

FOL e-Newsletter

The Newsletter of MFDS-Designated Foreign Official Laboratories

A message from the Minister of the MFDS



I am pleased to announce that as of March 23, 2013, the Korea Food & Drug Administration has become the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) and its responsibilities have expanded to cover livestock, fishery, and agricultural products as well as food, drugs, cosmetics, and medical devices that are closely related to our daily lives.

As the MFDS is granted more authority under the new Korean government, the MFDS is now able to regulate the entire food chain including all stages of production, processing, distribution, and marketing of food.

With growing global economy and expanding international free trade, the imported foods have increased significantly and consumers are taking great interest in the way they are controlled. In response to challenges of current imported food control system, the MFDS is actively working to identify potentially risky products more efficiently before they enter into Korea. Foreign Official Laboratories (FOL) are the front line of ensuring that food coming from overseas are safe and conform to the Korean standards.

The MFDS is working hard to ensure the competence of testing performed by the FOLs through efforts such as annual International symposium and MFDS's International Proficiency Testing Program. We launched FOL e-newsletter in 2012 to deliver important messages including imported food regulations, as well as news about the MFDS.

I am happy that the FOL e-newsletters serve a vital role in exchanging essential information between the MFDS and the FOL members. I would very much appreciate your words of encouragement and support. I would like to extend my sincere congratulations on the first issue of the FOL e-newsletter.

We will do our best to secure the overall food safety from farm to table.

Minister of the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety

Chung Seung
Chung Seung

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Notice

The Korea Food & Drug Administration (KFDA) was elevated to Ministry status on March 23, 2013 as part of government reorganization, becoming the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS).

MFDS's International Affairs; Memorandum of Understandings (MOU)

MOU between the MFDS and the NADFC

On July 12, 2012, the MFDS has signed a MOU with National Agency of Drug and Food Control (NADFC) in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Under this MOU, two agencies agreed to exchange information and collaborate on safety and quality control of food, drugs, herbal medicines, cosmetics, and health supplements.

The MOU will serve as an important milestone for the two nations to increase bilateral trade of safe and quality food and drugs which would further contribute in protecting and improving the public health in both countries.

MOU between the Gyeongin Regional FDA and the Shandong CIQ

On November 26, 2012, the Gyeongin Regional Food & Drug Administration and the Shandong Entry-exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau of the People's Republic of China (Shandong CIQ) concluded a MOU to exchange information and collaborate to ensure the safety of food traded between two countries.

The Shandong CIQ has been designated by the MFDS as a Foreign Official Laboratory since October 2006 and its continuous collaborative efforts with the MFDS has taken an active part in strengthening the safety of food imported from China.

What you should know about the MFDS's imported food safety control (1)

Current & Future Pesticide Residue Management Systems of the MFDS

Current regulation

The Ministry of Food and Drug Safety actively monitors pesticide residues in imported foods to ensure the safety.

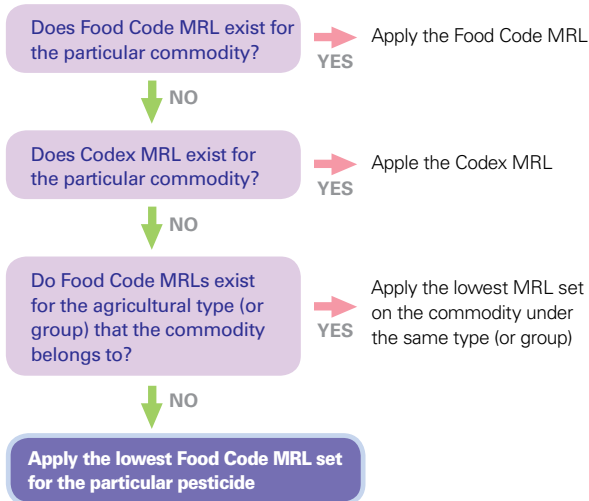
As of March 2013, maximum residue limits (MRL) for 432 pesticides are established in the Korea Food Code (hereafter "the Food Code"). However, there are numerous pesticides for which MRLs have not been established in the Food Code present in foods that are imported into Korea. In that such case, following limits are applied.

First, the Codex MRL for the particular commodity is applied.

Secondly, when no specific Codex MRL is listed, the lowest Food Code MRL set for the agricultural group/type is used. (Please refer to the agricultural product classification table found in the Food Code for further information.)

Thirdly, when there are no Food Code MRLs set for a particular agricultural group or type, the lowest Food Code MRL set for the particular pesticide (regardless of agricultural groups) is applied.

The MFDS has Pesticide Residue Database website with a search engine to assist in finding MRL set for a commodity you wish to look up. Please visit the website at http://fse.foodnara.go.kr/residue/pesticides/pesticides_info.jsp



Future Regulation; Positive List System (PLS)

To improve the regulation of pesticide residues in foods, the MFDS is in the process of changing the way it controls them. The MFDS is planning to implement the new regulation by 2016 featuring a positive list for maximum residue limits (MRL).

