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Regulations and current issues of food contact materials

Mee Kyung Kim

National Institute of Food and Drug Safety Evaluation - MFDS, South Korea

Standards and specifications including labeling for Food Contact Materials (FCMs) are hereby introduced. Major differences between countries related regulations, recent trends, and related researches are also presented. Standards and specifications regarding FCMs consist of general rules which describe purpose, scope and structure. The common specification standards describe manufacturing process and usage, application of the rules, suitability determination, sampling and handling methods, storage and distribution standards. The labeling standards of FCMs require the marking on all the food contact articles regarding the names and addresses of businesses, material names, and the words for food or labeling of utensils design for food, and precautions. With technological advances, many novel materials have been developed for food contact articles. In this field, the application of new technology can greatly improve thermal resistance, barrier function and anti-gas permeability etc. However, some well-known or unknown compounds inside food packaging might leach/migrate into food or beverage. Nowadays, since the database concerning these leached/migrated compounds is still inadequate and doubts and anxiety continue to persist in the public imagination, safety assessment related research works need to be continuously carried out. Researches have been engaged in numerous projects to secure the safety of food packaging in recent years. Some major projects are as follows: Study of nanomaterial-applied food containers and packaging, development of analytical methods regarding perfluorinated compounds, antioxidants and UV absorbers migrate from polyethylene and polypropylene, bisphenol analogues, and mineral oils from food packaging materials. Non-intentionally added substances, nano materials, plastic colorants and volatile organic compounds in food packaging will continue to be very challenging topics in the present and near future. Harmonization of standards, specifications and analytical methods are also needed to manage safety of FCMs. Collaboration studies of international bodies are suggested to solve these global issues.

Biography

Mee Kyung Kim has completed her PhD from State University of New York at Albany, USA. She is a Senior Researcher and Director at Food Additives and Packaging Division, National Institute of Food and Drug Safety Evaluation (NIFDS), Korea. During 2000-2012, she had worked at National Animal, Plant and Fisheries Quarantine and Inspection Agency. Her speciality was the development of scientific quarantine and inspection system included analytical methods for POPs in food of animal origin. Since 2013, she is working at NIFDS for the method development of food additives and food contact materials and for the safety assurance of food and related packaging.

mkim@korea.kr