

HANDBOOK FOR IMPORTED FOODS

IMPORTED FOODS Q&A
2003

JETRO

JAPAN EXTERNAL TRADE ORGANIZATION

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1. Laws and Regulations at the Time of Importation

(1) Overview

Q1

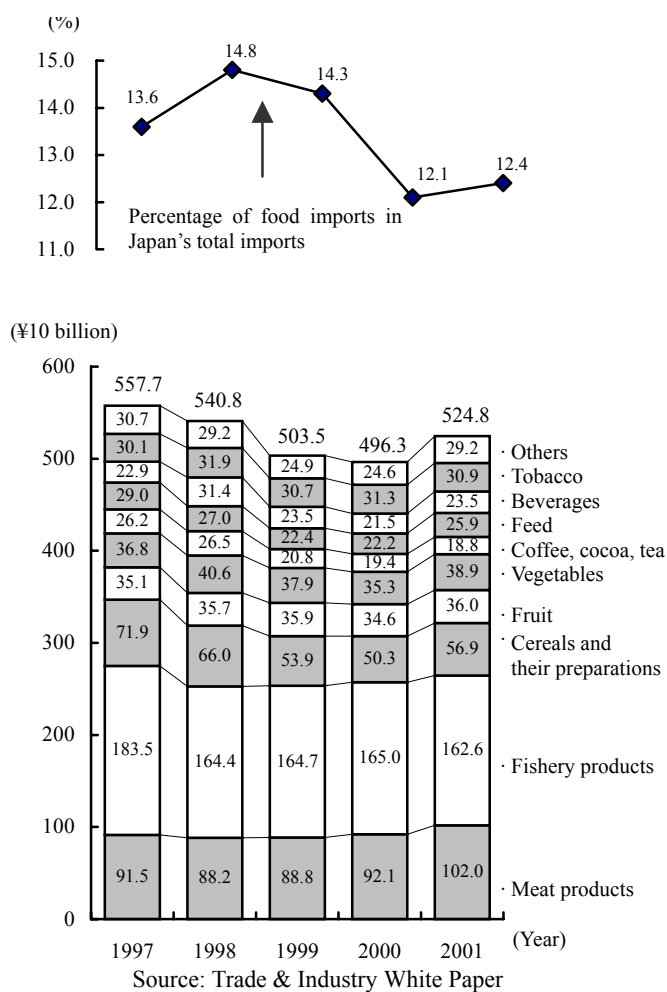
What types of foods are imported into Japan?

A : Variety of foods being imported into Japan from abroad now constitute an indispensable part of the Japanese diet. Food imports reached a total of ¥5.2 trillion (or \$4.31 billion on a dollar basis) in 2001, which represented 12.4% of Japan's total imports. (Figure 1)

By product category, the most commonly imported food consisted of fishery products, imports of which totaled ¥1.6 trillion in 2001, representing 31% of all food imports. The principal types of imported fishery products include shrimp, crab, tuna, salmon and trout, and eels. The next most commonly imported foods in 2001 was meat products at approximately ¥1 trillion (19.4%), cereals and their preparations at approximately ¥560 billion (10.8%), and vegetables at about ¥380 billion (7.4%).

The leading exporter of foods to Japan was the United States with 30.0% of all food imports, followed by China (13.7%), Australia (6.7%), Thailand (5.2%), Canada (4.8%) and Republic of Korea (3.4%).

Figure 1 Japan's Food Imports (Yen basis)



SHORT MEMO

Japan's food self-sufficiency ratio (on a calorie basis) has been declining steadily from its FY 1965 level of 73%. Since FY 1998 the ratio has been flat at around 40%. Other leading countries had food self-sufficiency ratios as follows (1999 statistics): United Kingdom 71%, Germany 97%, France 136%, United States 127%, and Australia 327%. It is apparent from these figures that Japan has the lowest level of food self-sufficiency ratio of any developed nation. Precisely because Japan is so dependent on imported foods, the safety of imported food represents a matter of great concern for the Japanese people.

Note: Food self-sufficiency ratio (on a calorie basis) = (Domestic calorie supplies / Total calorie supplies) x 100

Source: Food Supply & Demand Table FY 2000, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Figures are given on a Japanese fiscal year basis (April to March).

