

# Herbal Ingredient and Product Trends in Taiwan

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## Abstract

Due to changes in population structure such as ageing population and low fertility, demand for convenience and functional foods will direct the progress of food industry in Taiwan. With maturing of functional food technology and ability, the product development and quality reliability have received recognition in recent years. For products that claim “health care effects” must get “Health Food” permit from Taiwan Food and Drug Administration (TFDA) that is regulated by “Taiwan Health Food Control Act”. Up to date, 13 health care effects with 315 products such as regulating blood glucose, promotion of gastrointestinal functions and attenuation of body fat accumulation, etc. have been approved in Taiwan.

The raw material of Taiwanese functional food products is diverse, including four types: plant-based, animal-based, microorganism-based and others. Due to limited supply of domestic raw materials, majority of the functional materials used are imported, while the ratio is different in each category. Based on a research project conducted in 2015 by Industry & Technology Intelligence Service (ITIS) team of Food Industry Research and Development Institute (FIRDI), it showed that most microorganism-based raw materials were supplied domestically. For animal-based raw materials used in Taiwanese functional foods, a greater ratio of domestic to imported materials was observed and the plant-based raw materials used are mainly imported. This study also indicated that 47% of functional foods made in Taiwan were plant-based materials, which including root (e.g., ginseng), stems (e.g., garlic), leaves (e.g., wheat straw, aloe), flowers (e.g., pollen), fruits (e.g., mulberry, plums), seeds (e.g., barley), cereals (e.g., oats), and plant metabolites. Several case studies regarding development of herbal ingredient and functional food will also be discussed in this presentation.