

Toxic Foods: Beans Sprouting in Veterinary Drugs

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At the beginning of 2010, the famous Harbin “bean sprout village” at Dawn Town, Heilongjiang Province, was exposed for having produced a large amount of poisonous bean sprouts.

The bean sprout workshop in the village scrubbed the buckets (containers) with lime and soaked the beans in veterinary drugs as well as anti-inflammatory drug. They removed the roots with the “root removing agent”.

At least tens of thousands of pounds of such toxic bean sprouts were put on the market every day. They then became dishes on the dining tables of local and big city restaurants.

Heilongjiang Morning Post reported that a mini truck was parked inside the bean sprout workshop run by a couple surnamed Zhao. Inside the truck, some residual sprouts were scattered on a piece of cloth. These sprouts were more than ten centimeters long. They were rootless, white and shiny. In the workshop more than a hundred pounds of beans could be produced in a day. Two thousand pounds of bean sprouts were grown and sent to the stores in a small farm market for sale.



A broken bathtub is also a tool for sprouting beans (screenshot)

The lady workshop owner said that by using root removing agent, the bean sprouts "would not be rotten in even a week's time." The house where the couple lived was piled with dozens of bags of beans. Next door was their "production plant". An air of moisture blew against our faces as soon as we entered the room. Standing in the house were more than ten large plastic buckets about a meter tall. There were two somewhat dilapidated bathtubs which were full of hot water. Some growing bean sprouts were soaking in more than a dozen big plastic bins.

We went to another relatively large bean sprout workshop in the village. The name of the owner was Liu Sen. Here two trucks were ready to carry the produce every morning. Each vehicle could carry about 3,000 pounds. The products were sent to the major agricultural markets and the restaurants of Harbin City.

Anti-inflammation drugs and veterinary medicine used as antiseptic agent to soak beans

In Liu's workshop, there were green beans spouting in several large basins. Some medicines were scattered on the floor next to the basins. On the side of a big box which sent out a pungent smell, there was a label "Pefloxacin Mesylate, approved by State Food and Drug Administration".

Inside a bucket with another placard printed "Zhongyuan Tsuneji" was six bags of drugs. Their packaging clearly specified it as "veterinary medicine." It was written: "for treatments of sepsis and gastrointestinal, respiratory and local infections and other symptoms in animals." This was a veterinary drug to be taken by chickens, ducks, geese and pigeons. We could see that half of the contents of the barrel of this drug had already been used.

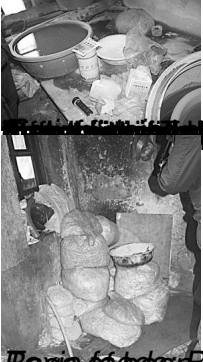
In an interview with the investigating staff from Trade and Industry, Liu said that these drugs were used to soak beans. They could prevent the beans from rotting. Liu's wife said a big box of Pefloxacin Mesylate cost only 40 yuen and was sufficient enough to soak a few pounds of beans. In the room there was also a plastic bag containing some white powder. Liu explained that it was lime. They used it to scrub the pots and barrels after soaking the beans.

Dafangshen is a famous "bean sprouts village". In the village there are fifteen to sixteen black bean sprout workshops. The method used to sprout beans is the same. Besides Liu Shen and another relatively large workshop which each produced 10,000 pounds of bean sprouts per day, the average production of the other thirteen workshops was 1,000 pounds. By calculation it showed that the village has at least produced tens of thousands of poisonous bean sprouts a day for sale in the markets.

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Bags of beans sprouting in containers in the house (screenshot)