

# News from the World Of Spices

Dec, 2017



## Traceability, it's what's for breakfast, lunch *and* dinner



GMO Free. Organic. Free Range. Grass-Fed. Gluten Free. Locally Grown. Cruelty Free. Product of this state. Product of that state – as grocery shoppers continually become more consciences of the products they drop into their carts, who is responsible for backing source claims made by food companies and retailers?

“At the retail level, we go throughout the store looking at products to verify and certify certain attributes,” said Leann Saunders, COO and president of Where Food Comes From, a Denver based third-party agricultural and food verification company.

“These attributes may be ingredients within a product, non-GMO compliance or verifying claims made on an egg carton for an animal welfare standard being practiced.”

According to Saunders, verifying and creating a traceability path to products and ingredients means things to different people, defined by, “how wide and deep are you going?”

“Traceability may be within their own operation and company, or it may trace back through the supply chain,” she said.

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## Some like it hot! Appetite for hot and spicy foods continues, matched by product launches, says Kalsec



Food and beverage brands are responding to consumer demand for hotter, spicier, foods with over 50 new hot and spicy products launched every day around the world in 2016, says Michigan-based natural extracts specialist Kalsec.

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### Mintel research: consumers like experimenting with new ingredients

According to new research from Mintel, as many as 41% of Italian, 38% of Polish, 35% of German, 32% of French and 21% of Spanish consumers say they enjoy experimenting with ingredients.



Consumer appetite is strong and according to Mintel there are four key ingredients that are expected to excel in 2018: chaga mushroom, green banana flour, hemp and blue algae.

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## Centre approves floor price for pepper imports to aid domestic growers



To protect domestic pepper growers against a surge in imports possibly originating from South-East Asia, especially Vietnam, the government has approved a proposal from the Spices Board for imposing a minimum import price (MIP) of ₹500/kg on the spice.

“Decline in the domestic pepper price due to cheaper import from other origins has been a major concern among pepper growers. Pepper prices have gone down by nearly 35 per cent in one year and have resulted in a lot of hardship for pepper growers,” a release from the Commerce & Industry Ministry pointed out.

Pepper, which ruled at over ₹700 per kg last year, is now trading at slightly above ₹400 spelling doom for domestic growers.

There are apprehensions that since most of the pepper-producing countries are in the ASEAN region, pepper from the region is being routed through Sri Lanka taking advantage of lower duty under SAFTA (South Asia FTA) and India-Sri

Lanka FTA, the release said.

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## Nestlé calls for partnerships on circular economy

Swiss food giant Nestlé is calling for a more collaborative approach between the public and private sectors to develop a circular economy as it works to meet its 2030 environmental impact targets.

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## Report shows only half of European food recalls made public

All too often there is a lag between the time European governments know about unsafe food and when public warnings go out about recalls, a new report says.

After the public notice of last summer's European egg recall because of insecticide contamination, [Berlin-based Foodwatch](#) decided to look into just how often such delays occur. The European consumer rights organization, which specializes in food quality issues, found recall information is only getting out about half the time.

Dutch egg producers last summer were found using fipronil, a banned insecticide, as a cleansing agent. Supermarkets in 18 European countries removed millions of eggs for destruction.

The European Union runs a food safety alert system, which is activated when a member state makes an official report. Belgium filed the first notice on July 20, and the Netherlands and Germany followed.

However, according to Foodwatch, the EU let 10 days pass before going public with the news on Aug. 1.

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## SE Texas chefs turn up the heat with peppers, spices



For Ally McCowan and DeCarlos Hawthorne, it's a must to stop by Kajun Seafood and Wings to fix their spicy cravings when they visit Beaumont from The Woodlands.

"Every time we come, this is where we eat," McCowan said. "Other restaurants have nothing on this place."

Hawthorne, who is originally from Beaumont, said his go-to dishes are the boiled shrimp and the sausage.

"They're both really spicy," he said. "Don't rub your eyes. You'll be crying. The spices are hot - tissue hot, like runny nose hot."

Known for the region's love of spice and bold flavors, Southeast Texas forms a zesty grub hub of multiple cuisines and cultures. Spice, the great universal language, creates a hot, flavorful harmony with dishes ranging from mild to extreme, depending on your taste.

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## **FSSAI relaxes norms for materials used for seasoning pkg till Jan 2018**

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), the country's apex food regulator, has decided to allow the food business operators (FBOs) to use the old printing materials for the packaging of seasonings till January 2018. These packaging materials carrying the labelling requirements laid down under the previous regulations.

