

INTRODUCTION

For your information, we are delivering this new edition of the Newsflash. Due to the importance, again a lot of attention for the Chinese import ban of certain types of waste.

Highlights in this issue:

- Selection procedure for the Asia Environmental Enforcement Award finalized
- Workshop for Afghanistan Customs
- Very successful Interpol operation '30 days of action'
- 30th Anniversary of the Montreal Protocol and World Ozone day 2017
- App for refrigerant reference
- The Killing Fields in Sri Lanka
- Import ban on solid waste in China
- China tries to keep foreign rubbish out
- The impact of the Chinese import ban of waste
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- Waste seized in Cambodia
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- Pesticides contaminated eggs found in South Korea

REN Newsflash, a monthly newsletter, covers REN activities and achievements, highlights of partners' activities and general news on combating illegal transboundary movements of waste and chemicals, and synergies and linkages on chemicals/waste related MEA's.

REN Activities

[Selection procedure for the Asian Environmental Enforcement Award finalized.](#)

A high-profile award ceremony will be held on 7 September 2017 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, held alongside the Asia Pacific ministerial meetings on environment and development hosted by UN Environment and UNESCAP. Ministers and high-level dignitaries from 63 countries in Asia Pacific will be in attendance.

This year the winners of 2016 and 2017 will receive their award.

The four winning organizations and the four winning individuals are already informed about their selection to receive this very important AWARD to recognize and laurate their outstanding performance in fighting Pollution Crime.

<http://www.apministerialenv.org>

[Train the trainer workshop on the Montreal Protocol and Green Customs in Kabul](#)



The National Ozone Unit of the National Environmental Protection Agency in Afghanistan in cooperation with the UN Environment OzonAction

Programme and the REN project initiated for the very first time in Afghanistan a Green Customs workshop which held in Kabul, Afghanistan from 23- 25 July 2017.

The workshop was attended by senior officials and master trainers from Custom Academy, Custom Department of Afghanistan, ministry of Finance, NEPA and UN Environment and about 40 participants from different ports of Customs, central Department of Customs and the major Provinces of Afghanistan. Apart from presenting presentations on different subjects the main objective of this meeting was capacity building of the awareness of the local governmental and non-governmental officials on the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm Conventions and in particular the Montreal.

See also:

<http://www.unep.org/disastersandconflicts/news/tackling-ozone-depleting-substances-casualties-mount-afghanistan>

Partners' Activities

[Interpol's Operation '30 days of action' a big success in combatting Waste Crime](#)

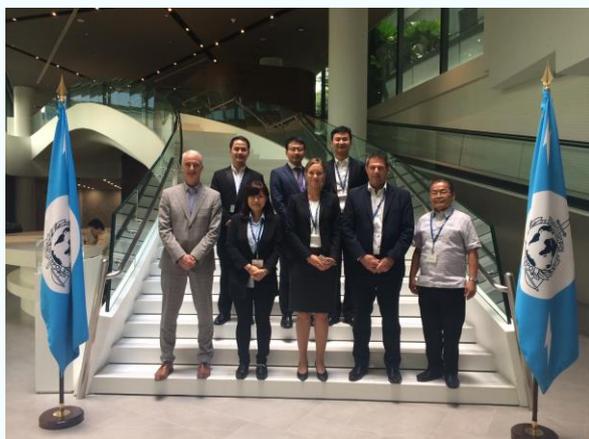


Photo: pre-operational meeting in Singapore

More than 1.5 million tonnes of illegal waste were discovered worldwide during a global operation coordinated by INTERPOL targeting the illegal shipment and disposal of waste.

The month-long '30 days of action' (1-30 June) was the largest global enforcement action against waste crime and

trafficking, with police, customs, border and environmental agencies from 43 countries participating. While previous actions have focused on electronic waste, this operation widened its scope to include all types of illegal waste, such as industrial, construction, household and medical waste. The operation was initiated by INTERPOL's Pollution Crime Working Group in response to a call from the global law enforcement community to gather more information about illegal waste streams between countries and regions. The majority of the illegal waste discovered during the operation was metal or electronic waste, generally related to the car industry.

In total, 226 waste crimes were reported, in addition to 413 administrative violations. Criminal cases included 141 shipments carrying a total of 14,000 tonnes of illegal waste were identified, as well as 85 sites where more than 1 million tonnes of waste was illegally disposed. Some 326 individuals and 244 companies were reported to be involved in criminal or administrative violations in total.

The results confirmed that Asia and Africa were the main destinations for waste illegally exported from Europe and North America, with trafficking also occurring between countries within Europe.

