

## Press Release

### South Korea opens borders to Swiss Pork

18 June 2009

**As of the beginning of this month it is permitted to export Swiss pork into South Korea. Following a lengthy market-opening process, the South Korean authorities have now given a number of Swiss companies the go ahead for exports into their country. This opens up an attractive sales market for Switzerland to optimise the added value of its pork.**

The signing of the approval contract followed a three-year preparatory period requiring the combined efforts of the Federal Veterinary Office of Switzerland (FVO), the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (seco), the Federal Office for Agriculture (FOAG), the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) and Proviande, the trade association of the Swiss meat industry. The contract now makes it possible for a number of Swiss enterprises to export pork into Korea.

With a population of 49 million and an ever-increasing demand for pork, South Korea is the fourth largest pork importer in the world and an attractive sales market for the Swiss meat industry. The South Korean food market is a high price market. Twenty-five percent of the total expenditure of private households is used for food and beverages, 14.2% for meat. In geographic respect, the market is highly concentrated: almost half the population lives in the metropolitan area of Seoul representing 70% of retail sales in South Korea.

Korean consumers have a strong predilection for pork, especially for fresh, unabashedly fat cuts of pork belly for roasting or barbecuing. One very popular pork dish is known as Samgyeopsal, another is Jokbal in which pigs' trotters are the main ingredient. These national dietary traits allow the approved Swiss companies to optimise the creation of added value, as parts of the animal can be exported that usually are not consumed in great quantities here in Europe.

The Korean people place a great deal of value on quality, freshness and safety. They generally consider imported food and beverages to be less safe than their own domestic products, but Switzerland's outstanding product quality, rigorous auditing processes, strict food and beverage legislation and not least its tracking system, have allowed Swiss meat to fulfill the demanding Korean expectations completely. At Micarna SA for example, several client delegations have already been scheduled to allow prospective purchasers to test the quality and processing standards directly on site in Switzerland. As a result of the good, efficient working relationships of all those involved, consumers in South Korea will soon be able to try out the products for themselves at home.

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