

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Senate

Manila City

Fourteenth Congress

Second Regular Session



RESOLUTION NO. 123

RESOLUTION URGING THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (DOH) TO IMMEDIATELY BAN THE SALE, DISTRIBUTION AND CONSUMPTION OF ALL PRODUCTS THAT HAVE ANY TRACE OF THE CHEMICAL MELAMINE ($C_3H_6N_6$), AND TO CREATE A COMPOSITE TEAM TO CONDUCT RANDOM INSPECTION AND EXAMINATION OF ALL MILK PRODUCTS AND BY-PRODUCTS REPORTEDLY CONTAINING SAID CHEMICAL

WHEREAS, the country has recently been plagued with news about melamine contamination in milk products which has resulted in the affliction of kidney diseases among infants in China;

WHEREAS, almost fifty-three thousand (53,000) children have now been affected, causing the Chinese government to recall dairy products from twenty-two (22) companies, with the first group of milk products said to have been contaminated coming from the Chinese corporation Shijiazhuang Sanlu Group Company;

WHEREAS, melamine is an organic base first synthesized in 1834 by German chemist Justus von Liebig, also known as the father of the fertilizer industry;

WHEREAS, melamine, often combined with formaldehyde to form fire and heat resistant melamine resin, is used in various industrial products such as whiteboards, floor tiles, Formica, kitchenware, fire retardant fabrics such as thermal liners, heat resistant gloves and aprons, commercial filters, construction products and fire blockers in aircraft and other means of transport;

WHEREAS, this chemical compound is high in nitrogen, which registers as elevated protein levels in food product testing;

WHEREAS, there have been reports that melamine found its way to the dairy products as a result of the greed of some individuals who purposefully contaminate their products to raise the protein levels of these items so that they may charge more for the sale of these sub-standard and poisonous products;

WHEREAS, it will be remembered that in the previous year, the United States (US) government ordered the recall of several brands of dog and cat food due to alleged contamination of melamine which resulted in renal failure and death of the animals;

WHEREAS, a study was then conducted by the United States Food and Drug Administration, in collaboration with several other government agencies, to assess the risk to humans and to animals of melamine contamination in food products;

WHEREAS, while this study indicates that "the consumption of pork, chicken, domestic fish, and eggs from animals inadvertently fed animal feed contaminated with melamine and its analogues is very likely to pose a human health risk", it is also argued that regular and prolonged exposure to melamine may be fatal, such as what happened to the infants in China, some of whom have been consuming the contaminated milk products for several months;

WHEREAS, laudably, our government has been taking steps to forestall a replication of the tragedy which has struck China, such as drawing up a list of "safe" and "unsafe" milk products, reviewing a list of milk products originating from China which tested positive for melamine, monitoring importers of milk from China, issuing advisories which warn the general public not to use Chinese dairy products until they are cleared, collecting milk samples in Metro Manila to test for melamine, and stopping the distribution and sale of Chinese milk brands Yili and Mengniu;

WHEREAS, however, it is critical that permanent safeguards be put in place to ensure that there is a consistent

and sustained effort to prevent the consumption of products contaminated with melamine;

WHEREAS, the fact that the country is very vulnerable to products coming in through illegal channels should impel the government to conduct stricter monitoring of the entry of these goods and to punish all who are responsible for violations of our laws;

WHEREAS, stricter monitoring may, for instance, come in the form of express manifestation by retail establishments through conspicuously posted notices that they are selling and distributing dairy products from China;

WHEREAS, responsible officials of local government units may, in the exercise of police power, inspect such establishments and address any infraction by prosecution under our laws;

WHEREAS, all these are in consonance with the constitutional right of the people to health, as provided in Article II Section 15 of the Constitution, and with the duty of the government, under Article XIII Sections 11 and 12, to establish and maintain an effective food and drug regulatory system and to undertake appropriate health development and research responsive to the country's health needs and problems: Now, therefore, be it


Resolved, as it is hereby resolved, by the Senate of the Philippines, To urge the President of the Philippines to direct the Department of Health (DOH) to immediately ban the sale, distribution and consumption of all products that have any trace of the chemical melamine (C₃H₆N₆), and to create a composite team to conduct random inspection and examination of all milk products and by-products reportedly containing said chemical.

Resolved, further, That the DOH submit a report to the Senate with regard to the implementation of this Resolution.

Adopted,


MANNY VILLAR
President of the Senate

This Resolution was adopted by the Senate on September 23, 2008.


EMMA LIRIO-REYES
Secretary of the Senate
