

## 《中国人吃上安全食品为何这么难？》

Ink, dye, bleach, wax and toxic chemicals: These are just a few of the substances that have been found recently in food products in China, reigniting fears over food safety despite repeated government pledges to crack down on tainted eats.

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Why is China having such trouble making its food safe?

Sean Yong/Reuters2011?4?10????????????????????????????????????????????????????????

While China is no stranger to food scandals, a spate of food contamination cases brought to light over the past month has been shocking even to the most jaded of observers here. Over the past few days, health authorities in the southern province of Guangdong shut down 17 noodle makers after they were discovered mixing ink and wax to their dough. Meanwhile, over the weekend, nearly 300 people in the city of Changsha were reportedly sickened after eating meat contaminated with the banned 'skinny meat' additive clenbuterol, the subject of a meat industry crackdown in March.

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In perhaps the most bizarre case, also in Changsha, a number of consumers earlier this month walked into their kitchens at night to discover their store-bought pork was glowing in the dark.

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Beijing has struggled with food safety for years. The problem appeared to come to a head in 2008, when milk tainted with the industrial chemical melamine killed at least six children, sickened tens of thousands of others in 2008 and appeared to shock the government into taking decisive action. But the melamine eventually reappeared in the Chinese food supply, along with a host of other chemicals and illegal additives, leading many observers to wonder why China can't seem to solve such a fundamental problem.

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One of the biggest issues is the drive to make a buck at any cost, says Lester Ross, a Beijing-based attorney with U.S. law firm WilmerHale. Some companies see that by using additives, they can cut overhead costs or boost profit margins, and they merely aren't thinking about the affects the additives will have on consumers, Mr. Ross says.

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Ross????????????????????????????????????????????????????????????

The answer to that, according to Mr. Ross, is an education blitz. China has the ability to plaster its subways, bus stations and even television screens with messages and advertising that lets all people know the dangers involved using chemical additives in food.

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Local media reports of illnesses related to chemical consumption have helped, Mr. Ross says. A flood of news stories in recent days have informed Chinese consumers that meat containing clenbuterol may be leaner, but it may also cause headaches, nausea, and heart palpitations, while vegetables with sodium nitrite may grow faster, but they can also cause cancer.

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In a push for greater clarity, China's Ministry of Health is planning to revise and make public its list of legal food additives by the end of the year, while also publishing a black list of illegal additives, the state run China Daily reports.

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But education is only part of the problem. Another issue, according to Mr. Ross, is that there are too many cooks in the kitchen -- or rather too many bureaucracies handling food safety. The Ministry of Health is the lead agency on food safety issues, he explains, but the State Administration for Industry and Commerce is also involved, as are the State Food and Drug Administration and the Ministry of Agriculture.

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Struggles with food safety are not a specifically Chinese problem. Many countries, including the U.S. and Japan, have gone through similar growing pains in the food industry, says Wu Ming, a professor at Beijing University's school of public health.

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Sanitation and contamination issues permeated the food manufacturing and processing U.S. in the late-19th century. As China law scholar Stanley Lubman recently noted, it wasn't until 1906, when Upton Sinclair published "The Jungle," a book that unveiled the horrific standards of meat-packing plants of Chicago, that the U.S. began to wake up to its food safety problems.

19????????????????????????????????????????(Stanley Lubman)????????1906????•??? (Upton Sinclair)????????(The Jungle)????????????????????????????????

The big difference between the U.S. and China is size, Ms. Ming says, adding that the quantity of companies involved in China's food industry will make for tougher regulatory obstacles.

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"It's impossible to lessen such problems overnight," Mrs. Ming said. "It will take many years."

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