

Three Ministries Join Forces to Launch K-Food Smart Manufacturing Alliance, Backing the Industry's AI Transformation and Global Push

The Ministry of SMEs and Startups (MSS), the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (MAFRA), and the Ministry of Food and Drug Safety (MFDS) jointly launched the K-Food Smart Manufacturing Alliance today at COEX Hall D in Seoul, on the occasion of the AI+ Smart Factory Show 2026.

The alliance is a public-private cooperation platform bringing together larger and small food manufacturers, smart manufacturing technology SMEs, and specialized institutions – all with a shared objective: strengthening the global competitiveness of K-Food through AI-driven manufacturing innovation.

What sets the alliance apart is its ambition to move beyond individual company support toward something more structural. The platform aims to create a K-Food smart manufacturing standard model – integrating demand, production, quality, and hygiene management on an AI foundation – and to establish data and collaboration standards for the food industry as a whole. It is the first private sector-led cooperation platform of its kind in Korea.

At the launch ceremony, CJ Olive Networks and Hakhwa 1934 shared the smart manufacturing innovations they have achieved through their own digital transformation journeys, and outlined their vision for AI-based manufacturing going forward.

Government and industry leaders then jointly proclaimed the K-Food Smart Manufacturing Alliance Vision Declaration. Signatories included Minister Han Seong-Sook of MSS, Vice Minister Jong-Gu of MAFRA, Deputy Minister Kim Yong-Jae of MFDS, CJ CheilJedang CEO Kim Chan-Ho, Sempio Foods CEO and Korea Food Industry Association Chairman Park Jin-Sun, and Impix CEO and Korea Autonomous Manufacturing Platform Association Chairman Lee Sang-Ho.

Through the declaration, participants jointly committed to strengthening K-Food's global competitiveness through AI transformation in manufacturing, advancing data- and AI-based manufacturing innovation, expanding cooperation among manufacturers, technology companies, and support institutions, promoting field-centered demonstration and the diffusion of results, and leading the AI transformation of Korean manufacturing as a whole.

MSS, as the lead ministry for K-Food manufacturing innovation, will drive the expansion of flagship AI-based smart manufacturing models, build export-oriented smart factories, and establish the foundations for manufacturing data standardization and utilization – while supporting the spread of AI transformation among food manufacturing SMEs and fostering a manufacturing AI ecosystem.

MAFRA, as the ministry responsible for food industry promotion, will work to raise efficiency across the entire food value chain – from agricultural raw material production through distribution, food service, and consumption. The ministry plans to expand alliance participation to food tech companies, traditional food producers, and regional small food companies, driving tangible outcomes including increased K-Food exports.

MFDS will support the digital transformation of food safety management through expedited Smart HACCP registration, provide technical support for the on-site adoption of Smart GMP to spread data-based quality management in health functional food manufacturing, and support the automation of production information systems in food factories through Food QR.

The alliance launch coincides with the opening of the AI+ Smart Factory Show 2026, held in partnership with the 15th Smart Tech Korea (STK 2026) from June 10 to 12 at COEX Hall D. Under the name “The Future of Manufacturing with AI,” the event features a 300-booth exhibition alongside conferences, business matching, and investor relations programs.

The Manufacturing AX Conference brings together global technology leaders including Siemens, Schneider Electric, and SAP, alongside Korean innovators such as LG Electronics’ Production Engineering Research Institute and MiCube Solution, to share the latest trends and field innovation cases in manufacturing AI.

The Smart Factory Experience Hall organizes exhibitors across the four categories of smart manufacturing technology – automation equipment, connectivity devices, information solutions, and intelligent services – giving visitors a structured view of the full manufacturing AX value chain.

At the AX Business Connect Lounge, 62 solution providers – including winners of the 2025 Manufacturing AI Solution Competition – held tailored consultations with small and mid-sized manufacturers seeking to adopt manufacturing AI solutions. Successful matches receive two months of complimentary solution consulting and usage benefits from Naver Cloud.

The Smart Factory IR Showcase offers investment consultation opportunities for smart manufacturing technology companies with strong product development and commercialization capabilities – with day one dedicated to manufacturing robotics and day two to manufacturing AI solutions, each featuring pitches to venture capital firms and specialized investors.

“We launched the K-Food Smart Manufacturing Alliance today, public and private sectors together, to create the synergy between K-Food’s global leap and smart manufacturing innovation that Prime Minister Kim Min-Seok spoke of at the Samyang Foods manufacturing site last October,” said Minister Han Seong-Sook. “The government will actively support leading AI-based smart manufacturing models in the food industry – and build on them to spread AI transformation across Korean manufacturing as a whole, including beauty and fashion.”

“In connection with this alliance, we will intensively foster the food tech essential to the food industry’s AI transformation – including smart food manufacturing and distribution and food robotics – and rapidly spread advanced AI technologies,” said Vice Minister Kim Jong-Gu of MAFRA. “Building on a smart food industry, we will industrialize the full K-Food experience, including recipes, technology, and content – continuously expanding K-Food’s global territory and developing it into a core engine of the national brand.”

“We will actively link Smart HACCP, Smart GMP, and Food QR with the K-Food manufacturing AX initiative,” said Deputy Minister Kim Yong-Jae of MFDS, “so that food manufacturers can turn data into an asset and AI into a competitive edge.”

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