The Positive List System (PLS) refers to a regulation which establishes MRLs (including import tolerances) for pesticides registered in Korea and prohibits importing, distribution, and marketing of food commodities present with pesticides exceeding the established MRLs.

For pesticides which MRLs have not been established in the Food Code, the uniform residue level of 0.01ppm will be applied.

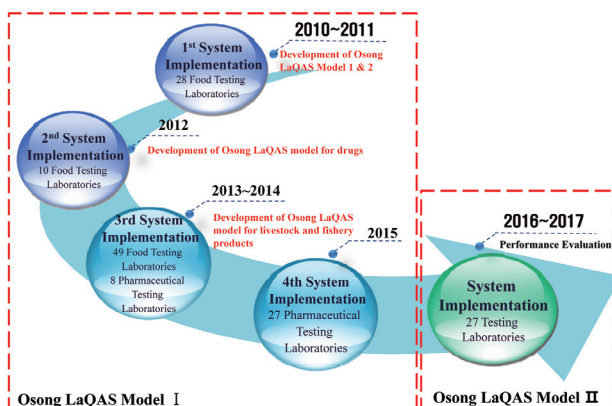
For effective management of the system, a "non-detection list" and an "exemption list" will be provided as well. The "non-detection list" consists of chemicals which should not be detected in any commodity since they pose high risk to human health. The "exemption list" contains chemicals that are determined not to pose any adverse effects to human health.

For the transition period, MRLs for pesticides not registered in Korea will be deleted and the "exemption list" and "non-detection list" will be added to the Food Code.



Osong LaQAS : Osong Laboratory Quality Assurance System

Future Osong LaQAS Plan



The MFDS developed and launched a laboratory management system named Osong Laboratory Quality Assurance System (Osong LaQAS). The MFDS recognized the need of developing testing laboratory management system which complies with the international standards as imports of food and drug products have grown in recent years due to an expanding network of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs).

The Osong LaQAS was launched in 2010 and as for the first step, guidelines in areas of food were developed and implemented. Later, the guidelines were expanded to the field of drugs. By 2016, the MFDS expects to take the second step to optimize the system so it will fully comply with the international standards.

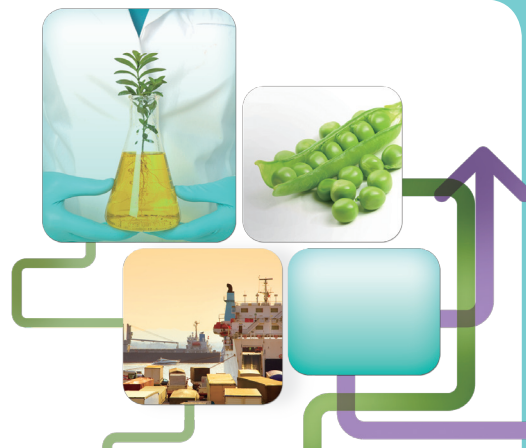
What you should know about the MFDS's imported food safety control (2)

Inspection Order

Starting in June 2011, a new regulation entitled “Inspection Order” was implemented as a measure to urge manufacturers and importers to take responsible steps to ensure the safety of products they bring into Korea.

The “Inspection Order” is issued to prevent any of following food entering the Korean food supply chain;

- ✔ **Food which has been implicated in a food safety incident**
- ✔ **Imported foods with high import refusal rates**
- ✔ **Food which have been reported to pose a risk to public health**



The “Inspection Order” only applies to a food commodity that has the conditions prescribed in the Order. When importers wish to bring these targeted commodities, they must have their products tested prior to sale at a MFDS-designated testing laboratory (including Foreign Official Laboratories). If test results are not submitted along with other supporting document at the time of imported foods customs clearance process in Korea, a consignment of food presented for importation will be rejected.

So far, there have been three cases of the “Inspection Order” and detailed information can be found at the MFDS official English website at the FOL page.

Inspection order code	Food subject to be tested	Test scopes	Country of Origin	Effective dates
2012-01	Hot peppers (include dried hot peppers)	96 pesticide residues	All	Oct 2, 2012 ~
2012-02	Cooking utensils and containers made from melamine resins	Formaldehyde	Vietnam, China, Hongkong	July 2, 2012 ~
2012-03	Smoked-dried fish	Benzopyrene	Japan	Jan 2, 2013 ~

Introduction of FOL members

We are excited to introduce a new section of the newsletter named “Introduction of a FOL member”. In each issue of the newsletter, we will be featuring one (or two) of the Foreign Official Laboratories. The honor of the first article goes to the Oregon Department of Agriculture’s Export Service Center (ESC) and the SGS (Thailand) Limited.



The Oregon Department of Agriculture’s Export Service Center (ESC) is the first MFDS-designated Foreign Official Laboratory (Dec 03, 1996) in the fields of agricultural products, processed foods, and packaging. The ESC has almost two decades-long partnership with the MFDS.

The laboratory is located in Portland, Oregon, USA with a staff

of 17 chemists, microbiologists, technicians and manager in 811 square feet of lab space.

