



Selected China-Related News and Actions on Food & Product Safety

(As of July 31, 2008)

In an effort to track the many actions that the US and PRC governments have taken or are taking to take in response to revelations about unsafe products, the US-China Business Council has compiled the following reference table. The table is not meant to be comprehensive.

Abbreviations

AQSIQ = Administration for Quality Supervision, Inspection, and Quarantine (PRC)

CPSC = Consumer Product Safety Commission (US)

FDA = Food and Drug Administration (US)

HHS = Department of Health and Human Services (US)

MOA = Ministry of Agriculture (PRC)

MOFCOM = Ministry of Commerce (PRC)

MOH = Ministry of Health (PRC)

NPC = National People's Congress (PRC)

SAIC = State Administration for Industry and Commerce (PRC)

SFDA = State Food and Drug Administration (PRC)

USDA = Department of Agriculture (US)

USTR = Office of the United States Trade Representative (US)

Bilateral/International Actions

2008

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| July 9 | HHS announces a new multilateral cooperative program in which drug regulators from the United States, European Union, and Australia will share information and jointly plan, allocate for, and conduct inspections of drug-manufacturing facilities globally, including in China. |
| June 18 | At the fourth round of the Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED IV), HHS and AQSIQ sign a progress report on the memorandum of agreement on food and feed that was signed in December 2007. The report describes the two sides' cooperation and meetings since last December and identifies working-level contacts for different areas of the memorandum of agreement. In addition, it outlines future steps, including US-led training for PRC officials on US requirements and standards in fall 2008, and an HHS/FDA on-site review of China's inspection and monitoring systems in early 2009. |
| June 18 | In interviews held during SED IV, HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt announces that the United States should open three new FDA offices in Beijing; Guangzhou, Guangdong; and Shanghai by the end of 2008. AQSIQ head Li Changjiang counters by saying that China will not agree to allow the FDA to post inspectors in US embassies and consulates in China until the United States agrees to allow AQSIQ to post inspectors in PRC embassies and consulates in the United States. |
| June 9-13 | EU Commissioner Meglena Kuneva visits Beijing, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong to meet with PRC officials and industry representatives on product safety issues. Kuneva states that China and the European Union plan to sign a new memorandum of understanding in November 2008 to expand cooperation on toy safety. |

- May 12-16 HHS Secretary Leavitt travels to Beijing and Shanghai for meetings with industry representatives and senior PRC officials from several agencies, including the heads of AQSIQ, MOST, MOH, and SFDA. In Shanghai, Leavitt also delivers remarks to Asia-based executives and suppliers of Target Corp. and tours the port of Shanghai.
- April 3 CPSC Chair Nancy Nord and EU Commissioner Meglena Kuneva hold a meeting and joint press conference in Brussels to discuss several topics, including joint US-EU initiatives toward China and global safety standards.
- March 14 FDA announces it has received approval from the US State Department to establish eight full-time permanent FDA positions at US diplomatic posts in China and will seek approval from the PRC government to post these personnel.
- February 20-28 A two-member FDA investigating team makes a first inspection visit to Changzhou SPL, a joint venture of Baxter International Inc.'s US-based heparin supplier Scientific Protein Labs (SPL). At the conclusion of their visit, FDA posts a redacted copy of the inspection report on its website, citing procedural problems with the facility but not tying it specifically to allergic reactions to heparin products in the United States or to a cause of the problems.
- January 24 On January 24, PRC Vice Minister of Agriculture Niu Dun meets in Beijing with Assistant USTR Tim Stratford and US Deputy Under Secretary of Agriculture Ellen Terpstra to talk about poultry- and pork-related market access and trade and safety issues.