Authorities in the Netherlands discovered more than 10 thousand tonnes of waste suspected to be involved in illegal trafficking within Europe and from the Netherlands to countries in West Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and the Caribbean.

The operation was supported by regional organizations including the European Union Network for the Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law (IMPEL) and the UN Environment project Regional Enforcement Network for Chemicals and Waste (REN) in Asia, underscoring the need for a coordinated response among stakeholders globally.

Read more: <https://www.interpol.int/News-and-media/News/2017/N2017-100>

[30TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONTREAL PROTOCOL AND WORLD OZONE DAY 2017](#)

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Montreal Protocol. As part of the anniversary celebrations, the Ozone Secretariat will launch a communication campaign ahead of World Ozone Day to be marked on 16 September 2017.

The #OzoneHeroes campaign to be launched on 14 September will seek to celebrate the major accomplishments of the Montreal Protocol in protecting the ozone layer and the climate, to increase public recognition of the success and impact of the Protocol, and to generate further support for the Protocol and its new mandate to phase down climate-warming hydrofluorocarbons under the Kigali Amendment, adopted in 2016.

Campaign materials and further information on how everyone can participate in celebrating this important milestone will be available from 14 September at www.ozoneheroes.org.

The theme for this year's World Ozone Day is: Caring for all life under the sun

Source: <http://ozone.unep.org/en/30th-anniversary-montreal-protocol-and-world-ozone-day-2017>

[App is handy refrigerant reference](#)

UN Environment OzonAction has introduced a new smart phone app providing information on ODS, HFCs, HFOs and other alternative refrigerants.

Intended for customs officers, Montreal Protocol national ozone officers, as well as refrigeration and air conditioning engineers, the What Gas? app provides a quick reference tool in identifying a refrigerant gas.

The app is searchable via a variety of methods and provides a wealth of useful information. By entering partial information or browsing the database, the application will provide quick reference information on many aspects of each individual chemical. This includes the chemical name and formula; type of chemical, common trade names; various chemical and commodity identifiers (CAS numbers, ASHRAE designations, HS codes, UN numbers, etc); as well as other useful information such as flammability and other hazards; the ozone depletion and global warming

potentials and whether or not the chemical is controlled under the Montreal Protocol.

The app includes both pure substances and blends and is available for free from Google Play and the Apple Store.

Source: <http://www.coolingpost.com/products/app-is-handy-refrigerant-reference/>

Activities in Combating Illegal Transboundary Movement and Border Control of Waste and Chemicals or other related highlights

[The Killing Fields](#)



In the North Central Province of Sri Lanka, a rice farmer sprays his paddies with herbicide.

In Sri Lanka's North Central province, a land of crumbling Buddhist temples and gently swaying palms, farmers have cultivated rice for millennia. Until the 1960s, they relied on oxen, not tractors, to plow their fields. But the introduction of mechanized and chemical methods has rendered such time honored techniques extinct. An island nation that once boasted nearly 3,000 ancient rice varieties now

produces a handful of modern strains in fields routinely drenched with herbicides and synthetic fertilizers.

As a result, Sri Lankan rice yields have increased by 60 percent since 1979. Unfortunately, a burgeoning public health disaster has arisen alongside this “progress.” Today, a mysterious kidney disease afflicts an estimated 400,000 people in the province, representing about a third of its population.

First-world renal disorders typically accompany obesity, diabetes, or high blood pressure, all rare risk factors in rural Southeast Asia. Baffled epidemiologists refer to the illness ravaging Sri Lanka as “chronic kidney disease of unknown etiology,” or CKDu, which results in a slow, torturous death. Sufferers are unable to pass urine, so their limbs swell with toxic fluid, causing constant pain.

Read more: <http://modernfarmer.com/2017/07/the-killing-fields/>

[Solid waste imports ban shows resolve to protect environment](#)

Imports of environmentally hazardous solid waste will end before the end of the year, and imports of solid waste that can be replaced by domestic resources will end by 2019, the State Council, China's Cabinet, announced on Thursday. Beijing Youth Daily comments:

In fact, China notified the World Trade Organization 10 days earlier that it would take emergency measures to prohibit imports of 24 kinds of solid waste by the end of the year, including imports of household plastic waste, vanadium slag, unsorted waste paper and waste textile raw materials.

The United Nations Environment Programme issued the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal in 1989 to reduce the movements of hazardous waste, specifically from developed to less-developed countries, and ensure the environmentally sound management of waste as close as possible to its source.

China's decision is fully in line with the principle and content of the convention.

This move, widely praised at home, is testimony to the Chinese government's resolve to transform the country's

development model and prioritize protection of the environment, ecology and traditional culture.

