Phyllis Schlafly

Release: December 3, 2013

# Look Out for Chinese Imports

Now that America is importing most of the ingredients in our prescription drugs and the majority of the foods we eat, it's important to look behind the label. It may or may not tell you where the products come from.

Your prescription drugs may be coming from Communist China. Drug research in China has fallen under a cloud since 2006 because 13 of the top 20 global drug makers have set up research and development centers in China. Yes, it's cheaper to do research there but, as one auditor said, "with cheaper research comes greater risk."

Researchers did not report the results of animal studies about a drug already being tested in humans, a breach described by drug researchers as a "mortal sin." Auditors also reported that Chinese workers did not properly monitor clinical trials and they paid hospitals in ways that could be seen as bribery.

China's purchase of pork producer Smithfield Foods Inc. for $4.7 billion has U.S. officials concerned about how this could affect the safety and availability of heparin. That's an important blood thinner derived from pig intestines that is widely used in U.S. heart surgery and kidney dialysis.

This would be the biggest Chinese takeover of a U.S. company. Smithfield is the world's largest pork producer, with 46,000 employees in 25 states, and is a major supplier of crude heparin, which is already stressed and could soon be in short supply.

In 2007 and 2008, nearly 150 people suffered serious reactions and 94 people died after being treated with contaminated heparin.

U.S. inspections in China are not what we are used to in the United States. For example, U.S. inspectors came and went from a Walmart-certified factory in Guangdong Province in China this fall, approving its production of specialty items that are on U.S. shelves for Christmas sales. Unknown to the inspectors, none of the kiddie items, such as reindeer suits, were manufactured at the factory being inspected, but had been outsourced to a never-inspected cheaper rogue factory.

Pets are in danger, too. Mysterious canine illnesses and deaths have been linked to jerky treats from China, and two manufacturers pulled leading brands off their shelves.

Dog lovers are warned that many jerky treats say "product of the USA" but that label merely means they were packaged in the U.S. while the ingredients are Chinese. Federal officials said the current outbreak sickened 3,000 dogs and 10 cats and killed about 600 canines.

Chickens raised and slaughtered in China are planned to be on U.S. grocery store shelves next year. The USDA notified China in September that four of its processing plants have been cleared to begin processing chickens from the U.S. and then sell them in the American market.

Free trade is bringing us fish raised in China's sick rivers such as the Yangtze. By the time the fish swim to the fish ponds, the water has accumulated raw sewage, agricultural pesticides, and the heavy metal output of poorly regulated industrial plants.

An increasing percentage of vaccines is manufactured in China and sold in U.S. pharmacies. China boasts of 30 vaccine-producing companies that will soon be producing one billion doses a year.

China tops the list of countries with tainted products. Chinese baby milk killed Chinese babies after melamine was added to conceal the milk's low protein count.

China has sold Americans a dazzling array of counterfeits and forgeries including copyrighted books, music, and expensive fashion apparel. The China Bee Products Association claims that half of all honey sold in China is fake.

China's latest venture into deception is collecting empty bottles of genuine alcohol, refilling them with a cheap substitute from who knows where, and then reselling this counterfeit alcohol to popular bars and restaurants in Beijing.  The police discovered 37,000 bottles of this fake alcohol ready to be delivered.

China's counterfeit alcohol is generally made from one of three bases: ethylene glycol (antifreeze) which attacks the kidneys and heart and is potentially fatal; methanol which attacks the retinal nerve and can result in blindness; and isopropyl (rubbing alcohol).

An expert on Chinese health at the Council on Foreign Relations, Yanzhong Huang, explained the big difference between Chinese and U.S. medicine safety. U.S. vaccines are kept safe by supporting institutions such as "the market economy, democracy, media monitoring, civil society, and a business ethics code," plus inspections and regulations, severe punishment for violators, and lawsuits by trial lawyers. Communist China doesn't tolerate any of those safety precautions.

Phyllis Schlafly is a lawyer, conservative political analyst and author of 20 books. She is the co-author, with George Neumayr, of the New York Times Best-Seller titled "No Higher Power: Obama's War on Religious Freedom." She can be contacted by e-mail at phyllis@eagleforum.org. To find out more about Phyllis Schlafly and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate Website at www.creators.com