

East China unique bean curd popular overseas

Despite the Spring Festival holiday, workers in a flavoring company in eastern China's Zhejiang Province continue to package their fermented bean curd products.

The preserved bean curd, or "furu" in Chinese, is a traditional flavoring for food. Red or white in color, the unique fermented bean curd in Shaoxing city started being exported more than a century ago.

Last year, Shaoxing exported 1,233 tonnes of fermented bean curd products with a total value of 2.86 million U.S. dollars, up 11.6 percent and 11.3 percent respectively. Hong Kong is the major importer, while Europe and North America are emerging markets.

With soybeans the main material, the traditional craft of Shaoxing fermented bean curd has a set of complicated procedures and strict requirements on temperature and humidity in production. Large bean curd pieces for export need to be sealed in pots for one to two years for post-fermentation.

"A local yellow rice wine is used in the process, contributing to the special flavor," said Xie Xiaoben, deputy general manager of Xianheng Foodstuff in Shaoxing.

"No nitrite is produced during the processing," Xie added, dispelling concerns.

The basic processing craft for fermented bean curd has not changed much in a century.

"More and more westerners like the bean curd," said Ren Mingxing, an entry-exit inspection and quarantine official in Shaoxing.

There has never been any food safety problem with the exported bean curd, which has won overseas trust for Chinese products, according to Ren.