Read more: <http://www.ecns.cn/voices/2017/08-01/267555.shtml>

[China tries to keep foreign rubbish out](#)

How a new rule could wallop the recycling industry



China dominates international trade in many goods, but few more than waste for recycling. It sucked in more than half the world's exports of scrap copper and waste paper in 2016, and half of its used plastic. All in all, China spent over \$18bn on imports of rubbish last year. America, meanwhile, is an eager supplier. In 2016 nearly a quarter of America's biggest exporters by volume were recyclers of paper, plastic or metal. Topping the list was America Chung Nam, a California-based supplier of waste paper which last year exported a whopping 333,900 containers, almost all of them to China.

This may soon change. On July 18th China told the World Trade Organisation that by the end of the year, it will no longer accept imports of 24 categories of solid waste as part of a government campaign against *yang laji* or “foreign garbage”. The Ministry of Environmental Protection says restricting such imports will protect the environment and improve public health. But the proposed import ban will disrupt billions of dollars in trade. Recyclers worry that other categories of waste may soon receive the same treatment.

Read more:

<https://www.economist.com/news/china/21725815->

[how-new-rule-could-wallop-recycling-industry-china-tries-keep-foreign-rubbish-out?fsrc=scn/tw/te/bl/ed/chinatriestokeepforeignrubbishout](http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1060480.shtml)

Foreign waste import ban leaves Western nations, Chinese manufacturers in a dilemma

For nearly three decades, China has been the world's biggest importer of waste. Each year, Chinese manufacturers and recyclers import 8 million tons of foreign waste to China to be reused as raw materials for new products.

While the waste produces health and environmental problems, these issues have long been overshadowed by the economic interests of both China and the exporting nations, which are mostly in the West. While recycling raw materials has helped Chinese firms save money, it has also helped Western countries earn money and solve their garbage problem.

So when China recently told the WTO that it will ban 24 types of solid waste imports before the year's end in order to protect its citizens' health and safety, the global recycling industry was left wondering: If China will no longer accept the globe's garbage, where will it all go?

Western countries devastated

The West's plastic recycling is dependent on China. A total of 87 percent of Europe's waste plastic, for example, ends up in China. Globally, 56 percent of waste plastic is exported to China, according to a report by the International Solid Waste Association. Even developing countries, such as Vietnam, Indonesia and Malaysia, re-export reprocessed imports and domestically collected plastic scrap to China, the reports says.

Dependence on a single importer can be risky, and that risk is now looming as China plans to shut its doors to foreign waste.

The 24 types of waste that are banned this time include plastic waste from living sources, toxic vanadium slag, unsorted waste paper and waste textile materials which are environmentally hazardous.

"Most of them used to be on the 'restricted' list of China's import regulations, and this time they are banned," said Liu

Jianguo, a professor specializing in solid waste management at Tsinghua University.

Apart from environmentally hazardous solid waste, China will also ban imports of solid waste that can be replaced by domestic resources by the end of 2019, according to the State Council.

For the recycling industry overseas, it's a nightmare scenario.

Robin Wiener, president of the Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, a Washington-based trade association, said in a statement that China's ban will be "catastrophic" to the US recycling industry, which transforms obsolete materials into secondary raw materials before they are exported to China.

Read more:

<http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1060480.shtml>

Ministers urged to pressure China on ban on waste imports.

Government ministers need to engage in diplomatic negotiations over China's proposed ban on all imports of scrap plastics and unsorted paper, say the Recycling Association and Confederation of Paper Industries.



Following the Chinese government's [notification to the World Trade Organisation \(WTO\)](#) of its intention to implement the ban by the start of 2018, the two trade associations have joined to outline their concerns in a letter to four ministers: International Trade Secretary Liam Fox, Business Secretary Greg Clark, Environment Secretary Michael Gove and

Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office Mark Field.

The crux of the letter revolves around the fact that the Chinese government submitted its notification to the WTO on 18 July 2017, but only gave until 20 July for comments to be submitted.

Both associations state that 60 days is the standard time in which comments can be made on such decisions and are asking the UK government to negotiate an extension with the Chinese government to give the industry time to cooperate with China on improving recycle quality.

Read more: <http://resource.co/article/ministers-urged-pressure-china-ban-waste-imports-12024>

Philippine trash probe in Korea waste case.

