# 4. Dried Fruits

This chapter defines dried fruits according to the H.S. code of the Tariff Schedule (Fig. 4-1), including products produced in Japan as well as imports.

Fresh, chilled, and fruits other than dried products are discussed in the Vegetables, Fruits, and Processed Products chapter.

**Fig. 4-1: Scope of coverage for dried fruits in this chapter**

| Category | Description | H.S. code |
|---|---|---|
| Dried fruits | Bananas | 0803.00-200 |
| | Dates | 0804.10-000 |
| | Figs | 0804.20-090 |
| | Pineapples | 0804.30-090 |
| | Avocados | 0804.40-090 |
| | Mangoes | 0804.50-090 |
| | Raisins | 0806.20-000 |
| | Apricots | 0813.10-000 |
| | Prunes | 0813.20-000 |
| | Apples | 0813.30-000 |
| | Berries | 0813.40-010 |
| | Papaws (papayas) , litchi, etc. | 0813.40-021 |
| | Persimmons | 0813.40-022 |
| | Kehapi | 0813.40-023 |
| | Other | 0813.40-029 |

## I. Points to Note in Exports to and Sales in Japan

### 1. Relevant Laws and Institutional Regulations

#### (1) Regulations and Procedural Requirements for Importing to Japan

The importing of dried fruits is regulated primarily by the following laws: 1) the Plant Protection Act, 2) the Food Sanitation Act, and 3) the Customs Act.

**<Plant Protection Act>**

Dried fruits are defined as fresh products, and undergo quarantine procedures, including screening for contamination by any pests or harmful plants, under the Plant Sanitation Act. Quarantine procedures performed at airports and ports are under the authority of the regional Quarantine Stations. Dried fruits that are individually packaged or contain added sugar, etc. are handled as processed food, which is exempt from the Plant Protection Act and subject only to food sanitation inspection under the Food Sanitation Act.

The following dried fruits are exempt from plant inspection: apricots, figs, persimmons, kiwifruits, plums, jujube, dates, pineapples, bananas, papaws (papayas), grapes, mangoes, peaches, and longans.

**<Food Sanitation Act>**

In compliance with Notification No. 370 of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, "Standards and Criteria for Food and Additives" issued under the Food Sanitation Act, and the standards for pesticide residues, etc. (including feed additives and drugs for animals) which are included therein, dried fruits that are individually packaged for retail sale are subject to food sanitation, which is conducted to assess the types and details of the raw ingredients, and to test the types and contents of additives, pesticide residues, mycotoxins, and so on. Import bans may be imposed on food in the event of an additive, pesticide, or other contents which are prohibited in Japan, when their levels exceed approved limits, or when the presence of mycotoxins, etc. is above allowable levels. Accordingly, dried fruits should be checked at the production site prior to import. If levels exceed the limits of Japanese standards, guidance should be given.

Pesticide residue standards adopted a negative system until 2006, under which pesticides would not be subject to control if there was no requirement for them. Amendments to the law introduced a positive list system, however, and the distribution of products is now prohibited in principle if they contain a specific level of pesticides, etc. even if there is no established requirement.

Dried figs, regardless of the country of origin, are subject to compulsory testing by order of the Health Minister (all-lot inspection that importers are ordered by the Health Ministr to perform for food items that have a high potential to be in violation of the Food Sanitation Act), to be tested for aflatoxin, a mycotoxin.

Although irradiation of dried fruits for sterilization is allowed in some of foreign countries, food irradiation during production and processing is in principle prohibited in Japan under the Food Sanitation Act.

**<Customs Act>**

Under the Customs Act, the importing of cargo with labeling that falsifies the origin of the contents, etc. is banned.

### (2) Regulations and Procedural Requirements at the Time of Sale

There is no specific law applicable to the sales of dried fruits. Regulations relevant to sales are summarized below.

**<Food Sanitation Act>**

Under the Food Sanitation Act, sales of products that contain harmful or toxic substances or those with poor hygiene are prohibited. Sales of dried fruits in containers and packaging are subject to mandatory labeling under the Food Sanitation Act, and provisions concerning safety labeling such as indication of food additives, allergy information, raw ingredients and source, and genetic modification, etc. are applicable.

**<Act on Specified Commercial Transactions>**

The Act on Specified Commercial Transactions stipulates the protection of interest of purchasers in the direct commercial transactions made with consumers. Sales of dried fruits in such routes as mail-order, direct marketing, telemarketing, etc. are subject to provisions of the Act on Specified Commercial Transactions.

**<Act on the Promotion of Sorted Garbage Collection and Recycling of Containers and Packaging>**

Under the Act on the Promotion of Sorted Garbage Collection and Recycling of Containers and Packaging, importers, etc. that sell contents using containers and packaging that are controlled by the Act (parts of paper containers and packaging and plastic containers and packaging, etc.) shall be liable for recycling (however, small-scale enterprises of below a certain size are excluded from among enterprises subject to the Act).

## 2. Procedures

### (1) Procedures for Authorization of Importing and Sales

The following procedures are required at the time of importing (Fig. 4-2):

**<Plant inspection>**

Because the Plant Protection Act rules that bulk importing of dried fruits is handled only at certain seaports and airports that are capable of sufficient plant protection measures for the purpose of preventing diseases and pests from entering the country, care should be taken in selecting the seaport/airport of entry before exporting from the country of origin. *Note that not all Quarantine Stations perform the plant inspection.

In filing an application for inspection with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Quarantine Station, the required documents must be submitted (Fig. 4-3) promptly after entry to port. In the event of rejection due to the detection of diseases or pests as a result of quarantine, fumigation or other measures are ordered.

**<Food Sanitation Inspection>**

Under the Food Sanitation Act, the required documents (Fig. 4-3) must be submitted when filing an application for the inspection with the imported food monitoring departments of Quarantine Stations, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. Inspection is conducted where it has been decided necessary to check the standards and criteria or safety issues at the initial review stage. If, as a result of the initial review and inspection, no issue has been detected under the Act, the registration certificate is returned, which the applicant shall submit, along with customs documents, upon filing an application for import with Customs. In the event that it has been ruled unfit for importing, measures such as destruction or returned to shipper are taken (Fig. 4-2).

