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Consumer Watchdog Rejects Half of Russian Butter

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Maxim Stulov / Vedomosti

A consumer watchdog says that half of the butter sold in Russia does not meet basic sanitary requirements.

Roskachestvo, which was created by the Russian government "in order to improve consumers' confidence in Russian production," told the RBC newspaper that it had carried out a study of 64 Russian and foreign brands of butter. Among the brands were "Buttermilk" from Danone Russia, "Little House in the Village" from WBD, and "Karat," from the Karat processed cheese factory in Moscow.

Only 18 brands were recognized as "high quality," and another 10 were found to meet all the necessary requirements.

Fourteen brands were found to have misrepresented their ingredients. In some, dairy fat had been replaced by vegetable fat. Another eight brands had lowered the fat content of their product by adding water.

In addition, 18 brands were found to be in violation of sanitary standards, containing potentially harmful microbes and bacteria such as E. Coli.

The study was the first of its kind for dairy products, but in 2017 Roskachestvo plans to carry out similar studies on milk, yoghurt, cheese, and condensed milk.

Some manufacturers have disputed the results of the study. Albert Sufiyarov, owner and founder of Neva Cheeses, said that he doesn't trust the results of the study and called it "unfair competition."

"How they collected the samples is unclear," Sufiyarov said.

"We don't have any quality violations. Every week we do over a dozen analyses in an independent laboratories."

Among the top quality brands were "Little House in the Village," "Karat," "Prostokvashino," and "Ekomilk." A list of all the brands tested has been published on Roskachestvo's web site.

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