

Ssu Cheng Biotech inks a pact with Taiwan COA

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Singapore: Taiwan-based Ssu Cheng Biotech has signed an exclusive agreement with the Council of Agriculture (COA) in Taiwan. The pact authorizes Ssu Cheng Biotech to use COA's pesticide residue rapid screening technology worth \$400,000.

As per the deal, the company has received exclusive rights to produce and internationally market an enzyme that screens pesticide residue levels in food products. Mr Chen Bao-ji, minister, COA, said, "For the first time an agricultural technology has been transferred from the public to the private sector."

The Taiwan Agricultural Research Institute, director-general, Mr Chen Junne-jih stressed that food products must be evaluated for the amount of pesticide content in them, to avoid the harmful effects of these chemicals on public health.

Statistics provided by the institute indicated that the reagent is currently being used to screen pesticide residues in more than 200 types of produce at screening facilities across the nation, including rice, tea leaves, herbs, vegetables and fruits. The institute also highlighted that around 879,781 batches of samples were scanned last year.

Mr Junne-jih said that many Asian countries have also expressed their interest in procuring the reagent, as this screening procedure is more reliable. He further added that each gram of the substance is capable of screening roughly 15,000 batches of produce.

Mr Lin Ching-feng, president of Ssu Cheng Biotech, said that mass production of the reagent had begun last month. "At this stage, the company is capable of manufacturing 10g of the product per month," he added.

Mr Ching-feng said that in collaboration with the government the company aims to expand its production lines to cater to the demand from markets in China, India and Southeast Asia.