



Written by [Dennis Behreandt](#) on September 15, 2008

## Thousands of Infants Sickened in China

Reports on Monday indicated that the number of sickened by the tainted powdered milk had risen to 1,235, with two deaths. The product was sold by Shijiazhuang Sanlu Group Co., a large producer in China that is part owned by the New Zealand-based Fonterra Cooperative Group, Ltd.

[According to the Wall Street Journal](#), Sanlu has tried to keep news of the tainted milk out of the spotlight. “Sanlu had known of a problem with its products as early as March, and was aware of the melamine contamination from early August, according to officials,” the *Wall Street Journal* reported.



Reports in the Chinese press indicated that, prior to the recent deaths, the company had attempted to distance itself from responsibility for the sale of the contaminated milk. [According to China Daily](#), “Sanlu had said its products did not have any quality problems because they had passed State food safety tests.” On another occasion, said *China Daily*, a “Sanlu official said the milk food might have been mislabeled, or ‘someone’ might have been selling spurious products under the company’s brand.”

Sanlu has since apologized for the contamination. “The serious safety accident of the Sanlu formula milk powder for infants has caused severe harm to many sickened babies and their families. We feel really sad about this,” said Sanlu vice president Zhang Zhenling, reading from a prepared letter.□

This is not the first time infants have been sickened and killed by tainted baby food products in China. In 2004, *China Daily* reported, 13 babies died after drinking “milk food” that was later determined to have “no nutritional value.”

*(Imaginechina via AP Images)*



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