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- December 11-13 At the third round of the Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED III), the United States and AQSIQ sign several agreements related to food and product safety, including a USDA agreement to upgrade the USDA-AQSIQ memorandum of understanding on food safety to a minister-level agreement, a US Department of the Treasury agreement on alcohol and tobacco products, and other discussions on toys, fireworks, lighters, electrical products, and pesticides.
- December 13 USTR Susan Schwab and AQSIQ Director Li Changjiang meet on the sidelines of SED III to discuss US concerns about market access in China for US beef and poultry.
- December 11 During meetings of the US-China Joint Commission on Commerce and Trade, officials from the United States (HHS and FDA) and China (AQSIQ and SFDA) sign two memoranda of agreement: one on food and feed products and one on drugs and medical devices. AQSIQ also agrees to relist six of the eleven pork plants that had been previously delisted due to the presence of ractopamine in their pork products, although AQSIQ makes no commitments to change its zero tolerance policy on ractopamine.
- November 26-27 AQSIQ, MOH, and the World Health Organization co-sponsor the High-Level International Food Safety Forum, which is attended by representatives from 42 countries and areas. At its conclusion, participants pass the Beijing Declaration on Food Safety, which declares food safety to be an international problem and calls on all states to work together and separately to promote food safety. While attending, AQSIQ Director Li Changjiang signs food safety agreements with Brazil, Canada, Germany, and South Korea.
- November 6 The Import Safety Working Group publishes its Action Plan for Import Safety, which lists 14 broad recommendations and 50 action steps for government and the private sector to take in order to improve import safety. At the same time, FDA releases its Food Protection Plan, which uses a targeted, risk-based approach to ensure the safety of domestic and imported foods.
- October 24 The European Union and AQSIQ sign their first agreement on drugs and related products, stating that the two sides will share information and cooperate on standards.
- October 10 The *Wall Street Journal* reports that in a recent interview with AQSIQ Minister Li Changjiang, Li presented reporters with a list of recent US-made products with defects or safety problems, including turbines from General Electric Co., farm machinery from Deere & Co., and Hummer vehicles from General Motors Corp.
- September 12 The US National Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the PRC National Development and Reform Commission sign a memorandum of understanding to cooperate on motor vehicle safety;

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| | the memorandum covers standards development and enforcement and information sharing on safety and fuel economy. |
| September 10–11 | AQSIQ and CPSC co-host the second biennial Sino-US Consumer Product Safety Summit in Washington, DC, announcing new agreements to ban lead paint from Chinese-made exports bound for the United States and increase information and personnel exchanges in four product areas: toys, fireworks, lighters, and electrical products. |
| August 20–24 | AQSIQ and FDA officials meet in Washington, DC, to discuss Chinese seafood issues. |
| May 22–23 | At the second round of Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED II), US and PRC officials briefly discuss food and product safety issues, including potential areas of cooperation. |

PRC Government Actions

2008

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| July 31 | AQSIQ announces results from its product quality work for the first half of 2008, showing 93.8 percent of inspected products passed quality tests. AQSIQ also discussed its focus during the first half of the year on food, consumer goods, construction materials, and agricultural production processes. According to its report, AQSIQ will continue focusing on food and consumer goods in the second half of the year and increase inspections of auto parts and earthquake recovery-related products. |
| July 22, 24 | SFDA hosts two national-level conferences on food and drug safety supervision in 2008, in Yinchuan, Ningxiam, and Guiyang, Guizhou. SFDA head Shao Mingli states that SFDA should continue to strengthen its daily supervision of food and drug products but focus mainly on food safety for the Olympics and on food and drug supervision in the aftermath of the Wenchuan earthquake. |
| July 14 | AQSIQ announces new rules that take effect October 1, 2008, on the inspection and quarantine process of outbound exports. The rules allow enterprises to expedite processing through qualification by local inspection officials. |
| June 6 | Six government agencies – MOH, MOA, MOFCOM, SAIC, SFDA, and AQSIQ – jointly issue a notice designed to direct provincial governments and other agencies in food-safety work following the earthquake in Wenchuan, Sichuan. |
| May 12 | AQSIQ releases new draft regulations on the inspection and quarantine of food imports and exports; the regulations include new risk classification categories for products and enterprises, registration procedures for imported food and food additive products, and infrastructure and internal process requirements to improve food safety for exporting companies. |
| May 5 | SFDA releases 33 mandatory standards and 40 voluntary standards for medical products and devices, ranging from dental floss to EKG monitors. The new mandatory standards take effect December 1, 2009; the voluntary standards take effect June 1, 2009. |
| April 29 | SFDA announces the launch of a three-year study on examination and inspection technology most urgently needed in China. SFDA also solicits proposals for research projects and funding from Chinese organizations. The study has a particular focus on technology for inspecting for drug impurities, radioactivity, metal content, and harmful residues. |
| April 20 | The State Council releases a draft version of the new Food Safety Law, asking for public comments until May 20. The new law includes harsher penalties, including imprisonment, fines, and revocation of production licenses, for those who produce or sell low-quality food. The law also describes a new framework to identify and track products ranging from food to cosmetics. |
| April 10 | SFDA issues a formal notice that calls on all heparin-producing enterprises to increase inspections of their products for the presence of hypersulfated chondroitin sulfate and calls on local safety officials to halt production of firms that cannot guarantee the quality of their products. This follows a similar notice two days earlier (April 8) from MOH. |