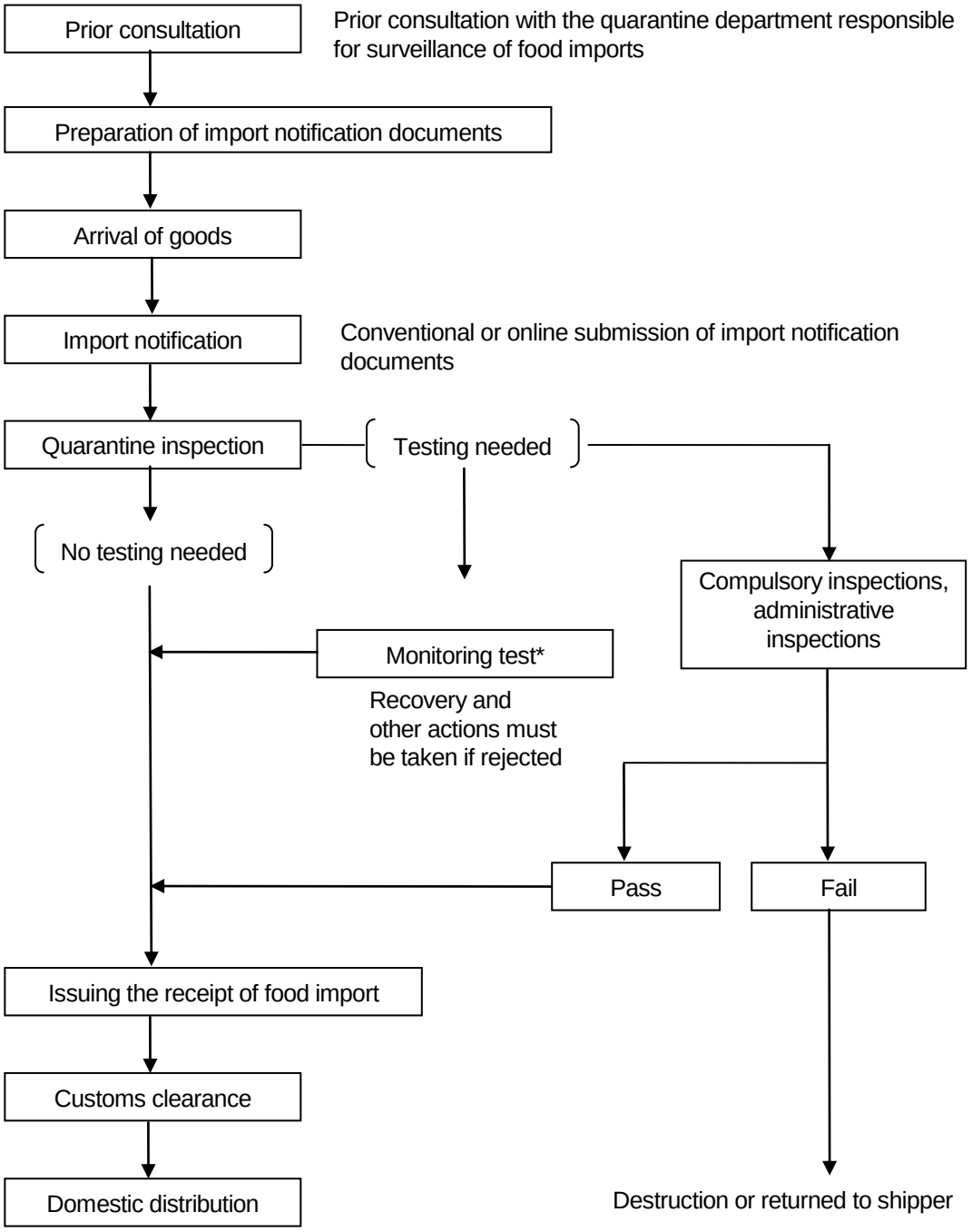
**<Customs>**

Under the Customs Business Act, import declaration must be made by importers themselves or commissioned to those qualified as registered customs specialists (including customs brokers).

To accept the entry to Japan of incoming cargo arriving from a foreign country, an import declaration must be made to the competent Customs office for the bonded area where the cargo is stored. Cargo for which customs inspection is required shall undergo required inspections first, and upon payment of customs duty, national and local consumption taxes, import permit may be given in principle.

**Fig. 4-2: Flowchart of import procedure**




Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
* Import food inspection following notification, conducted by MHLW Quarantine Stations according to the annual plan.

**(2) Required Documents**

Documents required for importing are summarized below in Fig. 4-3 according to the authorities to which each document is submitted.

**Fig. 4-3: Documents required for import clearance**

| Submitted to | Required documents | Fresh products (Note 1) | Processed products (Note 1) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Quarantine Information Office, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Plant quarantine under the Plant Protection Act) | *Application for import inspection | ○ | ― |
| | *Phytosanitary (inspection) certificate issued by the plant quarantine service of the exporter | ○ | ― |
| | *A copy of bill of lading (B/L), invoices, etc. (Submission may be required.) | ○ | ― |
| I Departments responsible for surveillance of food imports of Quarantine Stations, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (Food sanitation inspection under the Food Sanitation Act) | Notification form for importation of foods | ○ | ○ |
| | Material/ingredient table | ― | ○ |
| | Production flow chart | ― | ○ |
| | Table of analysis results issued by the designated inspection institute (if there is a past record of import) | ― | ○ |
| Local customs offices (Customs clearance under the Customs Act) | Declaration of import | ○ | ○ |
| | Invoice | ○ | ○ |
| | Packing list | ○ | ○ |
| | Bill of lading (B/L) or airway bill | ○ | ○ |
| | GSP Certificate of Origin (*only for imports from preferentially treated countries, discussed in III. Taxation System) | ○ | ○ |

Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; Ministry of Finance
○: Required ―: Not required
Note 1) Dried fruits are basically defined as fresh products while those that are individually packaged or contain added sugar, etc. are handled as processed food.
*For whether or not plant inspection is required, refer to (1) Procedures for Authorization of Importing and Sales <Plant inspection>, 2. Procedures.

As a phytosanitary (inspection) certificate, in principle the original copy that indicates the absence of pathogen or pest contamination, issued by the plant protection authority of the exporting country in a form in compliance with the International Plant Protection Convention, must be submitted. While the Convention stipulates that the phytosanitary certificate submitted to the authorities of the importing country be the original copy, the following are deemed valid in Japan, taking into consideration such cases where the original copy is lost or the delivery of the original copy is delayed:

a) A "carbon copy" of the original copy produced simultaneously; and

b) A copy that has been proven as being identical to the original copy by the plant protection authority of the exporting country.

