

S.Korea's LG unveils 'smart fridge'

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South Korea's LG Electronics Tuesday unveiled a refrigerator which suggests recipes as it forecast a bright future in the potentially lucrative market for "smart" household appliances.

LG will roll out smart fridges, washers and other appliances in [South Korea](#) and North America by the end of this year to compete against rivals including [Samsung Electronics](#) and Whirlpool, Lee Young-Ha, president of the home appliance unit, told reporters.

The nation's second-largest consumer electronics maker after Samsung on Tuesday showcased the first smart product -- a refrigerator connected to a home Wi-Fi network and which can be controlled by smartphone.

"By the end of the year, when our full range is introduced, consumers will be able to stay in contact with their appliances at any time, enjoying greater convenience and seeing real-life, real-time improvements in energy consumption and time savings," Lee said in a statement.

The smart fridge offers three energy-saving options as well as a "food management system" which tells users what is in their fridge, where it is and when its sell-by date expires.

The information is available via smartphones or tablets, and can be accessed from a grocery store or restaurant. LG boasts the machine can even suggest healthy recipes based on what foods are currently available.

The product costs about 3.6 million won (\$3,296) and will account for about 20 to 30 percent of LG's refrigerator sales in South Korea this year, said Lee, without giving a global sales target.

Other items including ovens and camera-embedded vacuum cleaners remotely controlled by smartphones or tablet computers will be introduced later this year, he added.

Market research firm Pike Research predicts the global market for smart [home appliances](#) will take off in earnest in 2013 and reach \$26.1 billion in sales by 2019.

In 2000, LG introduced a refrigerator connected to the Internet that met with a lukewarm response.

"Now things are different, with Wi-Fi networks everywhere, smartphones so common and prices far more affordable," said Kim Young-Soo, vice president of LG's home appliance unit.

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