

Top10 Chinese Food Scandals

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We've all heard several rumors about unsanitary food practices in China. We've gathered information on the top 10 Chinese food scandals. Read at your own risk:

Melamine Milk scandal

In 2008 six babies were killed and 300,000 were left ill after consuming an infant formula that was contaminated with the industrial chemical melamine. The scandal was covered up for several months to avoid embarrassment during the Olympic Games. It caused outrage in China and smashed public confidence in the government and its ability to regulate the food industry.

Toxic Bean-sprouts

Police in the northeastern city of Shenyang seized 40 tons of bean-sprouts in April 2011. The tainted vegetables had been treated with sodium nitrite and urea, as well as antibiotics and a plant hormone called 6-benzyladenine. The chemicals were used to make them grow faster and look shinier in the market stalls. 12 people were arrested.

Pesticide-drenched yard-long beans

More than 3.5 tons of yard-long green beans contaminated with isocarbophos, a banned pesticide, were destroyed after being discovered on sale in the central city of Wuhan in March 2010. The beans had come from the southern city of Sanya, and allegations of another attempted cover-up followed after the Sanya Agricultural Law Enforcement Bureau said it was inconsiderate of Wuhan authorities to publicise the case.

Leather milk

In February 2011 reports emerged of another milk contamination scandal, this time using leather-hydrolyzed protein which, like melamine, appears to boost the protein-content of milk, thereby enhancing its value. "The problem had been detected as early as March 2009," the official China Daily newspaper reported Friday. China announced this month it was closing almost half of its dairies in a bid to clean up the industry.

Aluminium dumplings

After reports that much of China's rice crop was contaminated with heavy metals, health authorities in Shenzhen tested 696 samples of food made with flour, including dumplings and steamed buns. "Nearly one third (28pc) were found to have levels of aluminium above national standards", the Shenzhen Standard reported. The contamination was blamed on excessive use of baking powder containing the metal.

Glow-in-the-dark pork

Reports and photographs surfaced last month showing pork that glowed an eerie, iridescent blue when the kitchen lights were turned off. Online users dubbed it Avatar meat and remained sceptical despite reassurances from the Shanghai Health Supervision Department which said the pork has been

contaminated by a phosphorescent bacteria but was still safe to eat if well-cooked.

Lean meat powder pork

China has fought a long-running battle with the use of the steroid clenbuterol in pork production. Known as "lean meat powder" it can cause dizziness, heart palpitations, diarrhoea and profuse sweating. The most recent case occurred last March in a stock market-listed pork producer, but China has acknowledged 18 outbreaks of food-related clenbuterol poisoning between 1998 and 2007, according to a report on the Shanghai Food Safety website.

Toxic take-away boxes

In April 2010 more than 7m of toxic disposable food containers were seized in the eastern province of Jiangxi. Although banned in 1999, the foam-boxes still maintain widespread use in China, releasing toxic elements when warmed by food. The chemicals have the potential to damage the liver, kidneys and reproductive organs.

Sewer oil

An undercover investigation by a professor from Wuhan Polytechnic University in March 2010 estimated that one in 10 of all meals in China were cooked using recycled oil, often scavenged from the drains beneath restaurants. The State Food and Drug Administration issued a nationwide emergency ordering an investigation into the scandal of the so-called "sewer" oil, which further dented public confidence in the food industry.

Cadmium rice

Research published in February claimed that up to 10 percent of rice sold in China was contaminated with heavy metals, including cadmium. Data collected by the Nanjing Agricultural University found that the problem was most acute in Southern provinces, where in some areas 60 percent of samples were contaminated, some with up to five times the legal limit.