**(3) Competent Authorities**

**Fig. 4-4: Contacts of competent authorities**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Plant Protection Act | | |
| | Plant Protection Division, Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries | TEL: +81-3-3502-8111<br>http://www.maff.go.jp |
| Food Sanitation Act | | |
| | Inspection and Safety Division, Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Food Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare | TEL: +81-3-5253-1111<br>http://www.mhlw.go.jp |
| Customs Tariff Act | | |
| | Customs and Tariff bureau, Ministry of Finance Japan | TEL: +81-3-3581-4111<br>http://www.mof.go.jp |
| Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products | | |
| | Labelling and Standards Division, Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries | TEL: +81-3-3502-8111<br>http://www.maff.go.jp |

**Fig. 4-4: Contacts of competent authorities (continued)**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Measurement Act | | |
| | Measurement and Intellectual Infrastructure Division, Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry | TEL: +81-3-3501-1511<br>http://www.meti.go.jp |
| Health Promotion Act | | |
| | Food and Labeling Division, Consumer Affairs Agency | TEL: +81-3-3507-8800<br>http://www.caa.go.jp |
| Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations | | |
| | Representation Division, Consumer Affairs Agency | TEL: +81-3-3507-8800<br>http://www.caa.go.jp |
| Act on Specified Commercial Transactions | | |
| | Consumer Advice Office, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry | TEL: +81-3-3501-1511<br>http://www.meti.go.jp |
| | Consumer Safety Division, Consumer Affairs Agency | TEL: +81-3-3507-8800<br>http://www.caa.go.jp |
| Act on the Promotion of Sorted Garbage Collection and Recycling of Containers and Packaging / Act on the Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources | | |
| | Recycling Promotion Division, Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry | TEL: +81-3-3501-1511<br>http://www.meti.go.jp |
| | Office for Recycling Promotion, Waste Management and Recycling Department, Ministry of the Environment | TEL: +81-3-3581-3351<br>http://www.env.go.jp |
| | Food Industry Policy Division, General Food Policy Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries | TEL: +81-3-3502-8111<br>http://www.maff.go.jp |
| Unfair Competition Prevention Act / Trademark Act | | |
| | Intellectual Property Policy Office, Economic and Industrial Policy Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry | TEL: +81-3-3501-1511<br>http://www.meti.go.jp |
| | General Affairs Division, Japan Patent Office, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry | TEL: +81-3-3581-1101<br>http://www.jpo.go.jp |

## II. Labeling

### 1. Labeling under Legal Regulations

Quality labeling of dried fruit products must be in Japanese and conform to the following laws and regulations: 1) Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products, 2) Food Sanitation Act, 3) Measurement Act, 4) Health Promotion Act, 5) Act on the Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources, 6) Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations, and 7) Unfair Competition Prevention Act.

When importing and selling dried fruits, the importer must provide the following information on labels in accordance with the quality labeling standards for processed foods of the Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products, and similar requirements for processed foods packed in containers under the Food Sanitation Act: 1) product name, 2) ingredients, 3) content, 4) expiration date, 5) storage method, 6) country of origin, and 7) name and address of importer.

**<Product name>**

The name of the product must be provided on the label in accordance with the Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products and Food Sanitation Act.

**<Ingredients>**

The ingredients of the product must be listed in descending order from highest to lowest content on the label in accordance with the Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products and Food Sanitation Act.

**<Additives>**

The substance name of additives used must be listed in decreasing order from highest to lowest content on the label in accordance with the Food Sanitation Act. The substance name and use of the following eight additives must be indicated on

the label: sweeteners, antioxidants, artificial colors, color formers, preservatives, whiteners, thickeners/stabilizers/gelators/bodying agents, antifungal agents, and antimold agents). For details on usage and storage standards of additives, Notification No. 370 of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare "Standards and Criteria for Food and Additives" prescribes the maximum allowable limit of approved additives for each food article.
Prohibited additives that have been detected from products include, for example, aflatoxin, which was detected in dried figs made in the U.S.A. and Turkey, and dulcin (sweetener) detected in dried fruits made in China.

**<Allergies>**

When products containing the specific ingredients shown in Fig. 4-5 are sold, it is required or recommended that ingredients be labeled in accordance with the Food Sanitation Act to prevent health hazards among consumers with specific allergies.

**Fig. 4-5: Specific materials related to allergy labeling**

| | |
|---|---|
| Specific materials requiring allergy labeling | Egg, milk, wheat, shrimp, crab, buckwheat noodle, groundnuts |
| Specific materials for which allergy labeling is recommended | Bearded clam, squid, salmon roe, orange, kiwi fruit, beef, walnut, salmon, mackerel, soy bean, chicken, banana, pork, matsutake, peach, yam, apple, gelatin |

Source: Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

Some dry fruits such as oranges are subject to allergy labeling. If they are included in the list of main ingredients, no additional action should be taken. If the name of ingredients on the label does not identify specific ingredients, labeling is required or recommended.

**<Content weight>**

When importing and selling dried fruits, the importer must measure the length, weight, or volume of the product in accordance with the Measurement Act and indicate them in their respective measurement units required by law on the label.

**<Expiration date>**

The expiration date of the product when stored according to the given preservation method in the unopened state must be indicated on the label in accordance with the Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products and Food Sanitation Act. As the quality of dried fruits does not deteriorate easily, the “best-by” date should be indicated on the label.

**<Preservation method>**

The preservation method for maintaining flavor in the unopened state until the “best-by” date must be indicated on the label in accordance with the Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products and Food Sanitation Act. For dried fruit products which can be stored at room temperature, the preservation method can be omitted from the label.

**<Country of origin>**

The quality labeling standards for processed foods, specified by the Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products, require the country of origin to be indicated on the labels of import foods.

This Act also requires the country of origin for the ingredients of processed articles to be labeled for dried fruits. Such information must be labeled either by stating in brackets on the list of ingredients or by stating the name of country of origin in a specified column of the labeling.

**<Importers>**

The name and address of the importer must be indicated on the label in accordance with the Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products and the Food Sanitation Act. For products processed in Japan using imported ingredients, the name and address of the manufacturer or dealer must be indicated on the label.

**<Nutrition facts>**

The nutritional components and calorie count must be indicated on the labels of dried fruits in accordance with the nutritional labeling standards prescribed by the Health Minister. The required information includes nutritional components, structural components (e.g., amino acids in protein), and types of components (e.g., fatty acids in fat). If general names such as "vitamin" are labeled instead of describing the specific names of nutrients, ingredients must be labeled.

Components must be indicated in the following order and unit:

a) Calories (kcal or kilocalories)
b) Protein (g or grams)
c) Fat (g or grams)
d) Carbohydrate (g or grams)
e) Sodium
f) Other nutritional components to be indicated on labels

The Health Ministry also prescribes standards on the labeling of other nutritional components and on information to be highlighted.

**<Organic labeling>**

The Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products defines organic agricultural products and organic agricultural processed foods, which include dried fruits, as Specified JAS (JAS-certified organic). Only products which meet these standards and affixed with the JAS-certified organic mark (Fig. 4-6) can be labeled as "organic" in Japanese.