In August 2017, FSSAI, through a gazette notification, prescribed new standards for seasonings and other products. The new regulations require a specific food product category, seasoning, to be printed on the label in place of the existing food product category, seasoning and condiments (proprietary food).

FSSAI said that it had received a representation requesting the permission to continue the use of the current packaging material for another six months. The last extension was granted in the month of August. However, the apex food regulator asked the FBOs to comply with the new regulations for labelling of seasonings before the end of the deadline.

The apex regulator, in its order, stated that that after due consideration, it has allowed the use of the existing label under proprietary food up to January 31, 2018. And it is mandatory for all the FBOs to comply the standards prescribed for seasoning notified in the gazette.

### Notices on salt

Meanwhile, FSSAI has also omitted the potential of hydrogen (pH) value requirement on the label for fortified salt.

In its recently issued notice, it has invited suggestions and comments from the World Trade Organisation (WTO)-Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) committee members relating to the omission of the pH requirement from iron-fortified salt and revising the definition in the Regulation of Restriction on sale of common salt in two months' time.

Amending the Food Safety and Standards (Food Products Standards and Food Additives) Regulations, 2011, the notice notified under the clause Salt, Spices, Condiments and related products under the category of Edible common salt for the food item Iron-fortified iodised salt (double-fortified salt) the mentioned pH value in five per cent aqueous solution should be between 3.5 and 7.5 was proposed to be omitted.

Iron-fortified iodised salt (double-fortified salt) has been defined as a crushed crystalline solid; white, pale, pink or light grey in colour. It added that it should be free from contamination with clay and other extraneous adulterants and impurities. pH is the measurement of a liquid's level of acidity or alkalinity.

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## **Organic farming: Perceptions and reality (Concluding Part**

### **III)** The organic way of farming embraces a slew of traditional, broadly accepted and scientifically proven cultural practices. These practices tend to promote soil health and biodiversity in farms and require less energy. However, these practices are not unique to organic farming because conventional farming also adopts them to varying degrees.

But what really set organic farming apart are the growing methods it prohibits. It prohibits the application of chemical fertilizers, use of synthetic chemical pesticides and deployment of genetically modified crops, livestock, fish and microorganisms.

The claimed exclusive benefits to consumers from organic farming of more nutritious, tastier and safer foods and a cleaner more sustainable environment are more perceptions than reality. What are real for the most part are lower yields per hectare, higher costs of production, and consequently more expensive foods.

But what is also real is that organic farming is more profitable to farmers than conventional farming (as much as 2.9–3.8 times more profitable to farmers by one US estimate). Increasingly the world over consumers are willing to pay the premium for the organic label.

Part 1 (26 November 2017 issue) of this series pointed out that the total ban on the application of chemical fertilizers has no scientific bases. The contention that continuous application of chemical fertilizers render soils unfit for crop production is refuted by long-term field experiments growing wheat and beans in England (since 1843), growing maize in Illinois in the America Midwest (since 1876)

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## India seeks lasting solution to food security issue at WTO ministerial; here's what Suresh Prabhu said

Commerce minister Suresh Prabhu on Monday asked developed nations to cut massive trade-distorting farm subsidies, affirmed India's commitment to multilateral trading system and sought a mechanism to protect farmers as well as a work programme on services that would draw elements from its own proposal.

India on Monday sought a permanent solution to the critical issue of public procurement programme at the on-going ministerial of the World Trade Organization (WTO) itself and asked the developed world to trim their massive trade-distorting farm subsidies without putting the onus of a reduction in such dole-outs on developing nations. Speaking at the plenary session of the 11th ministerial conference in Buenos Aires, commerce and industry minister Suresh Prabhu also sought a special safeguard mechanism to protect farmers from unusual shocks delivered by cheaper imports, in sync with a system that already exists for the developed countries.

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## IOI Loders Croklaan gets FiE sustainability award



At FiE, IOI Loders Croklaan received the Sustainability Champion Award for the company's efforts in building a traceable, transparent and sustainable palm oil supply chain. The Palm Oil Sustainability Program of IOI Loders Croklaan is said to show the ability to demonstrate and stimulate innovation, and raises the bar for the industry.

IOI Loders Croklaan's Palm Oil Sustainability Program consists of a dedicated three-step approach to trace back to the supplier mill and plantation level, and works in conjunction with its Sustainable Palm Oil Policy and the third-party supplier annex. The commitments in the area of traceability and transparency are part of the overarching long-term sustainability strategy of IOI Loders Croklaan.