Q2

Can any type of food be imported into Japan?

A : In general, any type of food can be imported so long as it is guaranteed safety for human health. However, imported foods must undergo certain specified procedures at the time of importation in order to verify their safety, etc. (see Q10)

The following types of foods cannot be verified as safe, and therefore cannot be imported into Japan.

1. Foods containing toxic or harmful substances, or that are suspected of containing such substances
 - Peanuts and pistachio nuts, etc. that have contracted toxic mold (aflatoxin, etc.)
 - Poisonous fish
2. Foods that have rotted or spoiled
 - Cereal grains that have contracted mold from sea water leakage during transport, etc.
 - Frozen foods that have thawed and spoiled due to problems with temperature control
3. Foods that fail to meet specifications and standards for manufacturing method, ingredients, or materials
 - Soft drinks treated with pasteurization methods that do not comply with manufacturing standards, etc.
 - Dairy products wherein the presence of the colon bacilli group is detected
 - Genetically modified foods that have not been verified as safe
 - Fresh vegetables with residual agricultural chemicals in excess of specified standard levels
4. Foods with improper additive usage methods
 - Foods that make use of impermissible additives
 - Dried foods with residual sulfur dioxide in excess of specified standard levels
5. Foods not accompanied by specified documentation
 - Meat products unaccompanied by a health certificate issued by the competent government agency of the exporting country
 - Blowfish (*fugu*) unaccompanied by a health certificate prepared by the competent public agency of the exporting country

Some product categories are subject to other requirements in addition to those specified above in order to be imported into Japan. For instance, there cannot be any infectious disease organisms or harmful insect pests in raw meat, processed meat products (ham, sausage, etc.), fruits, vegetables, or cereal grains. These products must undergo procedures intended to verify that they pose no threat to the flora and fauna of Japan. In addition, there are a small number of product categories that require approval in order to import them into Japan, including fish caught in coastal waters and edible seaweed. (see Q6)

Q3

Can anyone import foods into Japan?

A : In general, anyone can import foods into Japan. There is no requirement to obtain anything like a “food importer license.” However, a license is required in order to import and sell products classified as alcoholic beverages (beverages with an alcohol content of 1% or greater; see Q64).

There are also a very small number of products that may not be imported after an import quota allocation is obtained, such as fish caught in coastal waters and edible seaweed. Please refer to Q51 - Q57 for a discussion of these exceptional product categories.

Sometimes products that are treated as health foods in other countries are regarded as pharmaceuticals in Japan. In this case, under provisions of the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law, an importer’s license would be required to import the products. (see Q98)

SHORT MEMO

Many Japanese people become nostalgic for certain types of Japanese food when they travel abroad, and the same is true for foreign people living or staying in Japan. Accordingly, some people specialize in importing and selling spices, breads, and other foods that appeal to foreigners living or staying in Japan. People who can offer foods that appeal to particular national tastes can start a business and keep it going through the gradual spread of word-of-mouth.

In addition, some foods are imported into Japan that are aimed at consumers whose religious beliefs restrict the type of food they may eat, or the food preparation method that may be used, such as Muslims.

Q4

Could you explain about the sequence of food import procedures?

A : Some imported products, such as apparel, furniture, or general merchandise, can be brought into Japan after undergoing the customs inspection at the port of entry in Japan. However, imported foods must undergo a food sanitation inspection at the Quarantine Station before they can be allowed into Japan. In addition, some product categories must be inspected for compliance with specifications and standards that have to do with possible effects on livestock and agricultural products.

Import procedures for food may be classified as follows according to the type of products: (1) agricultural products, including fruits, vegetables, and cereal grains; (2) livestock products, including raw meats and processed meat products; (3) fishery products; and (4) other processed foods. The sequence of procedures is as indicated in Table 1 and Figure 2.

For example, all foods must pass through a food sanitation inspection checkpoint that verifies the safety of food for human health, as well as the customs inspection checkpoint. Furthermore, products such as vegetables and meat products must pass an additional checkpoint in the form of the plant quarantine/animal quarantine in order to confirm their safety for livestock and agricultural products. Thus, these products must pass a total of three checkpoints.