Organic agricultural products produced abroad and imported must be graded by one of the following methods and affixed with the JAS-certified organic mark, to be permitted to have organic labeling.

a) Labelling of JAS-certified organic mark and distribution of organic foods produced/manufactured by overseas manufacturers certified by JAS registered certifying bodies inside and outside Japan.
b) Labelling of JAS-certified organic mark and distribution of products by importers certified by registered certifying bodies in Japan (limited to organic agricultural products and organic agricultural processed foods).

For approach b), certificates issued by the government of a country with a grading system recognized to be of the equivalent level as that based on the Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS), or copies must be attached as a prerequisite. As of March 2011, the following countries are identified by the ministerial ordinance to have equivalent grading systems for organic agricultural products as Japan in accordance with Article 15-2 of the Act for Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products: 27 countries in the EU, Australia, U.S.A., Argentina, New Zealand, and Switzerland.

**Fig. 4-6: JAS-certified organic mark**


**<Containers and packaging>**

The Act on the Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources requires labeling for promoting sorted collection on specified containers and packaging.

When the following two types of containers and packaging are used for dried fruits, either or both marks shown in Fig. 4-7 must be labeled on one area or more of the containers and packaging in the designated format.

**Fig. 4-7: Labels for promoting sorted collection**


Plastic containers and packaging


Paper containers and packaging

**<Description>**

Product descriptions with false or misleading expressions are prohibited by the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations and the Unfair Competition Prevention Act, which is applicable to all articles in addition to food products.

## 2. Labeling under Industry Voluntary Restraint

There are no voluntary industry restraints for dried fruits.

## III. Taxation System

### 1. Tariff duties, consumption tax, and other relevant taxes

Tariff duties on dried fruits are shown in the table below. In order to apply for preferential tariff rates on articles imported from preferential treatment countries, the importer should submit a Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) Certificate of Origin (Form A) issued by the customs or other issuing agency in the exporting country, to Japan Customs before import clearance (not required if the total taxable value of the article is no greater than ¥200,000). Details may be checked with the Customs and Tariff Bureau of the Ministry of Finance.

If the importer wishes to check the tariff classifications or tariff rates in advance, it may be convenient to use the prior instruction system in which the importer can make inquiries and receive replies in person, in writing, or via e-mail.

**Fig. 4-8: Tariff duties on dried fruits (FY2011)**

| H.S. code | | | Description | Tariff rate | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | General | Temporary | WTO | GSP | LDC |
| 08.03 | 00 | -200 | Bananas, dried | 6.0% | | 3.0% | Free | |
| 08.04 | 10 | -000 | Dates | Free | | (Free) | | |
| | 20 | -090 | Figs, dried | | | | | |
| | 30 | -090 | Pineapples, dried | 12.0% | | 7.2% | | Free |
| | 40 | -090 | Avocados, dried | | | 3.0% | | |
| | 50 | -090 | Mangoes, dried | | | | | |
| 08.06 | 20 | -000 | Dried grapes | 2.0% | | 1.2% | Free | |
| 08.13 | | | Fruit, dried, mixtures of nuts or dried fruits of this Chapter | | | | | |
| | 10 | | Apricots | 15.0% | | 9.0% | | Free |
| | 20 | -000 | Prunes | 4.0% | | 2.4% | Free | |
| | 30 | -000 | Apples | 15.0% | | 9.0% | | Free |
| | 40 | -000 | Other fruit | | | | | |
| | | -010 | 1. Berries | 12.0% | | 9.0% | 4.5% | Free |
| | 20 | | 2. Other | 15.0% | | | | Free |
| | | -021 | - Papaws (papayas), soursop, litchi, etc. | | | 7.5% | 3.8% | |
| | | -022 | - Persimmons, dried | | | 9.0% | | |
| | | -023 | - Kehapi | | | 9.0% | 4.5% | |
| | | -029 | - Other | | | 9.0% | | |
| | | | Mixtures of nuts or dried fruits of this Chapter | | | | | |
| | | -010 | 1. Mixtures containing more than 50% by weight of a single nut or dried fruit constituent, excluding those containing chestnuts, walnuts, pistachios, nuts of subheading 0802.90 (except betel nuts) or dried fruits of subheadings 0813.10 to 0813.40 | 10.0% | | 6.0% | 3.0% | Free |
| | | -090 | 2. Other | 20.0% | | 12.0% | 6.0% | Free |
| 08.14 | 00 | -000 | Peel of citrus fruit or melons (including watermelons) , fresh, frozen, dried or provisionally preserved in brine, in sulphur water or in other preservative solutions | 2.5% | | 1.5% | Free | |

Source: Ministry of Finance

* Although it is impossible to identify dates as fresh or dried items in trade statistics, this document treats them as dried fruits since most of them available on the market are dried products.

Note 1) Special emergency tariffs may be imposed on articles if their import volume has increased by more than a specified percentage or their import price has decreased by more than a specified percentage.

Note 2) Special preferential rate is applicable only for the Least Developed Countries.

Note 3) Normally the order of precedence for application of tariff rates is Preferential, WTO, Temporary, and General, in that order. However, Preferential rates are only eligible when conditions stipulated by law or regulations are met. WTO rates apply when those rates are lower than Temporary or General rates. Refer to "Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan" (by Customs and Tariff Bureau, Ministry of Finance) for a more complete interpretation of the tariff table.

### 2. Consumption Tax

(CIF + Tariff duties) × 5%

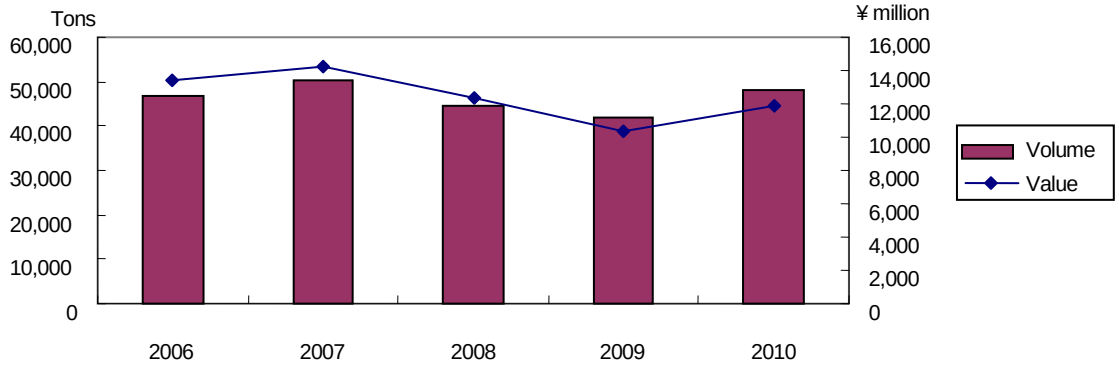
 

## IV. Trade Trends

### 1. Changes in Imports

Raisins and prunes make up a large portion of dried fruit imports, with raisins at 30,470 tons (111.8% vs. previous year) and prunes at 11,077 tons (121.1% vs. previous year) in 2010. Both items are showing steady performance even compared with recent trends, and volumes are stable. Fluctuations for dried persimmons have been volatile, and imports plunged to 882 tons (37.1% vs. previous year) in 2008. This was a result of extensive media coverage on issues involving Chinese food product safety. Imports tend to be affected by importer situations.