In addition to participating as a MFDS-designated Foreign Official Laboratory, the ESC laboratory is approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a member of the US Food Emergency Response Network (FERN) for microbiological and chemical analyses. Also, the ESC is approved by Japan’s Ministry of Health and Welfare and Taiwan’s Bureau of Standards, Metrology and Inspection.



The SGS (Thailand) Limited in Bangkok was designated by the MFDS as a Foreign Official Laboratory in 2009 specific for the food and food packaging sectors. The SGS (Thailand) Limited is the first independent third party inspection and service provider in Thailand.

The SGS (Thailand) Limited is located in Bangkok, Thailand with a staff of chemists, microbiologists, and technicians in 6,000 square meters of laboratory.

In addition to participating as a MFDS-designated Foreign Official Laboratory, the SGS (Thailand) limited is approved by the Thailand FDA, Department of Livestock Development, Department of Fisheries, and Bureau of Agriculture commodities & Food Standards. Also, the SGS (Thailand) limited is approved by Japan’s Ministry of Health and Welfare.

New FOL Designation

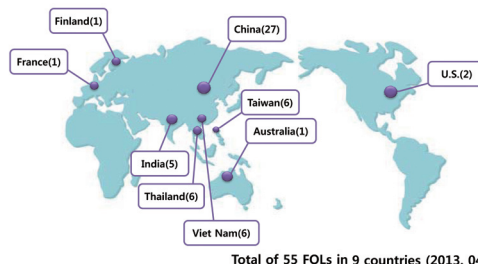
We have new additions to our list of foreign official laboratories. On Feb 1, 2013, two laboratories have been designated by the MFDS as a foreign official laboratory.

- Inspection and Quarantine Technical Center of Dalian Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau and Inspection, China
- Quarantine Technical Center of Liaoning Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureau, Donggang branch, China

As of February 2013, total of 55 foreign official laboratories in 9 countries have been designated by the MFDS. Foreign Official Laboratories are an essential component of

the MFDS's imported food control system and have served as a primary tool to prevent food which doesn't comply with the Korean standards from entering the Korean food chain.

FOLs around the World



To assess the reliability of testing result carried out by the MFDS-designated Foreign Official Laboratories, the MFDS conducts Osong International Proficiency Testing Programs (Osong IPTP) every year. In 2012, two rounds of the Osong IPTP were conducted and 13 FOLs from 5 countries have participated. Laboratory performance was assessed using z-scores and most of the participated FOLs submitted test results of $|Z| \leq 2$ indicating a satisfactory performance.

	IPTP-03	IPTP-04
Matrix	Tea powder	Ginseng powder
Analytes	Iron and Zinc	γ -HCH and α -endosulfan

The following laboratories have participated in the 2012 Osong IPTP; Oregon Department of Agriculture Laboratory Services, OMIC U.S.A, Qindao Korea-Sino Foods Industry, Liaoning CIQ, Shandong CIQ, NAFIQAD I, III, IV, V, VI, OMIC Thailand, SGS Thailand, and OMIC Australia.

2nd International Symposium on Quality Assurance of Analytical Laboratory

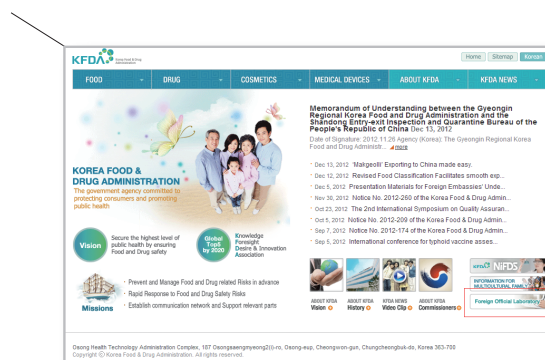


On Oct 31, 2012, the 2nd International Symposium on Quality Assurance of Analytical Laboratory was successfully held by the MFDS at the Grand Hilton Seoul Convention Center in Seoul, Korea.

The symposium consisted of three main parts. Session one covered different laboratory quality assurance system in three countries: Korea, Germany, and Australia. Session two focused on international efforts to assure the reliability and competence of test results, followed by a panel discussion on future aspects of Osong LaQAS.

More than 300 laboratory experts gathered for the symposium and we would like to express special appreciation to FOL members (SGS Thailand, OMIC U.S.A, OMIC Australia, and OMIC Thailand) who traveled far distances to participate in the symposium.

New homepage section available: Foreign Official Laboratory



To address the growing need to provide information about Foreign Official Laboratory to non-Korean speakers, we have added a new section called "Foreign Official Laboratory" to the MFDS official English website featuring relevant rules and information.

The new section can be accessed via the banner on the lower right side of the homepage. Once you click the banner, it will take you to the FOL page and you can download FOL designation application, other relevant forms, and past issues of FOL e-Newsletters. It will be frequently updated with useful information including Osong IPTP and upcoming events. Please be sure to continue to check out our website at <http://www.mfds.go.kr/eng/index.do?nMenuCode=78>

