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China Reopens but Kosher in Peril



New York... Food plants and factories throughout China have reopened following the significant toll that the COVID-19 virus extracted in Hunan and other parts of China. According to kosher food industry sources in both the US and Israel, there may be some shortages in the coming weeks as some Chinese factories will not be able to comply with kosher certification. According to the Orthodox Union (OU) factories that produce Group 1 (inherently kosher) products will be allowed to continue kosher runs. Factories of products that require supervision may be in short supply until air travel safely resumes. Many of the mashgichim (kosher supervisors) are from Israel and with air travel suspended between Israel and China, the mashgichim cannot return to their jobs. This is a huge issue for the Badatz certification which has many certifications in China that require the presence of mashgichim.

Remarkably, most of the products produced in China for Passover were shipped prior to the outbreak. There are approximately 1,500 certified kosher factories in China, according to the major certification agencies, including the OU, KOF-K, Star-K, and the Chicago Rabbinical Council (cRc). The OU alone certifies over 600 factories.

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