**Fig. 4-9: Changes in dried fruit imports**




Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

**Fig. 4-10: Changes in dried fruit imports by item**

Units: volume = tons, value = ¥ million

| Item | Volume | | | | | Value | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| Bananas | 325 | 253 | 259 | 205 | 516 | 97 | 81 | 70 | 64 | 84 |
| Dates | 1,143 | 919 | 765 | 892 | 1,108 | 101 | 91 | 91 | 95 | 114 |
| Figs | 1,536 | 1,494 | 1,207 | 957 | 1,130 | 656 | 747 | 728 | 496 | 573 |
| Pineapples | 18 | 31 | 11 | 8 | 11 | 13 | 18 | 10 | 9 | 9 |
| Guavas, mangoes and mangosteens | 125 | 97 | 91 | 33 | 39 | 101 | 74 | 60 | 20 | 20 |
| Raisins | 29,251 | 32,038 | 30,484 | 27,252 | 30,470 | 6,276 | 7,051 | 6,719 | 5,384 | 6,464 |
| Apricots | 969 | 882 | 676 | 855 | 704 | 542 | 559 | 409 | 384 | 383 |
| Prunes | 9,749 | 10,949 | 9,350 | 9,150 | 11,077 | 4,140 | 4,255 | 3,312 | 2,994 | 3,246 |
| Apples | 33 | 33 | 27 | 29 | 30 | 32 | 34 | 32 | 21 | 19 |
| Berries | 83 | 36 | 31 | 20 | 20 | 192 | 112 | 75 | 37 | 27 |
| Dried persimmons | 2,571 | 2,378 | 882 | 1,645 | 2,032 | 586 | 564 | 203 | 270 | 380 |
| Other | 1,142 | 1,092 | 932 | 1,078 | 1,003 | 679 | 665 | 640 | 605 | 556 |
| Total | 46,944 | 50,203 | 44,716 | 42,124 | 48,140 | 13,415 | 14,252 | 12,348 | 10,379 | 11,874 |

Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

### 2. Regional breakdown

Seen by country, the top trading partner is the United States with 38,554 tons (117.1% vs. previous year) in 2010, accounting for 80.1% of the total import volume. China came in second in 2010 with 3,171 tons (105.3% vs. previous year). However, most of its records relied on dried persimmons, of which exports took a nosedive in 2008 due to food safety issues with Chinese products, and figures remain unstable. There were signs of recovery in 2010 with Chinese exports of dried persimmons back to 2,032 tons (123.5% vs. previous year). South Africa exported 100 tons or ¥43 million of dried apricots in 2010, making up 14.2% of total dried apricot imports. Dates have been imported from Iran with a volume of 639 tons or ¥52 million in value during 2010, followed by Pakistan with 294 tons, Tunisia with 30 tons, and Egypt with 14 tons. The percentage of African countries in date imports is around 4% on a volume basis.

**Fig. 4-11: Trends in leading partner imports**

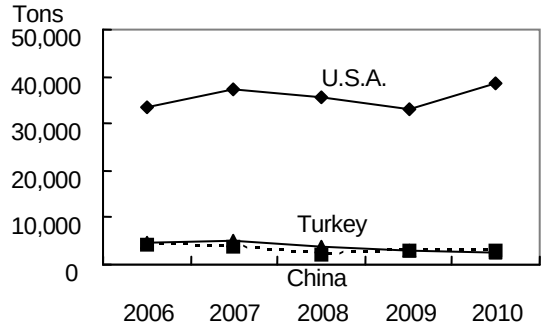



**Fig. 4-12: Shares of imports in 2010 (value basis)**

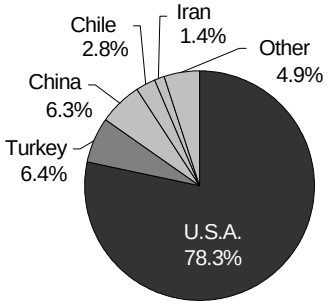



**Fig. 4-13: Principal places of origin of dried fruits**

Units: volume = tons, value = ¥ million

| Country | Volume | | | | | Value | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
| U.S.A. | 33,499 | 37,248 | 35,523 | 32,918 | 38,554 | 9,624 | 10,438 | 9,301 | 7,820 | 9,295 |
| China | 4,051 | 3,654 | 1,941 | 3,011 | 3,171 | 1,233 | 1,102 | 647 | 711 | 748 |
| Turkey | 4,588 | 4,874 | 3,615 | 2,929 | 2,556 | 1,085 | 1,282 | 1,137 | 847 | 756 |
| Chile | 1,498 | 1,406 | 1,063 | 1,072 | 1,302 | 416 | 398 | 315 | 307 | 330 |
| Iran | 1,178 | 931 | 913 | 706 | 827 | 207 | 206 | 259 | 123 | 166 |
| Other | 2,130 | 2,090 | 1,662 | 1,487 | 1,730 | 850 | 825 | 689 | 570 | 579 |
| Total | 46,944 | 50,203 | 44,716 | 42,124 | 48,140 | 13,415 | 14,252 | 12,348 | 10,379 | 11,874 |
| (African countries) | 625 | 996 | 709 | 529 | 416 | 151 | 218 | 158 | 149 | 121 |

Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

**Fig. 4-14: Principal places of origin of dried fruits by item (2010)**

Units: volume = tons, value = ¥ million

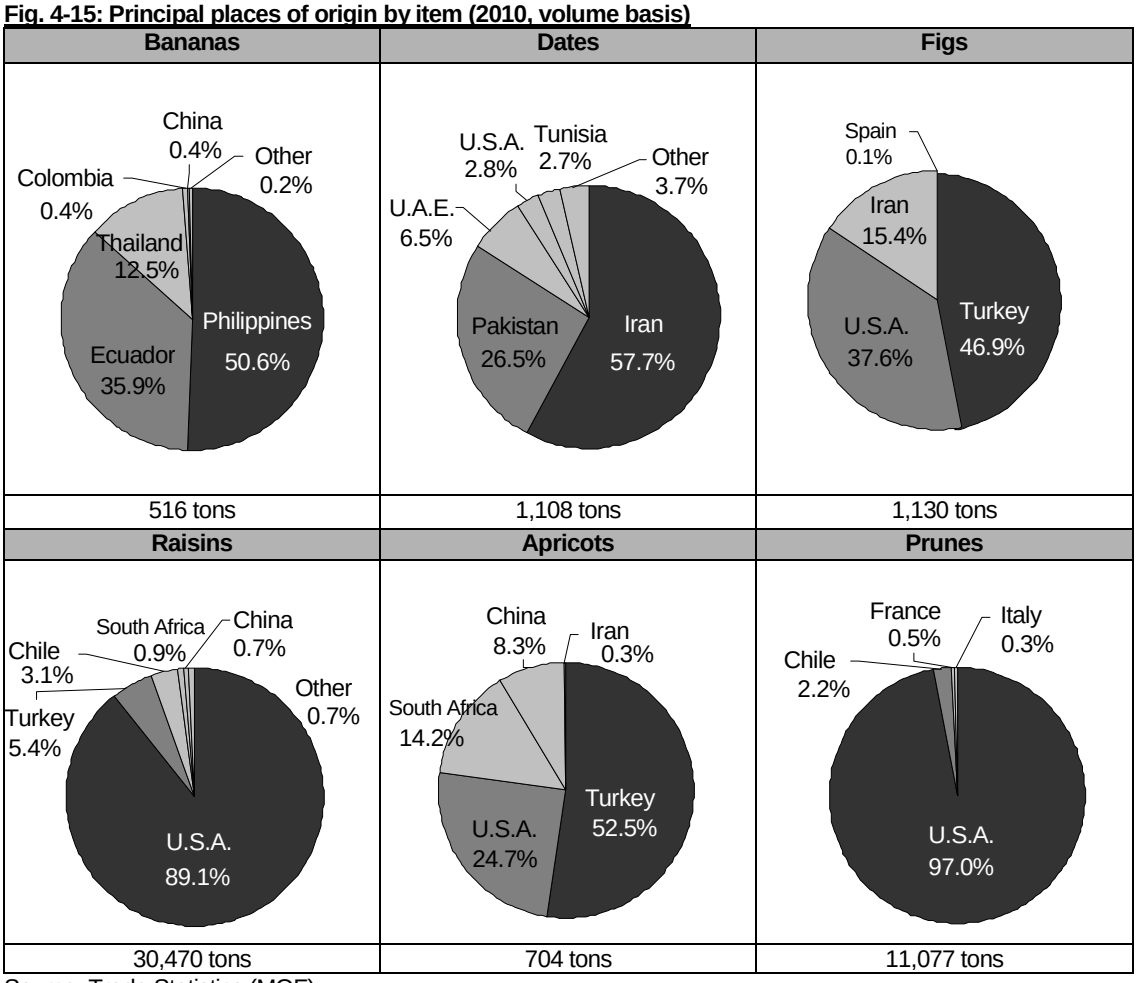
| Item | Total vol. imports | First place | | | | | Second place | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Country | Volume | Share | Value | Ave. unit price | Country | Volume | Share | Value | Ave. unit price |
| Bananas | 516 | Philippines | 261 | 50.6% | 7 | 26.3 | Ecuador | 185 | 35.9% | 39 | 210.6 |
| Dates | 1,108 | Iran | 639 | 57.7% | 52 | 80.6 | Pakistan | 294 | 26.5% | 19 | 63.4 |
| Figs | 1,130 | Turkey | 529 | 46.9% | 260 | 491.9 | U.S.A. | 425 | 37.6% | 202 | 474.6 |
| Pineapples | 11 | Thailand | 8 | 74.8% | 2 | 238.0 | China | 1 | 12.8% | 4 | 2,671.8 |
| Guavas, mangoes and mangosteens | 39 | China | 28 | 71.5% | 5 | 182.2 | South Africa | 3 | 9.0% | 4 | 1,152.9 |
| Raisins | 30,470 | U.S.A. | 27,159 | 89.1% | 5,721 | 210.7 | Turkey | 1,655 | 5.4% | 350 | 211.5 |
| Apricots | 704 | Turkey | 370 | 52.5% | 145 | 390.7 | U.S.A. | 174 | 24.7% | 186 | 1,068.4 |
| Prunes | 11,077 | U.S.A. | 10,747 | 97.0% | 3,150 | 293.1 | Chile | 240 | 2.2% | 60 | 249.3 |
| Apples | 30 | Chile | 15 | 51.2% | 12 | 783.0 | China | 11 | 35.1% | 5 | 446.1 |
| Berries | 20 | U.S.A. | 13 | 66.4% | 13 | 1016.0 | China | 3 | 17.2% | 7 | 2,185.0 |
| Dried persimmons | 2,032 | China | 2,032 | 100.0% | 380 | 187.0 | Taiwan | * | * | * | * |

Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

Note) The share is calculated on a kg basis in the original data source and is not always in agreement with the percentage in the above table, which is calculated on a tonnage basis.

**Fig. 4-15: Principal places of origin by item (2010, volume basis)**




Source: Trade Statistics (MOF)

## 3. Import Market Share in Japan

Most of the dried fruits distributed in Japan consist of raisins, prunes, and mangoes. Others are limited to mixed types, of which the majority are imported products. Consequently, supply of domestic products is limited to some fruits and dried persimmons, and remains at a small percentage.

## 4. Background of Changes in Volume of Imports and Other Trends

Since 2009, prunes and raisins, which hold an overwhelming share as ingredients, have remained stable. In 2010 there was a rise in imports for these dried fruits due to the expansion of demand triggered by health trends. Furthermore, the tendency to eat at home in response to the worsened economic situation is leading to more families baking their confectioneries at home. The trend is also likely to be affected by economic conditions in the future, but many domestic dried fruit manufacturers are ready to spark up demand by pursuing healthy and homemade promotions, and a drastic reduction is unlikely. In fact, there is room for other types of dried fruits to increase market size if their originality or uniqueness can be promoted effectively.

## V. Domestic Distribution

### 1. Trade Practice, Etc.

Special trading firms for dried fruits and nuts or confectionery ingredient suppliers are generally in charge of distributing dried fruits. Therefore, in order to sell nuts in a variety of sectors including home, processing, and commercial use, it is advantageous to do business through these specialized companies.

### 2. Domestic Market Situations

The Japanese dried fruits market has different market traits between home, processing, and commercial use.

Dried fruits for home use, such as raisons, have a long tradition in Japan and are often used for baking homemade cakes, etc. However, since the 1990s when consumers started to become more health conscious, the media has reported on the health benefits of prunes and other dried fruits. This came under the spotlight, and consumers have started to eat dried fruits as they are, rather than using them in homemade snacks. Starting in the mid-2000s, a major decline in the production of prunes led to a shortage of ingredients, continuous soaring costs and the sluggish economy were also some of the factors of the decline in market size. Nevertheless, due to rising awareness of healthy eating, consumption of dried fruits is growing both in terms of varieties purchased and also in the way in which they are consumed.

