

Mainstream restaurants join food-tracing movement at COA ceremony

By CHRISTINE CHOU
The China Post

Wowprime Corp. (王品集團), a major restaurant group in Taiwan, was among the firms recognized for participating in the “traceable restaurant movement,” at a ceremony held by the Agriculture Multi-Discipline Management of Technology (AMOT, 台灣農業跨領域發展協會) and the Council of Agriculture (COA, 農委會) on Tuesday.

AMOT released a three-star assessment standard for partnering eateries that have vowed to reveal comprehensive records of their ingredients, allowing consumers to track their food “from source to fork.”

Wowprime Corp. Chairman Park Chen (陳正輝) said they are very glad that their efforts in the past six months have received official recognition. This comes after the firm’s revenues and reputation were heavily hit, due to involvement in an oil scare last year.

“Our costs have risen more than 10-percent since we par-

ticipated in the traceability movement,” said Chen. “We now put food safety above all else, in hopes of restoring consumer faith.”

Minister of the COA Chen Baoji (陳保基) said the platform, Traceable Restaurants, has helped to create more value for farmers. Previously, farmers have expressed disappointment that their efforts in food profiling did not result in any substantial growth in the market.

However, this program could make quality agricultural goods stand out, said Chen.

Quality local produce needs to be known and appreciated by our consumers if we join the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in the future, remarked Chen.

The star standards credentials provide a helpful guide for consumers, who can discover produce records and certified brands on the “traceable restaurant” cloud database and mobile app, said Vice Premier Chang San-cheng (張善政) in his opening speech.

Chang urged restaurant owners to cherish their reputations and strive for food safety, even after they have received “stars.”

The COA previously stated that there are more than 180 restaurants participating in the movement. Only those that preserve sourcing receipts and records in their entirety can claim that their dishes or restaurants use traceable ingredients.

Restaurants that claim so without certified labeling could be liable to a fine of NT\$60,000 to NT\$300,000, said COA officials.

AMOT organized the ceremony to thank farmers for their devotion to manufacturing traceable produce, as well as 30 traceable restaurants for their sustained cooperation.

For the first time, awards were given to restaurants that received stars in the latest round of assessments. Brands include Wowprime Corp., Chiao-hsi Hotel Royal (礁溪老爺酒店) and Ootoya (大戶屋), among others.



Christine Chou, The China Post

An array of dishes lies on a table outside the award ceremony on Tuesday, Jan. 5. The displayed food received three star gold standards from food safety platform, Transparent Restaurants. With a swipe of a barcode, consumers are able to see a detailed profile of how the food on their table was sourced.