With the program and policy in place, the organization says it has shown significant progress in the past few years in building a transparent and sustainable palm oil supply chain. The Sustainable Palm Oil Policy and third-party supplier annex sets high standards and requirements for the business and applies to all suppliers, leveraging the broad reach of IOI Loders Croklaan in the industry to drive those standards down the supply chain. The corresponding three-step approach – focusing on traceability, risk assessment, and supplier capacity building – enables IOI Loders Croklaan to ensure suppliers become compliant with the policy. The most recent achievements can be found in the regularly updated online “Palm Oil Dashboard” [Read More](#)

## MoFPI, NASVI & Nestlé India collaborate to raise food safety awareness

As a part of the implementation of the Swachhta Action Plan, for the year 2017-18, the ministry of food processing industries (MoFPI), jointly with Nestlé India and the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI), has launched Project Serve Safe Food to organise training programmes for 500 street food vendors in New Delhi to generate awareness on food quality and safety.

While street food vending is an important source of employment for a large population, a variety of constraints, including the lack of knowledge and skills in business, limited training opportunities and restricted mobility have prevented street vendors from improving their skills and capabilities.

Training on health, hygiene, safe food handling, waste disposal and entrepreneurship will be imparted to the street food vendors. The programme has been rolled out in a phased manner by Nestlé India, with the first leg being launched in Goa in November 2016. This was followed by Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala, where training programmes were conducted for over 4,000 street food vendors.

The training programme was chaired by Parag Gupta, joint secretary, MoFPI. Speaking on the occasion, he said, "It is imperative that street food vendors get proper knowledge of food hygiene practices."

"There is tremendous scope to uplift the overall quality of street food available, which will help them improve livelihood opportunities, and at the same time, increase consumer confidence," he added.

"The endeavour of Nestlé India and NASVI in organising such events is commendable, and hope it benefits more and more people in the days to come," Gupta said.

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## Why pepper prices shot up

India is the largest consumer of pepper in the world and the second largest producer after Vietnam. The Union government approved the proposal of the state-run Spices Board as cheaper imports of pepper is seen putting pressure on the domestic market.

Indian pepper prices have moved up by Rs 75 per kg in the past two weeks to Rs 450 per kg with the government imposing a minimum import price on the commodity, traders said. However, processors and exporters of pepper products alleged that the move would harm the trade and lead to shifting of units to countries like Sri Lanka. India is the largest consumer of pepper in the world and the second largest producer after Vietnam. The Union government approved the proposal of the state-run Spices Board as cheaper imports of pepper is seen putting pressure on the domestic market. Traders are also wary of higher imports into India via the FTA route and by means of under-invoicing. The All India Spices Exporters Forum (AISEF) said that the new move is not rational and would hurt the spices industry. "The notification speaks about minimum import price CIF to be Rs 500/kg (\$7575/tonne), when today global market prices are trading at \$3500-4200/tonne. There are many companies that earn foreign currency for the country by importing and re-exporting the pepper by means of value addition and help create jobs in this sector. Such business will be forced to close down," Prakash Namboodiri, chairman of AISEF told FE. He said that higher import duty would have served the farmers interest better than the imposition of a minimum import price on all varieties of pepper, as it would lead to a cost escalation even in the case of light pepper berries which are used only for extraction and not consumed domestically.

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## Spices Market | Global Industry to Experience an Impressive Growth by 2022 | Research Report by MRFR

Due to the increasing demand of chilli and garlic, the market is growing at an incremental pace of development on the global stage. Market Research Future, a firm which specializes in market reports related to the Food, Beverages & Nutrition sector among others, recently forecasted in its report on Global Spices Market Research Report- Forecast to 2022 that the spices market will demonstrate an exceptional CAGR.

Increasing importance of spices for various flavors in foods and medicinal properties has resulted in higher demand for spices. On the other hand, rising awareness for food safety related to pesticide residues in spices and related health hazards has triggered higher demand of spices. Change in food trends and adoption of various international food forms encouraging spices consumption in raw form further encourages demand for spices.

Advancement in spice processing technology along with innovation in spice harvesting technologies across the globe is supporting the market growth. Many spices manufacturers are focusing on development of innovative technologies to do spice processing at large scale. The use of advanced technologies in spice industry is playing key role to fulfil increasing demand of spices from all regions of the world.

The countries which are rich source of spices such as India, China, Pakistan and Turkey are working to make export and import process of spices more liberal. Since the export of spices are highly competitive, formation of federation or trade of spice growers and exporters is a good platform which will facilitate better promotion of production, processing, marketing and export of quality spices from India and other countries.

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## Uzbekistan's Karakalpakstan to allocate territory for cultivating chili peppers

Up to 15,000 hectares are planned to be allocated for cultivating chili peppers in the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan in 2018, UzA national news agency reported Dec.19.