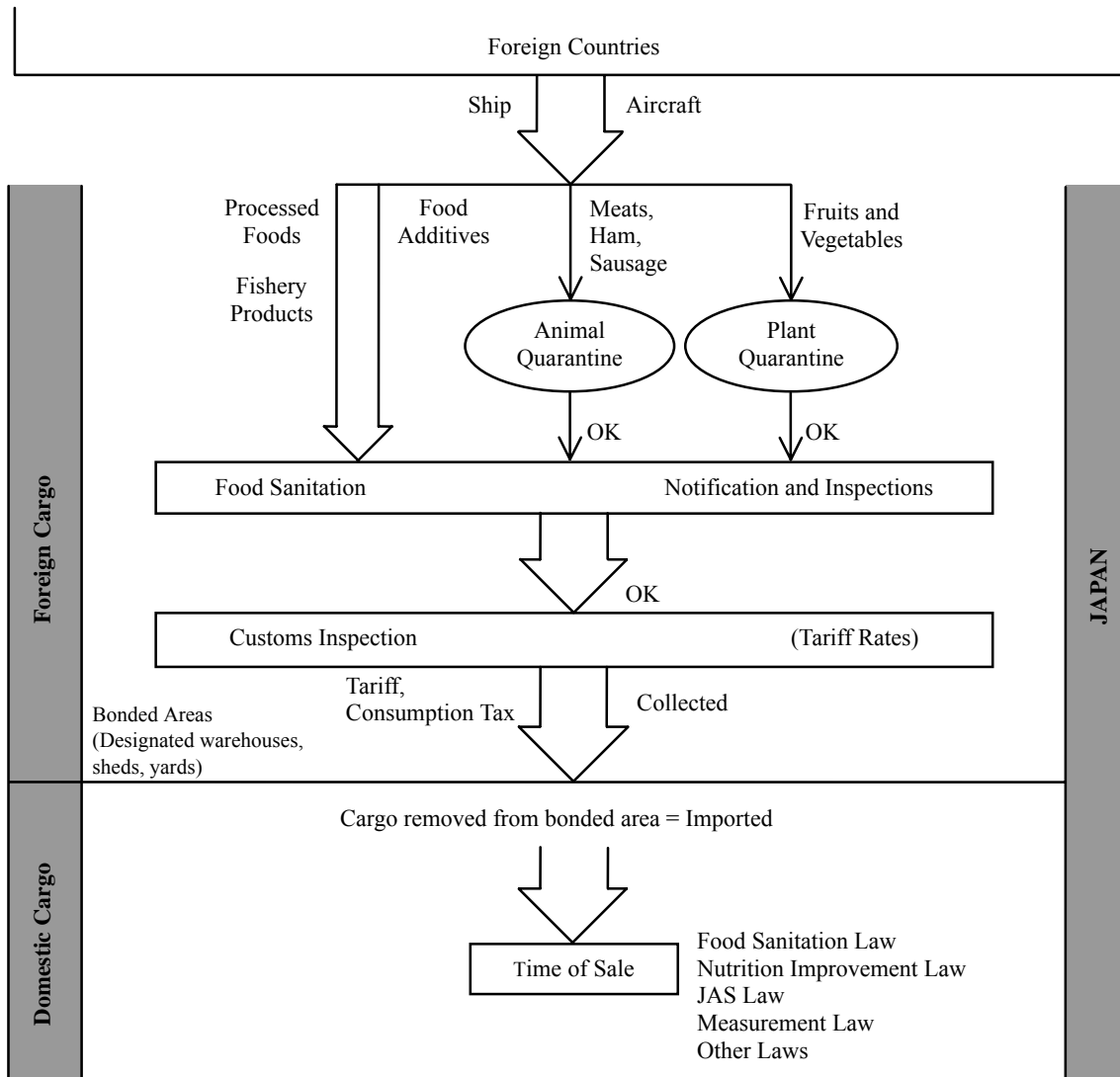
Table 1 Principal Quarantine and Inspection Procedures

	Fruits and Vegetables	Meats and Meat Products	Fishery Products	Other Processed Foods
Animal Quarantine		○		
Plant Quarantine	○			
Food Sanitation Inspection	○	○	○	○
Customs Inspection	○	○	○	○

○ indicates required inspections

Note: Under provisions of the Quarantine Law, quarantines were once required for fresh fishery products imported from areas with cholera outbreaks. This requirement was abolished as of April 2001. All inspections now have been consolidated with food sanitation inspections performed under the Food Sanitation Law.

