

Korea-China FTA Business Plaza 2015

Dr. Jeong-Bin Im

Professor, Seoul National University, Korea

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA) and the Korean Food Foundation jointly hosted 'Korea-China FTA Business Plaza 2015' in cooperation with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE) at KINTEX, Ilsan, Korea on April 27th. The event aims to match Chinese buyers and Korean exporters and utilize the Korea-China FTA as an opportunity to expand Korea's export to China. There were about 370 buyers and 1,500 Korean companies. This number included 51 agricultural-food-related buyers, and around 100 Korean food exporters. Korean exporters are mainly from the areas of ginseng, dairy, processed rice foods and traditional liquors. Mushrooms are now being nurtured as a strategic export item to China, and kimchi is being prepared for export by the Chinese new phytosanitary standard for import. Both items were also introduced to Chinese buyers at the

At the event, there were 556 export consultation meetings leading towards deals worth USD 37 million. There were also three contracts, worth USD 1.2 million, that were concluded. Chinese online buyers were particularly interested in instant foods like cup bibimbap (rice with sautéed and seasoned vegetables) and instant ddeokbokki (soft rice cake with fish cake and sweet red chili sauce), as well as infant foods. These are popular among young generations. Officials from China's major distribution enterprise highly focused on processed rice foods like rice snacks and rice makgeoli (milky Korean rice liquor). Vibrant export consultations happened at the event.

There was a session that discussed difficulties for Korean exporters to enter the Chinese market and measures to utilize the Korea-China FTA. There were participants from the China Certification & Inspection Group Co., Ltd (CCIC), which is a state company under the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine of the People's Republic of China. They introduced the customs process for exporting agricultural foods to China. MAFRA ran a consulting booth for measures to utilize the FTA for the export of agricultural foods, where they guided measures to overcome difficulties of exporting and the Ministry's export projects.

MAFRA has been building more sales stores where they focus on selling Korean agricultural foods at major departments and online shopping malls in major Chinese cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. MAFRA plans to establish a logistics center in Qingdao sometime in June this year, so that Korean agricultural foods can be kept safe in refrigerated and frozen storage before export. MAFRA will also keep hosting the K-Food Fair (3 times in Qingdao, Chongqing and Xi'an) to enhance Chinese customers' positive impression of Korean agricultural foods. These will be the ministry's plan to expand agricultural food export to China in 2015.

Date submitted: May 15, 2015

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: May 18, 2015