China Destroys Ikea Cake, Nestle Chocolate

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese authorities say they have destroyed nearly two tons of chocolate cake imported by Sweden's Ikea for violating food quality standards.

The Shanghai quarantine bureau said this week that Kraft cream cheese and 2.7 tons of Nestle chocolate bars also were among dozens of imported products destroyed in its latest round of quality inspections.

Chinese authorities have stepped up food inspections in recent years after a series of scandals over fake or shoddy goods.

The disclosure in December that suppliers of KFC violated rules on drugs use in poultry caused sales for the restaurant chain to plunge. KFC estimated sales in January dropped 37 percent and the company announced tighter quality control measures in an effort to win back customers.

The Shanghai quarantine bureau said it destroyed 1,872 kilos (4,100 pounds) of chocolate almond cake imported by Ikea that it said had excessive levels of coliform bacteria.

Ikea spokeswoman Ylva Magnusson said the cakes were destroyed in November and December but the company's head office had only found out about it on Monday.

"The product was stopped and destroyed. So none of the cakes made it to our restaurants," she said.

The cake made by a Swedish supplier is sold in Ikea stores in a majority of the countries where it operates. Magnusson said the company is looking into whether the cake should be withdrawn from sale elsewhere.

The Nestle chocolate contained too much sorbitol, a sweetener that in large amounts can cause bowel problems, the agency said in a statement.

Phone calls to spokespeople for Nestle and Kraft in China were not answered.

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