was launched at the end of last month in Beijing, which aims to "provide organic food with a price of ordinary food and services to resort travel.

Experts and Officials including Li Xianjun, chief of green food development center under Ministry of Agriculture, addressed in the opening ceremony on topics including the development of organic food in China.

Boshiyoupin, an organic life service platform, was kicked off in Beijing with nine stores in nine major residential areas across the city. In the next five years, the brand is to build 100 stores in the city. (Source: China Organic Agricultural Site)

Chongqing Spotted 66 Illegal Health Food Cases

The city-level food and regulator, industry & commerce bureau and police bureau have launched special campaign on the health food market of Chongqing.

During the two-month campaign, the city has investigated 66 illegal cases concerning health food, seizing 14331 bottles of health food that are illegally traded.

The illegal cases cover false advertisements and sales via unapproved seminars and conferences.

"We will raise the market entry bar for companies who want to sell health food in the local market," said a director with the local FDA. (Source: China Food Technology)



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China TCM International Exchange Center Launched

The international cooperation and exchange center of China TCM Institution was launched in Beijing, which aims to serve as the platform and window for international cooperation of the local TCM industry people.

The center will coordinate resources of the local TCM companies in education, R&D and financing. It will also serve as a venue for conference, technology exchange, domestic and international training as well as practice of government programs. (Source: people.net)

China's Top Court Demands Heavy Penalties For Food Safety Violations



China's top court has demanded heavy penalties for companies and individuals who violate the country's food safety laws, the official Xinhua news agency reported late on Wednesday.

The Supreme People's Court said in a circular on Wednesday that companies selling food online should be held wholly liable for any safety issues affecting consumers and urged firms to compensate consumers more quickly.

Food safety is one of the top concerns among Chinese consumers after a series of scares from milk tainted with industrial chemical melamine in 2008 to fiery liquor 'baijiu' laced with impotence drug Viagra.

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The country's main prosecutor also said that it had investigated 652 officials relating to misconduct over food safety protection, including for embezzlement and taking bribes, Xinhua reported. The probes took place since the start of 2014.

China voted through amendments to its food safety law in April that will see tougher punishments for violations and tighter regulation of infant milk formula and online shopping. The new laws come into effect on Oct. 1.

Beijing is trying to shake off a reputation for food safety scandals, although regulators and industry insiders acknowledge the authorities lack the resources and personnel to properly keep check on a highly-fragmented sector.

Chains such as McDonald's Corp and KFC-parent Yum Brands Inc have seen sales dashed by supplier scandals, while retailers Wal-Mart Stores Inc and France's Carrefour SA have also come under the spotlight. (Source: Reuters)

10-Year Report Reveals Habits of Chinese Online Shoppers

Online shoppers in China have expanded their foothold to more than 100 countries and regions in the past decade, according to a report published

Thursday by g.taobao.com, the country's largest shopping website Taobao.com's unit that focuses on overseas online shopping.



The Ten-year Report on Online Shopping Overseas reveals the trends of Chinese online shoppers since 2005.

In the early years of online shopping overseas, Chinese buyers preferred shopping websites in Hong Kong and Macao. And now they have switched their attention to a wider range of areas, including Japan, South Korea, North America, Europe as well as South Africa.

Among all the regions, Japan, the United States and South Korea are among the favorites, followed by Hong Kong, Germany, France, Taiwan, Australia, Britain and Denmark.

The year 2015 witnessed an explosive growth in online shopping overseas, with new buyers accounting for 28 percent, much higher than previous years. Chinese shoppers have purchased more than two million products from overseas via Internet.

These shoppers prefer local specialties in other countries and regions. For instance, they tend to buy cod-liver oil online from Iceland, water purifiers from Germany, cleansing tissue from Portugal.

But the hottest items are cosmetics and skin care products, which have been bought by more than half of these buyers.

The report also discovered different preferences among new and experienced shoppers. Newcomers prefer cosmetics while more experienced ones like food. Mothers are the most active buyers and baby formulas and maternal and baby products occupy nearly half of the top 10 spots of the hottest products bought overseas online.

Another characteristic of these online shoppers is that they follow popular trends. For instance, the Russia-made cellphone Yota sold well after visiting Russian President Vladimir Putin gave it as a present to his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping during the APEC meeting in Beijing in 2014.

The report also found regional differences among shoppers. Those from Beijing prefer air purifiers primarily due to the severe pollution, while people in Shenzhen like to buy cookies. (Source: China Daily)

Ozone Pollution Levels in Shanghai 1.5 Times Higher Than WHO's Recommended Limit



Ozone pollution in Shanghai over the past two weeks has reached levels 1.5 times higher than the WHO's recommended limit.

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The poisonous gas has replaced PM2.5 pollution – particles small enough to enter the lungs – as the biggest threat to the health of residents in several major mainland cities. But experts say ozone pollution, with its complicated formation process, is more difficult to combat than fine particles.

Shanghai saw elevated levels of ozone pollution for 12 straight days, from July 25 to Wednesday, with a peak reading of 246 micrograms per cubic metre recorded on Tuesday, according to the city's Environmental Monitoring Centre.

The World Health Organisation recommends a limit of 100 micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). Exposure to excessive amounts can cause breathing problems, lung disease and trigger asthma.