Figure 2 Flowchart of Food Import Procedures



Note: Upon request by the importer, the food sanitation inspection and the animal quarantine/plant quarantine inspection may be conducted concurrently. Importers who wish to receive such treatment must clearly write “requesting concurrent inspection” on the application for import quarantine inspection.

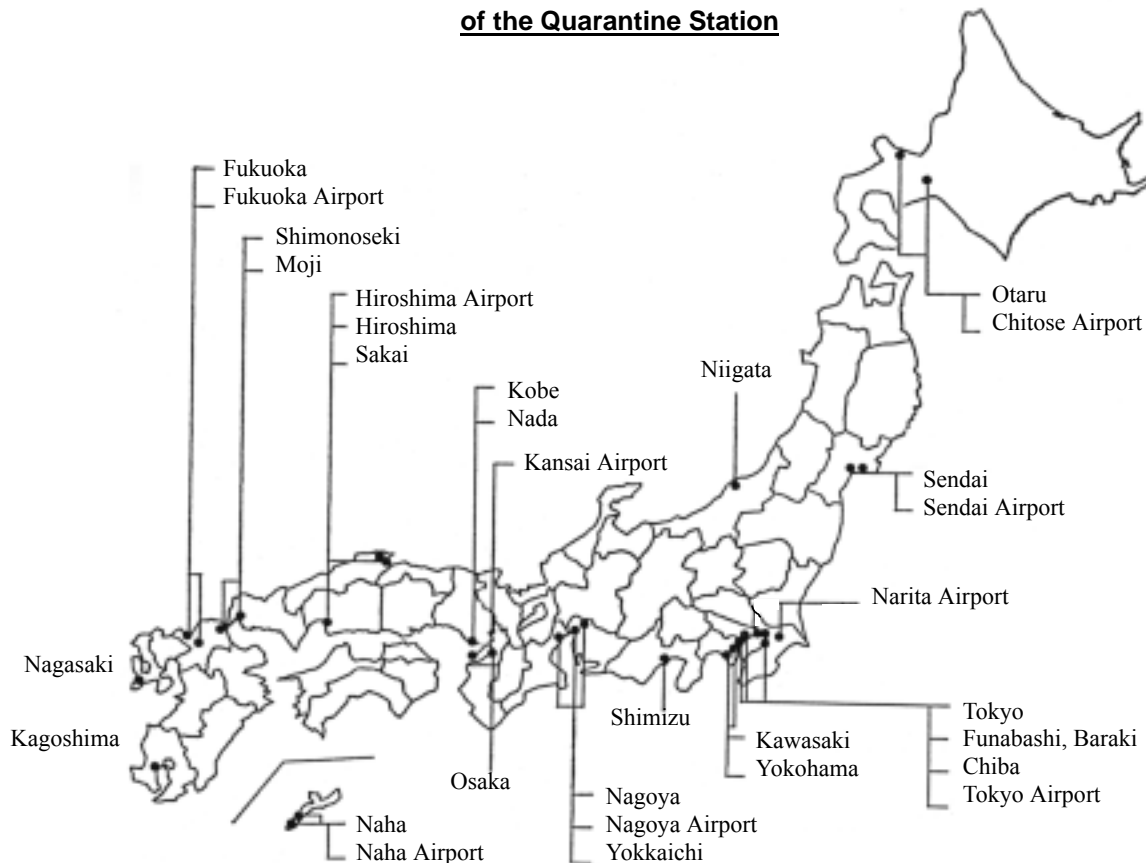
Q5

Can import procedures be completed at any Japanese port of entry?

A : If food is being imported into Japan, as described in Q4, the importer must submit a “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” to the Quarantine Station and have the food subjected to a food sanitation inspection to verify that the food poses no threat to human health. After document examination it is determined that further inspection is required, and the food can only be imported into Japan if it passes these inspections as required.

All the major airports and seaports have a Quarantine Station, and any of these ports of entry can perform the food sanitation inspection. The 31 leading ports of entry listed in Figure 3 all have Imported Foods Inspection Section of the Quarantine Station, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare with food sanitation inspectors on duty (please refer to Q13 for the working hours and to Q40 for a list of contacts).

