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## Report calls for guidelines on medicinal imports from China

TAIPEI, Taiwan -- The government should create a mechanism to certify and monitor the quality of Chinese medicinal herbs and ingredients, a Legislative Yuan research report suggested Tuesday.

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Official Government Site in English Info On Business, Trade & Policies.  
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The report, authored by the Legislative Yuan's Organic Laws and Statutes Bureau, said Taiwan relies on China for more than 90 percent of the raw materials used in Chinese medicine sold in Taiwan, ingredients that are not regulated or managed and could therefore contain heavy metals, pesticide residues and pollutants.

Without a comprehensive mechanism in China to regulate and monitor the plantation, harvesting, processing, packaging and marketing of herbal plants, the report said,

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the medicinal ingredients could be subpar or contaminated by mold or pests during the packaging and storage process.

Even worse, the report said, Taiwan itself has neither formulated comprehensive inspection and quarantine regulations for medicinal herbs nor implemented a licensing system to manage herbal imports and control quality.

Under existing laws, legally licensed importers can import medicinal plants with standard import certificates, and the plants are not inspected as the Department of Health has not set up any inspection offices at airports and maritime ports of entry.

Once the materials get through customs, they are not subject to spot checks before being marketed.

The absence of a strict regulatory and monitoring mechanism on herbal plants has put public health at risk, the report warned.

Noting that Japan, South Korea and Hong Kong have enacted strict laws to regulate Chinese medicinal plants, the report cautioned that if Taiwan fails to follow suit, it could become an outlet for substandard products rejected by the three places.

The report urged the government to only allow imports of properly certified herbal products from China and conduct regular checks on imported herbs to ward off substandard goods.



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