

FDA Establishes Permanent Presence in China

In order to ensure that FDA-regulated products made in China meet U.S. safety and quality standards, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is establishing a permanent presence in China.

Last month, FDA inspection stations were opened in Beijing, Guangzhou and Shanghai. The FDA has selected staff that will strengthen cooperation with its Chinese counterparts, Chinese industry and other U.S. government agencies. The FDA has plans to open additional offices around the world, including two in India this month, one in Latin America in January 2009, and others will follow in Europe and the Middle East.

These actions follow a series of illnesses and deaths resulting from Chinese-made pet food, toothpaste, drugs and dairy products. At least four Chinese children have died and thousands have been sickened after drinking infant formula tainted with melamine. The discovery of melamine-tainted milk powder and dairy products produced in China has raised public concern worldwide. A number of countries have either banned or are stepping up monitoring of China-sourced dairy products. The FDA has said that no amount of melamine is considered safe in infant formula, and melamine is not approved for direct addition to human or animal foods marketed in the United States. In the wake of this food safety crisis, China has said that it will fully reform the production, purchase, processing and sales sectors of its dairy industry within a year.

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