Figure 3 Leading Ports of Entry with Imported Foods Inspection Section of the Quarantine Station



There are only a limited number of ports of entry capable of conducting plant quarantines or animal quarantines. This is because only certain ports of entry have the physical facilities needed to perform the import inspections and to carry out any fumigation that may be required. For more information, please refer to Q45 (Animal Quarantine) or Q50 (Plant Quarantine).

- * Contacts: Animal quarantine.....Animal Quarantine Service (Q45)
Plant quarantinePlant Protection Station (Q50)
Food sanitation inspection.....Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Q6

Under which statutes are the import procedures for foods required?

A : The statutes listed below mandate the various declarations, inspections, and associated procedural requirements for each respective product category.

The purpose of these declarations and inspections is to assure the safety of foods, to protect domestic flora and fauna, and to protect domestic industry.

Table 2 Principal Statutes that apply to the Importation of Foods

Affected Product Category	Statute Name	Main Purpose	
Overall foods	Food Sanitation Law	To check for food health and safety	→ Q 8 - Q41
Livestock products	Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control Law	To prevent the spread of infectious livestock diseases	→ Q42 -Q45
Agricultural products	Plant Protection Law	To prevent the entry and spread of insect pests harmful to plant life	→ Q46 -Q50
Certain fishery products, edible seaweed	Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law	To limit the type and volume of certain imports	→ Q51 -Q57
Alcoholic beverages	Liquor Tax Law	To control the importation and sale of alcoholic beverages	→ Q64

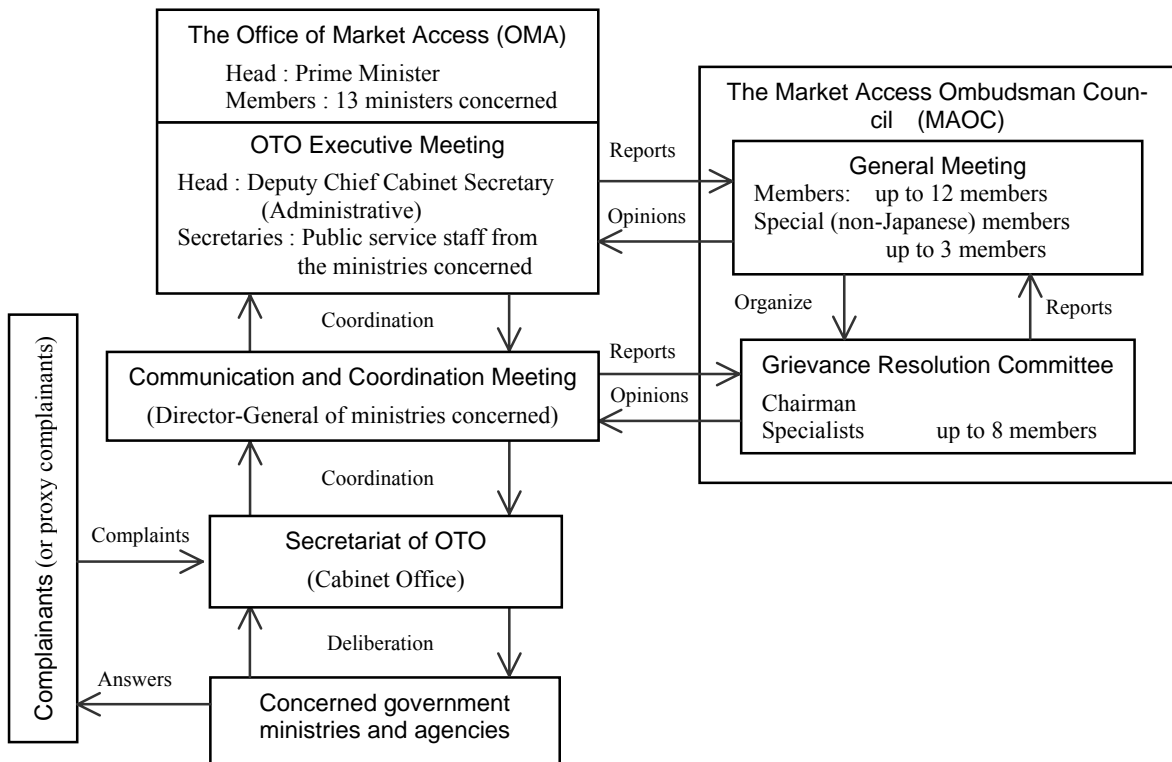
It should be noted that the Food Sanitation Law also requires the same import procedures for food additives, apparatus, container-packages, and toys for infants. (see Q9)

Q7

Is there any office that deals with complaints regarding the food import procedure process?

