

South Korea, Taiwan ramp up inspection on imported chilli

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Both South Korea and Taiwan have decided to increase inspection measures on imported chilli, including from Vietnam, to maintain the safety and quality standards of these food products entering their markets. The move comes as both countries aim to ensure the integrity of imported chilli products and safeguard consumer health by adhering to stringent quality control measures, according to the International Trade Council.

Recently, South Korea's Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) has issued a notice stating that imported food items will be subjected to inspection upon entry into the market due to high rates of nonconformity. This measure applies to chilli products from Vietnam, including cayenne, capsicum, chilli pepper, red pepper, and tabasco, which will undergo inspection for residues of seven pesticides. The inspection order will be effective from March 30, 2024, to March 30, 2025, and aims to address concerns arising from imported foods consistently failing to meet established standards and specifications. Importers are required to furnish testing results from MFDS-approved laboratories to facilitate imports into the Republic of Korea.

Similarly, the Vietnam Economic and Cultural Office in Taipei has received notification from Taiwanese authorities regarding heightened inspection protocols for all imported chilli products. This initiative, which began this month, seeks to improve quality management in light of safety apprehensions following the detection of banned cancer-causing dye additives in some chilli shipments from China. The products that will be subject to increased scrutiny include fruits of the genus *Capsicum*, crushed or ground, and other dried fruits of the genus *Capsicum*.

According to the Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA) notice, Taiwan has imposed bans on the customs clearance of chilli from specific enterprises, including 21 from China, one from Vietnam, one from Thailand, and one from Mexico. Despite these measures, Vietnam remains a significant player in the chilli export market, with exports totalling \$72 million in 2023, representing a 34.5 per cent increase compared to 2022.