

## FDA monitoring milk from China after nitrite deaths

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Philippine health authorities on Monday sought to allay fears of the public following the reported deaths of at least three people caused by nitrite-tainted milk in China.

The Food and Drug Administration said it continues to monitor milk products entering the Philippines, even as it said Chinese authorities maintained the deaths were an isolated incident.

"Based on our initial checking of 2008, since 2008 data, we have no registered product of milk from China. This is the effect of what happened before with the melamine [issue]," FDA director Suzette Lazo said in an interview aired on dzBB radio Monday.

She said the FDA has been monitoring milk products entering the Philippines even before an import ban on some brands of milk from China that was imposed in 2008.

The 2008 ban stemmed from a scare that some milk products from China were tainted with melamine. Melamine is mainly used in plastics.

For now, Lazo said the deaths reported last weekend were an isolated incident that happened in China.

"In fact I think the Chinese authorities have already taken precautions to investigate who are involved as well as inspecting all the other dairy (facilities). Since the melamine incident the Chinese government has been very strict," she said.

On Friday, a Reuters report said three children have died and 35 people have become ill from drinking nitrite-tainted milk in China's northwestern Gansu province, the latest food safety scandal to hit the dairy industry.

Nitrite is used for curing meat. — **RSJ, GMA News**

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