

Uni-President confirms usage of tainted oil

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Uni-President Enterprises Corp (統一企業) interim spokesman Tu Chung-cheng (涂忠成) yesterday confirmed that the company in 2012 used 47 tonnes of coconut oil intended for animal feed.

Tu said Uni-President bought the animal feed-grade products from its oil and fat-producing subsidiary, President Nisshin Corp (日新), and used them from Aug. 20, 2012, to Oct. 31, 2012. He said President Nisshin procured the problematic products from Ting Hsin Oil and Fat Industrial Co (頂新油業), which in turn had imported them from Vietnam-based oil manufacturer Dai Hanh Phuc Co (大興福).

Uni-President last year bought 118 tonnes of the 442 tonnes of coconut oil that President Nissin procured from Ting Hsin Oil and Fat, Tu said.

However, Uni-President stopped doing business with the supplier later that year after becoming aware that Ting Hsin Oil and Fat, a subsidiary of Ting Hsin International Group (頂新國際), had purchased low-cost oils from Chang Chi Foodstuff Factory Co (昌昌) and sold them on to many local companies, including Uni-President, Tu said.

The company has been importing its coconut oil from the Philippines since then, he added.

According to Tu, his firm is planning to sue Ting Hsin over the damage the oil might have caused to Uni-President's reputation, while also considering a compensation scheme for consumers.

Separately yesterday, when asked why the Food and Drug Agency did not post a clear list of all products affected by the inferior oil when the case broke, the agency's acting director-general, Chiang Yu-mei (張玉梅), said that it did previously announce which oils were imported from Dai Hanh Phuc and also gave a special explanation on the relevant coconut oil, which was imported in 2012 and therefore not present in any currently available products.

As for any new developments in the case, Chiang said the matter was still being investigated

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by the Changhua County District Prosecutors' Office.

Any suspicious oil products discovered would be immediately announced, Chiang said, adding that any companies buying those products would also be named.

Meanwhile, Democratic Progressive Party Legislator Lin Shu-fen (林淑芬) accused the Ministry of Health and Welfare of covering up for Uni-President, adding that the company's responsibility should not be forgiven simply because those products' expiration dates have passed.

Lin also said that the “ever shrinking” reported amount of coconut oil imported by President Nisshin — which dropped from 474 tonnes to 47 tonnes — was also a ministry attempt to shield the company.

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