A : The government has established a trade ombudsman program (OTO: Office of Trade and Investment Ombudsman), principally through The Office of Market Access (OMA), to promptly and appropriately respond to complaints regarding the import inspection process. Any importer having problems with the process should contact the Secretariat of OTO (Cabinet Office), the OTO offices in concerned government ministries and agencies, Customs Counselors Offices, regional Bureaus of Economy, Trade and Industry, Quarantine Stations (Imported Foods Inspection Section), Animal Quarantine Services, Plant Protection Stations, District Transport Bureaus, foreign diplomatic missions in Japan, or at JETRO offices. Complaints can be filed in any form, by telephone, facsimile, e-mail, postal mail and/or going to the contact point in person..

Figure 4 Flow of Complaints Procedures



* Contacts: Secretariat of OTO (Cabinet Office)

TEL : 03-3581-0384

(2) Issues Related to the Food Sanitation Law

1) Procedures

Q8

Why are the procedures required under the Food Sanitation Law?

A : In order to protect the public from health hazards caused by the consumption of food or drink, the Food Sanitation Law prohibits the manufacture, sale, and importation of foods containing toxic or harmful substances, of foods that are unsafe for human health, of food additives unapproved for use by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, or foods containing such additives; or of foods that do not conform to specifications and standards set by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare. All foods distributed within Japan, whether produced in Japan or imported from abroad, are subject to the same requirements. In addition, the Food Sanitation Law imposes the same legal obligations on importers of imported foods as it does on manufacturers and sellers of domestically produced foods.

Foods produced in Japan are subject to oversight and guidance by the food sanitation bureau of local governments under the Food Sanitation Law at every stage of the production process in relation to physical facilities, equipment and production methods. In addition, the distribution stage is also subject to oversight and guidance by food sanitation inspectors from local government health centers.

Imported foods are subject to oversight and guidance from food sanitation inspectors at the Quarantine Stations, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. The distribution stage is also subject to oversight and guidance by food sanitation inspectors from local government health centers. In many cases, however, it is more difficult than domestically produced foods to obtain specific information about the conditions of production, the methods used in production and processing, and storage conditions. Sometimes it is also necessary to check for degradation of product quality during transport.

Processed foods are manufactured in accordance with the food sanitation statutes of the producer country. But, those statutes define idiosyncratic criteria that are based on the climate, culinary customs, and other factors in that country. As a result, the statutory criteria in the producer country can differ from those under the Food Sanitation Law of Japan. Furthermore, although it only happens rarely, sometimes fishery products and legumes from other countries contain natural toxins not present in Japanese food products.

These are the reasons why foods imported from abroad are subject to the mandated procedures. Their purpose is to examine the foods to determine whether or not it complies with Japanese specifications and standards for safety and health.

SHORT MEMO

In 2000 there were a total of approximately 1.55 million import notifications of foods, the total weight of which was reported at 30.03 million tons. Ten years earlier, in 1990, there were approximately 670,000 import notifications, with a total weight of 21.73 million tons. Thus, in that span of time the number of import notifications grew 2.3 times over, while the total tonnage grew 1.3 times over. This demonstrates how much food importation has grown.

A : An import notification is required for all foods that are imported for the purpose of sale (including provision as a gift to either anonymous or large numbers of recipients) or for other commercial purposes, with the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare on each occasion.

Furthermore, the Food Sanitation Law requires an import notification for food additives, apparatus, container-packages, and toys for infants. These categories are defined as described below, so please follow the prescribed import procedures after checking with the Quarantine Station.

1. Food additives

Substances used in the process of manufacturing foods, or for the purpose of processing or preserving foods, by means of adding, mixing, infiltrating or others.

2. Apparatus

Tableware, cooking utensils or other machines or utensils which are used for manufacture, transportation or other treatment of foods that come into direct contact with foods or food additives.