- April 8 MOH Minister Chen Zhu and Vice Minister Ma Xiaowei discuss MOH's work on health standards, including food and drug safety standards, during the sixth annual conference of the MOH Health Standards Commission (HSC). Ma states that MOH and the HSC have already released 363 food hygiene standards, and Chen states that MOH plans to release or revise more than 7,000 standards in food, drugs, and other consumer safety areas this year.
- April 8 SAIC announces the results from a national survey on several types of edible products. The targeted products tested included children's food, liquor, rice, honey, and jelly. SAIC also conducted inspections on meat, fruit and vegetable juice, vegetable oil, wheat flour, and wine. Inspection results showed compliance rates between 54 percent (honey) and 100 percent (fruit and vegetable juice), with most categories between 79 and 90 percent compliance.
- April 3 SFDA announces the launch of a nationwide survey of production and operating conditions for producers of several types of food and medical products that were included in the December 2007 agreement between HHS/FDA and SFDA, including human growth hormone, glycerol, heparin, artemisinin, condoms, and glucose. The survey concludes May 30, 2008.
- April 3 AQSIQ posts on its website that local AQSIQ Entry-Exit Inspection and Quarantine Bureaus have begun a new round of action targeting product quality of key exports and food safety, with special attention to furniture, clothing, food, and agricultural exports.
- March 21 SFDA orders its local bureaus to increase supervision of heparin producers, stating that producers of the active ingredient in heparin must now obtain their raw material from registered suppliers. SFDA also states that suppliers must strengthen their checks on the quality and safety of those raw ingredients.
- March 20 MOFCOM releases its *2007 Investigation Report of Food Safety in Logistics*, its fourth such report since 2005. The report examines food safety measures taken by various actors in the food supply chain, including wholesalers, distributors, and retailers, and highlights growing awareness of food safety issues in both urban and rural areas.
- March 5 Premier Wen Jiabao, speaking in front of the NPC, pledges to implement a system in 2008 that will include 7,700 national standards for food and product safety, as well as improved laws and regulations, a stronger monitoring system for food safety violations, and increased punishment for violators of food and product safety laws and new regulations.
- February 28 The China National Certification and Accreditation Administration removes administration approval procedures that had limited certification institutions from abroad, including Hong Kong and Macao, from setting up representative offices in China.
- February 26 In a press release, SFDA states that it had not registered Changzhou SPL, the Chinese joint venture of Baxter International's supplier SPL, because Changzhou SPL was registered as an agro-products company, not a pharmaceutical manufacturer.
- February 20 AQSIQ holds a national telephone conference in Beijing to launch a new campaign on product safety that targets 10 product types, including furniture, toys, garments, paint, costume jewelry, auto parts, cotton fiber products, fiberboard, decorative products, and detergents. The first phase of the campaign, focusing on the first five products, will run from March to October 2008; the second phase will begin in October and run into 2009.
- January 28 The Guangdong Provincial Government releases China's first local-level regulations on food safety; the regulations outline a food safety recall system and describe systems for shared responsibility among producers and retailers and for supervision of production, sales, and consumption of food products. The regulations state that they took effect on January 1, 2008.
- January 16 Vice Premier Wu Yi convenes a national teleconference to mark the end of the four-month national campaign to combat food and product safety issues, claiming completion of all major goals and urging officials to build a long-term framework to promote food and product safety.
- January 8 MOA Vice Minister Gao Hongbin announces that, over the next three to five years, MOA will formulate national agriculture standards that correspond to the international Codex Alimentarius system. Gao also states that 325 agricultural standards were released during the recently concluded inspection campaign for agricultural products.

