

Promoting agricultural products' traceability system in restaurants to protect consumer rights

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Four large corporations in the restaurant and hotel industry in Taiwan, under the assistance of the Council of Agriculture (COA), promised to give priority to choosing foods with traceability system records, and to gradually introduce a traceability service system, which customers can use while ordering a meal to directly trace the origin of their food using devices such as smart phones and tablet computers.

With rising awareness about food safety, consumers are now paying more attention to both the sources and the safety of restaurant food. In order to meet these needs, the COA and a group known as the Agricultural Multi-Discipline Management of Technology (AMOT) are working together to assist the restaurant and hotel industry to improve services.

Since 2007, the COA has been promoting an agricultural products' traceability system which emphasizes product safety, sustainability, transparency and traceability; the system also meets regularly, and does rigorous verification checks conducted by a certified international third party. In order to enhance market incentives, strengthen advertising and encourage consumers to identify and purchase agricultural products with traceability records, the COA has printed increasingly an average of 1.62 million labels per month in 2013, compared to 1.13 million per month in 2012, and 770,000 labels per month in 2011.

COA officials said that the restaurant traceability service is designed to encourage the catering industry to use ingredients with good records to increase consumer awareness of food sources; the system employs cloud technology to provide real-time information about images and records of the origin of various food ingredients.

Consumers can use this service to research the origin, methods and specific attributes of foods to protect their health; they can also support agricultural business operators by their actions in order to influence methods of production.

AMOT officials said that the concept of traceability restaurants promoted by the COA garnered the support of four well-known corporations, including the swanky hotel W TAIPEI; The Peng's Corporation, which has been in operation for more than 60 years in Taiwan; the Hot-7 Teppanyaki restaurant chain under the Wowprime group; and the Mellow Field Hotel, a principal investment by many fishermen's and farmers' associations throughout the country.

Representing different dining styles, these restaurants and hotels have become pioneers in promoting traceability services, working together to create a safer eating environment for all their consumers.

(Data Source: Council of Agriculture)

Date submitted: April 21, 2014

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: April 22, 2014