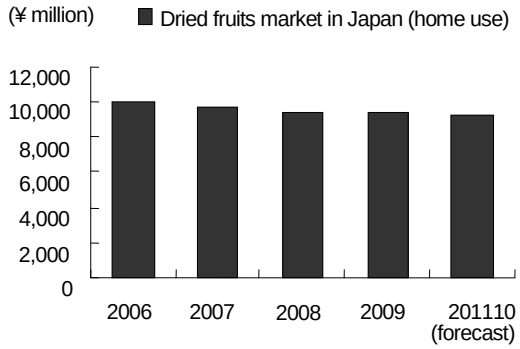
Companies such as Kyoritsu-foods, Shoei Foods, Crown Foods, Toyo Nut, and Kracie Foods account for large shares in the dried fruits market. Many of them are also suppliers of nuts.

**Fig. 4-16: Dried fruit market in Japan (home use)**

Unit: ¥ million

| Year | Sales (¥ million) | Yearly change |
|---|---|---|
| 2006 | 9,900 | — |
| 2007 | 9,600 | 97.0% |
| 2008 | 9,400 | 97.9% |
| 2009 | 9,300 | 98.9% |
| 2010 (forecast) | 9,200 | 98.9% |

Source: 2011 Food Marketing Handbook No. 1, Fuji Keizai




Dried fruits for processing are used in many areas such as confectioneries, breads, desserts, and ingredients, with a substantial market size. Due to the mango boom from 2004 to 2007, mangoes became a driver of growth in the market and and led to significant expansion. However, it has now contracted as a reaction, and bottomed out in 2010.

As for commercial use, raisins are used in raisin breads at bakeries, and as relish for curry at curry restaurants.

#### (1) Use of dried fruits

In Japan, dried fruits are consumed in various ways.

#### 1) Home use

Dried fruits are often eaten directly out of the container, with yogurt, or by adding them to homemade baked goods such as cookies. Prunes and mangoes are often consumed with yogurt. More and more health-conscious women are following this trend, since nutritious fruits can be taken in simply and enjoyably. Furthermore, small pouches of dried fruits such as “Fruity Navi” (Kracie Foods) have become a hit recently. As a result, it has become popular for young women to carry small bags of dried fruits (around 30 grams) and nibble on them every once in a while at school or at the workplace. Dried fruits in such size and containers are now emerging as new demand.

#### 2) Processing use

Dried fruits are generally added in processed foods such as snacks including biscuits, cookies, chocolates, and bread, yogurt, fruit jelly, breakfast cereal, health foods, or sauce for Japanese-style pancakes. The types of dried fruits used and the types of processed foods applicable diversify every year.

Examples of products rapidly gaining momentum in the past few years are bar-shaped biscuits, wafers, or breakfast cereal called nutrition bars or cereal bars containing nutrients such as protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals in a balanced manner, with reduced calories. The nutrition and flavor of dried fruits were enhanced by adding fruits to these bars, and the

products became a hit among consumers in their late teens and up to those in their thirties. Hence, the volume and assortments of dried fruits have expanded.

Furthermore, the types of dried fruits used in chilled desserts such as fruit yogurt or fruit jelly have also diversified. Mangoes, which were rarely used before, have increased dramatically due to the mango boom starting around 2006.

In Japan, breakfast cereal was generally considered as children's breakfast. However in recent years, many products targeting adults have been launched which include fiber, vitamins, and minerals etc. with less sugar. Due to the lower birthrate, cereal for kids is on a downward trend, but cereal for adults has been increasing. Many of the cereal products for adults have improved taste by adding several kinds of dried fruits. Dried fruits and various types of nuts are mixed in cereal and nutrition bars, so that consumers can take in the abundant nutrients of fruits and nuts in a balanced manner. Products that can appeal to this fact are now growing in sales.

In terms of health foods, dried prune extract sales remain stable due the demand for iron rich foods from middle-aged women.

#### 3) Commercial use

For commercial use, an overwhelming share is covered by raisins, which are used in raisin bread at bakeries. Other uses include relish with curry at curry restaurants or hotels, toppings for salads at restaurants, welcome fruits at hotels, snacks with drinks at bars, or as refreshments at Chinese tea stores.

### (2)Types of dried fruits

#### 1) Raisins

Raisins are dried fruits introduced from the United States after World War II. They have a variety of uses such as in bread, cookies or cakes, desserts, and in cooking, but 80% is used in breads and 10% in cookies and others. The majority is produced in the United States, but a small amount is also imported from South Africa and other countries.

#### 2) Figs

There used to be little demand for figs in Japan. However, imports have increased allowing easier access. Since figs are rich in antioxidant properties and in dietary fiber, they are used in confectioneries, jam, and drinks, and are now becoming popular. Many are grown in Turkey or the United States.

#### 3) Apricots

Japan has traditionally been a producer of apricots, but lately there has been an increase in imports from Turkey and the United States where costs are lower. They are eaten directly or used in various confectioneries and cereals, etc.

#### 4) Persimmons, dried

Persimmon trees are grown all over Japan. The fruits are harvested in autumn and usually eaten without processing, but the types of persimmon with less sweetness are dried to increase their sweetness, and then consumed. Therefore, dried persimmons are traditional Japanese dried fruits and eaten as snacks since ancient times. Currently, domestic production has decreased, and many are imported from China.

#### 5) Prunes

Since prunes are nutritious containing minerals such as iron, they are often eaten right out of the bag or with yogurt at home. They are also used as ingredients for health foods or drinks. Most imports come from the United States, but some also come from Chile and other countries.

#### 6) Dates

When dates were first imported to Japan, they were rarely eaten as a whole, but mostly used as ingredients for Worcestershire sauce arranged Japanese-style, on pancakes. By using dates as an ingredient, the sauce was added a unique umami (fifth taste sensation), richness, and sweetness to its flavor. "Otafuku sauce" which consists of around 50% of the market share for Japanese-style pancake sauce, has used dates in their recipe since the 1970s to add a distinctive flavor to their sauce. Since dates are imported from countries such as Iran, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, supply becomes disrupted when the situation in the Middle East becomes unstable, such as in the case of the Gulf War or the war in Iraq. A small portion is also imported from North African nations such as Tunisia and Egypt. They are also recently starting to be consumed as dried fruits because of their high nutrients.