- January 3 At the National Quality Inspection Work Conference in Beijing, AQSIQ Director Li Changjiang states that AQSIQ in 2008 plans to formulate 10,000 national standards, including 4,000 urgent national standards. Li also states that AQSIQ will ensure total conformity with international limits on harmful substances in food and other major consumables and 75 percent conformity with international standards on national standards by the end of 2008.
- 2007**
- December 26 In a report to the NPC, Minister of Health Chen Zhu cites improvements in food safety: a new licensing system for the sale of 525 food products, the issuance of more than 107,000 food production permits, the adoption by all licensed manufacturers of the QS mark (a mark introduced by PRC regulators in 2003 to indicate that a product has passed a higher level of inspection before entering the market 2003), the revision of nearly 2,500 industrial standards, and the formulation of more than 200 new standards.
- December 20 At a SAIC working conference, Vice Director Zhou Bohua reports the establishment of a new nationwide licensing system at 173,000 supermarkets across the country. Zhou also states that SAIC has closed more than 192, 000 unlicensed food businesses and uncovered 29,800 food safety violations in the previous four months.
- December 18 The PRC Certification and Accreditation Administration issues new regulations that require all toys sold in China to have received, and to prominently display, the China Compulsory Certification (CCC) mark that was announced on June 1.
- December 10 SFDA begins to implement new measures for a drug recall system, which requires recalls for products within a period of time that depends on the severity of the risk posed by the product in question.
- November 29 At a national food and product safety conference in Guangzhou, Guangdong, the PRC government launches a local large-scale food and product safety inspection campaign in Guangdong, following earlier campaigns in Jiangsu and Zhejiang. The campaign sets eight priority fields, including agricultural products, processed food, pork, drugs and health-related devices, and import and export products.
- November 8 The Standardization Administration of China announces that China will revise 600 national food safety inspection standards to bring China in line with international practice by 2010.
- October 8 AQSIQ Minister Li Changjiang announces that all legal food exports now bear the China Inspection and Quarantine (CIQ) inspection mark.
- September 18 SAIC announces that it will create a national tracking system for food products, requiring all food vendors to keep detailed records of food suppliers, to detect and punish unlicensed food providers.
- September 5 MOA releases new regulations covering seafood products for export, including stricter management of registration, inspections and quarantine procedures, and fines for violators. The regulations take effect on October 1, 2007.
- September 5 Six government agencies – AQSIQ, MOFCOM, MOH, MOA, SAIC, and the Ministry of Public Security – launch a three-month campaign to increase food safety in the pork industry, including increased inspection and licensing of pork farms and slaughterhouses.
- August 31 AQSIQ reveals new recall systems for food and toys, placing responsibility on manufacturers and vendors to stop production and sales, notify other firms, and report to authorities. AQSIQ also announces fines for producers and vendors that fail to comply.
- August 23 Vice Premier Wu Yi, head of the Leading Group on Product Quality and Food Safety, holds a nationwide press conference to announce the launch of a four-month campaign to combat food and product safety issues. Wu lays out eight key product areas, with concrete goals for each, including the so-called “twelve 100s.”
- August 21 AQSIQ announces that it has begun to construct a new database of information on inspection and quarantine of imported and exported products, aimed at businesses, government agencies, and the public.

- August 17 The State Council releases its first White Paper on China's Food Quality and Safety, which stresses the importance that the PRC government places on food safety and describes PRC government efforts to promote food safety.
- August 8 At a press conference, SFDA announces that it will spend \$1.1 billion on food and product safety programs that began in 2005 and will continue for the next three to five years. This spending will include programs to build and expand testing centers and border inspection centers across China. SFDA also announces that it will hold regular biweekly information releases on food and product safety.
- July 27 The State Council releases Special Regulations on Improving Supervision and Management of Food and Product Safety, granting supervisory departments new inspection authority and tying food and product safety management to the performance evaluation of government officials.
- July 25 The State Council announces the formation of the Leading Group on Product Quality and Food Safety, an interagency task force created to better coordinate food and product safety policies, including work on new laws and regulations. PRC Vice Premier Wu Yi is named head of the leading group.
- July 10 Former SFDA Commissioner Zheng Xiaoyu is executed on charges of bribery.
- July 4 AQSIQ releases a survey on the safety of products in China's domestic market, indicating that close to 20 percent of domestically sold products fail to meet quality requirements.
- June 19 AQSIQ and the Standardization Administration of China hold a press conference to announce that they will formulate, review, and revise up to 4,000 PRC standards that touch on food quality and safety issues. They also announce that the review period for standards will be reduced from the current 12 years to 4.5 years by 2010.
- June 7 The State Council releases the 11th Five-Year Plan for Food and Drug Safety, setting concrete benchmarks for product inspection, such as randomly testing 80 percent of product types on the market by 2010, and advocating greater coordination between PRC government agencies responsible for product inspections.
- June AQSIQ begins to post on its website lists of enterprises that violate quality and safety regulations and announces that exports from those enterprises will be prohibited.
- May 28 SFDA announces a new national campaign to improve drug safety and inspection, which involves the dispatch of 90 inspection officials to 15 provinces between May 28 and June 8.
- May 8 The State Council releases the 2007 Special Plan on National Food Safety, which advises enforcement agencies to increase cooperation and strengthen their supervision of the food supply chain.