3. Container-packages

Articles in which foods or food additives are contained or packaged and are to be offered when the foods or food additives are delivered to others.

4. Toys for infants

Articles designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare as posing threat to health if put in the mouth by an infant (examples: blocks, rubber teething rings, folded papers (*origami*), etc.)

However, if the same food is imported repeatedly, the import notification need not be filed on each occasion, provided that certain conditions are met. (see Q31)

Q10

Could you explain about the procedures required under the Food Sanitation Law?

A : We will explain the sequence of procedures at the Quarantine Station in reference to Figure 5 on the following page.

1. Submission of the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” and other required documentation

Food sanitation inspectors are available for an advance consultation service of how to fill out the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” before the time of submission (see Q11). Normally the notification is filed after the cargo is transported to the bonded warehouse. However, if the prior notification program is utilized (see Q30), the notification can be filed as early as seven days prior to the cargo’s arrival.

2. Documentary examination

At this point, an examination is conducted as to whether there are any food sanitation problems, based on the content of the completed notification form and other related documents, past import history with the same food and any past violations, the laboratory test results of any voluntary inspections, or others. If the determination is made that cargo inspection is required, inspection categories and inspection methods are defined. (see Q11, Q15)

3. Stamp for receiving notification

If the determination is made that no further inspection is required, a copy of the submitted notification (2 copies) is stamped “Submitted” (on the right hand column) and given to the importer. This copy is appended to the declarations at the Customs.

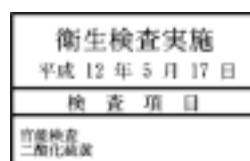


4. Inspections

Depending on the circumstances, food sanitation inspectors from the Quarantine Station will go out to the bonded warehouse or container yard where the cargo is being stored for on-site inspection. If necessary, the food sanitation inspector will take samples and conduct a laboratory testing. For more information, please refer to Q15.

5. Certificate of inspection

Articles that passed inspection have one copy of the submitted notification stamped “Passed” (on the right hand column), and the copy is given to the importer. This copy is appended to the declarations at Customs.