China's environmental protection authorities urged people not to go outside from 2pm to 3pm, when concentrations of the ozone pollution in Shanghai would be at their highest.

Ozone has also become a growing concern in Guangdong province, according to the Guangzhou-based Yangcheng Evening News.



Ozone was the major air pollutant for 60.5 per cent of all polluted days in the second quarter, compared with 16.9 per cent for PM2.5, the newspaper reported, citing sources at the provincial

Environmental Protection Department.

During the same time last year, the figures were 34.1 per cent for ozone and 32.2 per cent for PM2.5.

PM2.5 levels usually fall in the summer, because the weather helps to disperse the particles. But it's also a time when direct sunlight intensifies, which leads to higher concentrations of ozone pollution.



At ground level, the harmful gas is formed by photochemical reaction of oxygen, nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds in the air under sunlight. Nitrogen oxides are produced in combustion processes and emitted by vehicles, power plants that burn fossil fuels and refineries.

He Kebin, a professor of environmental studies at Tsinghua University, said environmental authorities were still trying to decide how to curb levels of hydrocarbons.

Dallas Baker, president of US-based Air & Waste Management Association, said ozone pollution was more difficult to tackle than PM2.5 – which could be removed by installing filters at factories – due to the complicated way it formed.

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“One possible solution is to decide which pollution is the more prominent – NOx or organic compounds – in a certain area, then focus on slashing one of the two categories,” he said, referring to nitrogen oxides.

The daily mortality rate rises by 0.3 per cent for every 10 µg/m³ increase in ozone exposure, according to the WHO.

Environmental protection authorities have urged people to avoid daily outdoor activities between 2pm and 3pm, when the ozone concentration is at its highest, according to the Shanghai Morning Post. Unlike with PM2.5, masks do not offer any protection from the gas.

In Hong Kong, ozone remains a serious environmental threat, with the concentration increasing by about a third in the last 15 years, according to government data. (Source: SCMP)

Social Media Helping Ease Public's Fears of GM Foods



International agribusiness companies have intensified their efforts to ease public fears over genetically modified products in China, taking to social media platforms to popularize GM science

and interact with the public.

Croplife International, the trade association representing a number of international biotechnology companies, launched its own Sina Weibo and Tencent WeChat public messaging accounts on Friday to engage the public about genetically modified food products amid intense debate about their safety.

The association said in a statement that it is responding to calls by the central government to increase the popularization of GM science and to enhance the knowledge about GM foods.

Croplife China, a division of the organization in China, represents 13 international agricultural businesses in China, a majority of which are involved with genetically engineered seeds and the associated insecticides and herbicides.

Sun Li, a public affairs manager with the organization, said it is aiming to increase its social media presence to respond to public concern over the safety of GM food products.

According to the first policy document issued this year by the Communist Party of China Central Committee, which usually signifies the country's top priority, China will increase research and safety management of genetically modified food and promote the popularity of GM food science.

Chen Xiwen, deputy director of the Central Rural Work Leading Group, said at a news conference earlier this year that it is important to change public misconceptions about GM products.

Some GM food is not being marketed because of the public's disapproval, he said.

Some international agribusiness companies have not been allowed to conduct their business in China, since the country has so far only allowed the



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marketing of domestic GM papaya and cotton.

Gao Yong, director of Asia Corporate Affairs at Monsanto Co, said previously that the company was mostly focused on the research and development of new products, and that interaction with consumers will be a new priority in the near future.

"We have seen that the government has made their voices heard and the scientists as well (over the safety of GM foods). We the enterprises need to play a part in this process," he said.

The company also launched public accounts on WeChat and Weibo in March to spread knowledge about GM science and respond to public concerns over the safety of its products.

Huang Dafang, a researcher with the Biotechnology Research Institute at the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences, said it could take a long time to eliminate public fears over the safety of GM food products.

"Many would rather believe the rumors because they have no channels to the right knowledge. Thus we need to make the science easily accessible to them," he said. (Source: China Daily)



New Measures Aid Private Hospitals

The State Council decided on Thursday to put private-capital-invested hospitals in the medical insurance system, a move designed to encourage the development of medical institutions.

Among other measures, the approval process to set up a hospital or clinic will be streamlined, and preconditions including the number of beds will be canceled.



Nonprofit private-capital-invested medical institutions that provide basic healthcare service should get subsidies from the government, and hospitals invested with private capital will see other favorable policies such as tax cuts, the State Council said.

"This is terrific news for such hospitals," said Hu Shanlian, professor from the School of Public Health under Shanghai-based Fudan University. He said many hospitals run by private capital, especially those at the high end, have met great difficulties as they can neither get government subsidies nor join the national medical insurance system.

Hu said there are two possible ways for the government to give subsidies - to give the hospitals money or buy their services.

The State Council also ordered at the meeting that private-capital-invested medical institutions be covered in regional development plans for medical resources.

Raising capital for such institutions - through equity financing and project financing, for example - will be supported.

Pilot programs will be set up to simplify preconditions for doctors to work at different hospitals.

The government will also establish a supervisory system for these hospitals and crack down on illegal medical practices and excessive medical treatment. (Source: China Daily)

China Updates is published weekly by the U.S. – China Health Products Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion of dietary supplements and nutritional ingredients. The association's major focus is the continued development of China's overall natural health product industry as well as offer business services to its global members.

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