#### 7) Mangoes

Mangoes produced in Mexico and Southeast Asia were not frequently distributed in Japan. However since around 2004, various processed foods using mangoes and local fresh mangoes have increased presence in the market, leading to a mango boom, which also substantially expanded the dried mango market. Eating dried mangoes out of the bag or mixing them with yogurt at home has become custom. In addition, mangoes are used increasingly in a variety of processed foods such as chilled desserts and confectioneries. The Philippines holds a large share, but countries such as South Africa also export a certain amount.

**8) Blueberries**

In the 1990s, blueberries became a fad due to media reports that anthocyanin included in blueberries were good for the eyes. As a result, frozen blueberries, blueberry jam, and snacks and supplements that use blueberry extracts expanded significantly in the market. Dried blueberries were lower in demand compared to frozen blueberries because they were less applicable in processed foods such as desserts, and also because fresh blueberries from the United States were also increasing in imports. However, they are being imported mainly from the United States and other countries to be used as ingredients for snacks such as cookies and nutrition bars or to be eaten out of the bag.

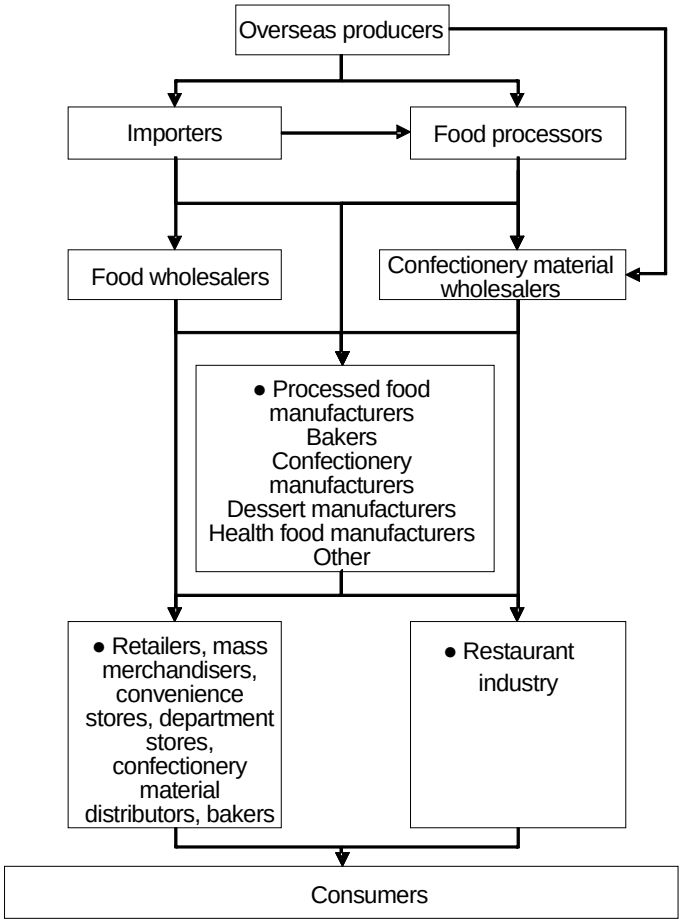
**9) Apples**

As apples are grown all over Japan and fresh apples are easily obtainable throughout the four seasons at a steady price, demand for dried apples is not high compared to other dried fruits. Nevertheless, they are being imported from Chile and China to be used as ingredients in bread, cakes, cookies, or to be eaten as they are as snacks.

## 3. Distribution Channels

Distribution of dried fruits in Japan is generally handled by importers, processors, and confectionery ingredient wholesalers, as in the case of nuts. However, there are also specialized trading firms and special processing manufacturers for dried fruits. Since the variety of use covers a broad range of processing such as for bread, confectioneries, drinks, desserts, health foods, ingredients, and others, there are many different processed food manufacturers and each of them require their own volumes and forms.

**Fig. 4-17: Distribution channels for dried fruits**




Source: Fuji Keizai research data

## 4. Issues and Considerations for Entering the Japanese Market

When entering the Japanese dried fruits market, one must first take into consideration the Japanese dietary habits, tastes in food, living environment, and other aspects. In addition, it is also essential to understand the types of dried fruits, their uses, and the ways they are consumed. For example regarding dietary habits, the Japanese are now extremely health-conscious, and consumers are keenly interested in food products that are good for the health. Hence, dried fruits should be promoted in the Japanese market as healthy foods that are abundant in nutrients. Furthermore, recent demand has been high for organic products and not only limited to dried fruits. Products would be more advantageous if they were organic, but this will require a prerequisite to prove that they are organic (refer to II. Labeling 1. Labeling under legal regulations <Organic labeling>).

Recently in Japan, efforts to secure traceability for all food products have been gathering momentum, and a system enabling tracing of products to their place of origin is required. Also under Japanese standards, products are evaluated not only by class and quality but also by size, uniformity, and appearance. Trading prices are also set based on the aforementioned criteria, so it is essential that one have a thorough understanding of Japanese codes and standards.

The Food Sanitation Act strictly limits the aflatoxin B1 content of dried fruits under 0.01 ppm. Aflatoxin exceeding approved limits is often detected in dried fruits such as figs.

The regulation for aflatoxin currently targets only aflatoxin B1. However, regulations will be tightened starting in October of 2011. Restrictions are planned to be amended to limit the total content of aflatoxin B1, B2, G1, and G2 to be under 0.01 ppm.

**<Exhibitions>**

**Fig. 4-18: Exhibitions for dried fruits**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Overall food products | FOODEX | |
| | http://www3.jma.or.jp/foodex/ja | TEL: +81-3-3434-3453 |
| | International Hotel & Restaurant Show | |
| | http://www.jma.or.jp/hcj | TEL: +81-3-3434-1377 |
| | Supermarket Trade Show | |
| | http://www.smts.jp | TEL: +81-3-5209-1056 |
| Dessert, cake, beverage | Dessert, Sweets & Drink Festival | |
| | http://www.dainichiad.co.jp/html/fabex/deza_top.htm | TEL: +81-3-5294-0071 |

## 5. Failure Cases

**<Mold growing on dried fruits>**

In 2009, some mold was found in mix dried fruits for home consumption sold by a food manufacturer. The supplier initiated a voluntary recall of all products. Although some fungi had been detected on the products at the point of import from several countries through a trading firm, mold was not found at that stage. It is believed that the mold had grown at the point of sales at the mass merchandiser after repackaging by the food supplier.

## 6. Import Associations & Related Organizations

**Fig. 4-19: Dried fruit associations and related organizations**

| | |
|---|---|
| Japan Dried Fruits Importers Association | |
| | TEL: +81-3-3253-1234 |
| Raisin Administrative Committee | http://www.raisins-jp.org |
| info@raisins-jp.org | TEL: +81-3-3221-6410 |
| California Dried Plum Board / California Prune Board | http://www.prune.jp |
| info@prune.jp | TEL: +81-3-3584-0866 |