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Food By-products Reborn as Livestock Feed to Become Future Resources

- The Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Emart, Nonghyup, Samsung, Taebaek Feed, and 12 other organizations and companies begin a pilot project for the high-value-added feed resource utilization of food by-products through signing a memorandum of understanding

A regulatory exception pilot project will be launched to recycle food by-products generated in the manufacturing, processing, and distribution of food into raw materials for high-value-added livestock feed.

The Ministry of Environment (ME, Vice Minister Lee Byounghwa) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA, Vice Minister Park Beomsu) will sign a memorandum of understanding for the ‘Pilot Project for High-Value-Added Feed Resource Utilization of Food By-products’ with 10 companies and institutions* on December 17 at the Emart headquarters (located in Jung-gu, Seoul).

* E-mart, Seoul Agro-Fisheries & Food Corporation, Nonghyup Agribusiness Group, Samsung Welstory, Hyundai Green Food, Samsung Electronics, Hanwoo Association, Taebaek Feed, Sechang Environment, Ricoh

This agreement was established to implement a system for recycling high-quality food by-products, which is classified as waste despite its excellent feed resource value, into raw materials for high-value-added livestock feed. The participating institutions expect that this will enhance the self-sufficiency rate of feed materials*, contribute to the development of the livestock industry, and result in waste reduction and carbon emission reduction** effects.

* In 2023, the dependence on overseas sources for feed materials is 80.6%.

** If approximately 12,730 tons/year of agricultural by-products generated from businesses such as Emart Fresh Center and Garak Market are transformed into high-value-added feed, it is possible to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1,426 tons CO₂eq annually.

Until now, agricultural products and vegetables that have lost their marketability or were unsold during the food distribution process, as well as food by-products generated during the product standardization process in food manufacturing and processing companies or the cooking process in large-scale communal kitchens, have been classified as waste. This has led to restrictions on recycling, as they were treated together with other waste.

Through this regulatory exception pilot project, the ME and the MAFRA will build a leading model* for the safe and hygienic recycling of high-value-added feed resources, covering the entire process from the generation, storage, collection to the resource utilization of food by-products. In parallel, regulatory adjustments such as recognizing circular resources and expanding the scope of feed materials will also take place.

* (Existing) Concerns about quality deterioration due to mixed disposal of food waste and during the transportation process →

(Improvement) To ensure that food by-products generated from the target businesses will not be mixed with existing food waste, separate disposal and designated collection vehicles, as well as distinct process management, will be implemented.

If an institutional foundation is established to recycle approximately 116,000 tons of food by-products generated annually* into raw materials for high-value-added livestock feed, it is expected to contribute to enhancing the competitiveness of the livestock industry as well as promoting the circular utilization of food by-products and reducing food waste.

* Estimated based on the Agricultural and Fishery Products Wholesale Market Statistical Yearbook (2023), and data from the Allbaro System.

Vice Minister Lee Byounghwa stated, “Through this memorandum of understanding, we have established a positive circulation model that allows high-quality food by-products generated during the production and distribution processes, which have been classified as waste and treated with other waste, to be utilized as high-value feed resources.” He added, “In the future, we will build a sys

tem for the thorough circular utilization of high-quality food by-products as valuable resources through collaboration with various stakeholders in the food and distribution industries and the livestock sector.”

Vice Minister Park Beomsu expressed, “We hope that the activation of the feed resource utilization of food by-products through this memorandum of understanding will contribute to reducing feed costs for livestock farmers and the development of the livestock industry.” He added, “Together with the participating organizations, we will continue to actively discover and utilize various feed resources to achieve the development of the feed industry and social responsibility toward the environment simultaneously.”