

## Cookware sets: Suppliers bolster product development

Friday, 25 June 2010

Exports of China-made pressure cookware are on the upswing, thanks to the increasing demand for time-saving kitchen products.

To boost sales further, R&D teams in most companies are working on models with better energy efficiency, larger capacity and added safety features.

For example, a number of makers are launching combination versions with a rice cooker function. Usually, these have a completely sealed frame over the protection valve that maintains the pressure at 1.5 to 1.8 bar.

In addition, a handful of suppliers have released designs with a capacity of more than 15L. Typical models can hold 3, 5 and 7L. Some are also made lighter for camping purposes such as a 4L pot that weighs only 1.2kg.

To improve safety, companies are incorporating two or three independent valves, as well as additional interlocks to prevent opening the lid while the internal pressure exceeds atmospheric pressure. Nonetheless, there is still a possibility of explosion when products are not thoroughly cleaned and maintained.

Several makers, including Zhejiang Tianxi Industry Group Co. Ltd, secure certification from CE and TÜV-GS. One of the largest manufacturers in the line, the company is among those that participated in the formulation and revision of the GB/13623-2003 and GB/15066-2001 standards on pressure cookers.

Typical releases from China are made of aluminum or stainless steel. The former material may be stamped or anodized. High-quality designs have a heavy three-ply or copper-clad bottom to spread heat faster and more evenly.

Although most suppliers recommend cleaning pressure cookers by hand, some of the latest products are dishwasher-safe.

Note: All price quotes in this report are in US dollars unless otherwise specified. FOB prices were provided by the companies interviewed only as reference prices at the time of interview and may have changed.

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