

# THE PLAIN DEALER

Ohio's Largest Newspaper • Cleveland, Ohio

December 15, 2005

Edition: Final  
Section: Business  
Page: C1

## Ohio kraut sales soar over buzz on bird flu

*Marcia Pledger; Plain Dealer Reporter*

An Ohio company's sauerkraut sales have skyrocketed 50 percent, thanks to fears about the bird flu.

The family-run Fremont Co., which sells its fermented white cabbage under the Frank's and Snowfloss brands, typically sees 3 to 4 percent annual sales growth.

The sudden demand for sauerkraut started in early November after researchers at Seoul National University reported that a similar dish might help protect against bird flu.

About 60 people in Asia have died from the disease acquired from infected fowl. Although bird flu does not appear to pass from human to human, scientists fear that it could before long, causing a bird flu pandemic.

The South Korean scientists fed fermented cabbage called kimchi to chickens infected with bird flu. Researchers claimed that the lactic acid that bacteria created during the fermenting process appeared to help the birds fight the virus.

The [Fremont Co.](#), which takes its name from its hometown in Sandusky County, has never experienced such a sales surge, said [Chris Smith](#), vice president of sales. "People have heard the news," he said. "They know sauerkraut is a healthy product, so they're adding it to their diet."

At Great Lakes Kraut Co. in Bear Creek Wis., which claims to be the world's largest sauerkraut producer, sales have climbed 15 percent since early November, co-owner Ryan Downs said.

"We've enjoyed a very nice spike because of the potential curative powers of kraut as related to the bird flu, but sauerkraut has always been known as a healthy food," he said.

The Fremont Co. has shipped 9 million cans, jars and bags of kraut to food retailers nationwide this quarter, Smith said, compared with 6 million in the same quarter last year.

"We expect sales to level off. But right now we're just doing what we can to keep up," Smith said. This week the company added some holiday sauerkraut recipes to its Web site for those health-conscious customers who bought the stinky stuff and now wonder what to do with it — besides putting it on hot dogs.

Copyright, 2005, The Plain Dealer. All Rights Reserved. Used by NewsBank with Permission.  
Record Number: MERLIN\_4532285