A CEBU City resident has asked Deputy House Speaker Gwen Garcia (third district, Cebu) to include in the Congress' investigation the allegedly illegal shipment of 25,000 metric tons of garbage in Cebu from South Korea last February 2017. In his letter to the congresswoman, Jun San Sebastian of Topas St., Casals Village in Barangay Mabolo, Cebu City believes that by including the matter in the investigation it would lead to the identification of the culprits. The House's dangerous drugs committee and the committee on ways and means are investigating the seized P6.4 billion shabu shipment in Manila. Shipment documents San Sebastian has attached in his letter several documents of the reported illegal shipment, including a port load survey report filled up by the shipper from South Korea and was received by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) in Cebu last Jan. 19, 2017. Other documents were the single administrative document (SAD), which showed that the shipload of garbage came from South Korea; routing slip of the SAD processing, which indicated that the shipment was processed on Jan. 20, 2017 and it was released the following day; and the investigation report of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) last Feb. 7, which confirmed that the shipment was garbage. In the SAD, the Congress can check on the tax assessment, name of Customs broker, and names of Customs personnel who processed the documents. Part of the reported illegal

shipment was sent back to the South Korea through mv Cristina, while the other parts were either stored in a warehouse in Mandaue City or dumped in the city's Barangay Taboc.

Read more: <http://www.sunstar.com.ph/cebu/local-news/2017/08/11/gwen-garcia-asked-include-trash-korea-probe-557768>

and

<http://news.mb.com.ph/2017/08/15/house-probe-on-25000-metric-tons-of-garbage-from-southkorea-sought/>

Tainted chicken seized at border



Sean Sinat, chief of Camcontrol for the Banteay Meanchey branch, said the poor quality products were brought from Thailand into Cambodia through the Poipet International Checkpoint hidden in the cart of porters. The owners of the goods escaped when Camcontrol officials were checking the cart. "Those products are strictly prohibited. They are waste products made by removing the meat and leaving only the remains of bones, which traders illegally import and intend to distribute to the Cambodian market, without considering the health impact on the Cambodian people," Mr Sinat said. According to a report on the activities of the Camcontrol General Department in the first six months of 2017, officials have found and destroyed a total 12,913 kilograms of fake, bad quality and expired goods, which were intended to be sold in 921 markets nationwide.

Source:

<http://www.khmertimeskh.com/5077495/tainted-chicken-seized-border/>

[Why toxic chemicals keep sneaking into our food](#)

The ongoing scandal over contaminated eggs has raised serious concerns about food safety. How can we ensure the quality of products we buy - and eat? And how do illegal substances end up on our plates at all?

Most people would avoid deliberately eating pesticides - but they don't realize that they're eating them without knowing it much of the time.

With revelations of a highly toxic insecticide recently found in millions of eggs for sale in Germany and the Netherlands, and as the egg scandal spreads to other European countries such as France and the United Kingdom, it's a legitimate question to ask: How much of my food inadvertently contains toxic chemicals? Add to the discussion how increasing quantities of fake and illegal pesticides are being produced globally, as the European Crop Protection Association (ECPA) has warned.

The European Union's food safety watchdog also recently indicated that almost half of the food Europeans eat contains traces of pesticides - although in most cases, not at levels harmful to people.

Read more: <http://www.dw.com/en/why-toxic-chemicals-keep-sneaking-into-our-food/a-40009502>

[Crisis continues as more pesticide-contaminated eggs detected in South Korea](#)

South Korea has detected eggs contaminated with the pesticide fipronil and has momentarily banned egg products from all farms with over 3,000 hens, authorities announced on Tuesday.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs revealed that some eggs from a farm in Namyangju, east of Seoul, were found to contain the pesticide, reports Efe news.

It is unknown how many samples tested positive for the contamination. The farm, which has some 80,000 hens, produces about 25,000 eggs a day.

The ministry has prohibited farms with more than 3,000 hens from producing eggs until the authorities complete a thorough inspection on the matter, Yonhap news agency reported.

South Korea has already restricted the sale of eggs produced in the country due to the 2016 outbreak of bird flu, forcing the Asian country to import eggs from other countries such as Australia, New Zealand, Denmark, the Netherlands, Thailand and Spain.

At the moment, there are still no official reports on imported eggs containing the pesticide in South Korea.

Following the official announcement on Tuesday, three major South Korean retailers -- Homeplus, E-Mart and Lotte Mart -- announced they have suspended the sale of eggs until the government releases the results of their inspection.

The pesticide fipronil, a harmful substance banned for use in hens, has raised attention in Europe after Belgium and Holland were reported to have used the substance. Some eggs in 17 other countries were also found to contain the pesticide.

Read more:

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/world/2017/aug/1/5/crisis-continues-as-more-pesticide-contaminated-eggs-detected-in-south-korea-1643500.html>

Compiled and edited by Mr. Huib van Westen
Information presented under 'partner activities' is obtained from external sources. UN Environment and SIDA do not verify its accuracy or endorse this information in any way.

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