Such instructions were given by Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev during the trip to the Republic of Karakalpakstan on December 15-16.

Chili peppers are planned to be cultivated on the basis of Indonesian hot peppers, which have been recently reviewed during the Uzbek delegation's trip to Indonesia.

The chili pepper crops are ripening within 60-80 days. Specialists from Indonesia will be involved in the cultivation process.

At present, chili peppers are grown on a 4.4 million hectare-territory. Moreover, 68.3 million tons of chili peppers are annually harvested.

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## Biological pest control agents given green light by government



Cambodia has just launched a new registry for companies that wish to import biological control agents (BCA), effectively allowing the importation of these organisms which are widely used in other countries for pest control.

BCA are natural organisms that are used to fight pests, such as the larva of certain flies which are used to combat insects that kill crops. Controlling pests – whether they are insects, mites, weeds or plant diseases – through this method is known as biological control.

Speaking at a workshop on the subject yesterday, Phum Ra, the director of the department of agricultural legislation at the Ministry of Agriculture, said his ministry has officially opened a registry for companies who want to import BCA, a move he hailed as a milestone for the agricultural sector as it will reduce dependency of chemical products and widen producers' markets abroad, particularly when it comes to organic buyers.

He added that the country's current overreliance on chemical fertilizers is debilitating the soil, causing pesticide resistance and hampering access to international markets that demand higher and greener standards of agriculture production.

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## \*Microsoft AI helping Indian farmers increase crop yields\*

New technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Cloud Machine Learning, Satellite Imagery and advanced analytics are empowering small-holder farmers in India to increase their income through higher crop yield and greater price control, Microsoft India said.

In a few dozen villages in Telengana, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, farmers are receiving automated voice calls that tell them whether their cotton crops are at risk of a pest attack, based on weather conditions and crop stage.

In Karnataka, the government can get price forecasts for essential commodities such as tur (split red gram) three months in advance for planning the Minimum Support Price (MSP).

"Sowing date as such is very critical to ensure that farmers harvest a good crop. And if it fails, it results in loss as a lot of costs are incurred for seeds, as well as the fertilizer applications," Suhas P. Wani, Director, Asia Region, of the International Crop Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT), said in a Microsoft blog post.

The non-profit ICRISAT conducts agricultural research for development in Asia and sub-Saharan Africa with a wide array of partners throughout the world.

In collaboration with ICRISAT, Microsoft has developed an AI-Sowing App powered by Microsoft Cortana Intelligence Suite including Machine Learning and Power BI.



## Americans Love Spices. So Why Don't We Grow Them?



Nutmeg, cinnamon and cloves are probably ramping up in importance in your spice cabinet right about now – the classic flavors of the winter season. But while you might be shopping for local ingredients for your favorite recipes for eggnog or maple-glazed ham, the odds are that the spices you're using were imported from the other side of the world.

As owner of La Boite, a spice store in Manhattan that creates blends for chefs and home cooks, Lev Sercarz travels far and wide in search of the best spices. "Spices tell the story of the world," he says. "There's a reason why good spices are good – they are the flavors of the regions that they come from and they also support that economy."

Nowhere is the demand for spices more evident than in the United States, which leads the world in both consumption and imports. A U.S. Department of Agriculture [report](#) showed that Americans have dramatically embraced spices over the past 50 years: Per capita spice consumption in 1966 was 1.2 pounds annually, while that figure more than tripled by 2015 to 3.7 pounds.

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## The Human Face of Trade and Food Security

Globalization has significantly changed agricultural trade, and markets are more connected and capable of delivering economic opportunity and food security now than ever before. While the market itself is the physical representation of trade, the rules governing the market are a key factor in productivity, investment, and overall **food security**. The system of rules and regulations governing trade and market activity, the “enabling environment” for short, directly affects how much farmers in a country will be able to produce and how food will be stored, processed, and sold.

In most cases individual countries cannot meet their own food security needs and must import food and inputs (such as seed, fertilizer, and agrochemicals) from elsewhere. However, as food moves across borders, the rules become even more complex and can sometimes halt trade in food entirely.

Just as the nature of markets has changed, so has the system of rules governing the market. Informal systems, with unwritten understandings of how to conduct trade, have turned into more structured regulatory systems within and between countries. Agricultural trade is increasingly subject to formal rules at multiple levels: national, regional, and international. This includes the disciplines through the World Trade Organization (WTO) on which the debate around agricultural trade is often focused. Yet, the policies and regulations that perhaps impact the market most are shaped at the national and even local levels.

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