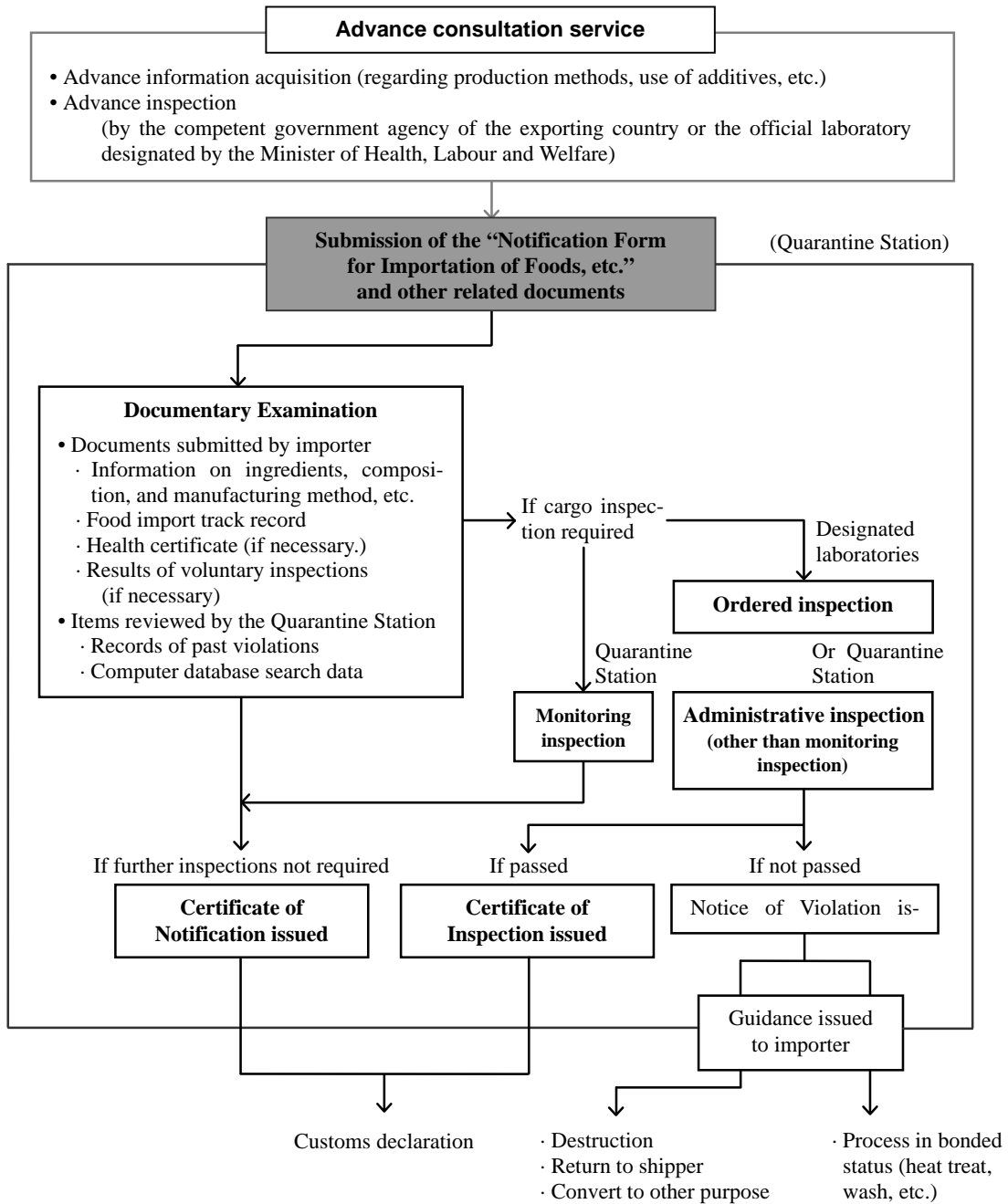


6. Handling of cargo that fails inspection

Instructions will be issued by the Quarantine Station. Please follow those instructions. (see Q16)

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Figure 5 Procedures required under the Food Sanitation Law



* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Q11

What documentation is required under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law?

A : Importers are required to submit the following items of documentation to the Quarantine Station for the port of entry through which they wish to import foods.

1. "Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc."

Two copies of this document are required for foods being imported into Japan, listing the product name, the country of origin, the ingredients, food additives, and the method of manufacture or processing. Please refer to Q12 for the content of the form and how to complete it.

<Simultaneous notification for multiple product items>

Importers wishing to submit import notification simultaneously for multiple product items can combine the upper part of the form that are common to all products and the lower parts that are reserved for separate items to submit notification of up to seven product items on the same occasion.

2. Supplemental Documentation

Supplemental documents include those stipulated under the Food Sanitation Law, as well as others prescribed in the Notice. Exact documentation differs from one product category to another. Additions or changes may be made at any time to required documentation, so please check with the Quarantine Station.

(1) Meats and meat products

A health certificate issued by the government authority of the exporting country is required for flesh and organs of livestock (cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, and water buffalo) and poultry (chickens, ducks, and turkeys), or products made from these meats (ham, sausage, etc.).

(2) Blowfish (*fugu*)

A health certificate prepared by the competent public agency of the exporting country is required. The certificate must list the scientific name of the species and the location where caught, and it must indicate that it has been processed in a sanitary manner.

(3) Fresh fishery products from areas with cholera outbreaks

These fresh fishery products require a health certificate issued by the competent government agency of the exporting country.

(4) Oysters for raw consumption

A health certificate issued by the competent government agency of the exporting country is required.

(5) First-time importation of processed food

Descriptive material including food content list (listing ingredients, additives, etc.) and manufacturing process chart (indicating the pasteurization temperature and time, etc.)

3. Other Documentation

If the importer appends statements of voluntary inspection results performed in advance by official laboratories designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare or by official laboratories in the exporting country, the cargo may be exempt from corresponding inspections at the Quarantine Station, which will expedite the import procedures. (see Q33)

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Q12

Could you explain how to fill out the “Notification Form for Importation of Food, etc.”?

A : The following page shows a sample of the “Notification Form for Importation of Food, etc.” It consists of two parts: the common items (1) through (18), and the spaces to be completed in (19) through (33).

- (1) Notification receipt number

This space is used by the Quarantine Station, and should be left blank.

- (2) Classification of notification

Circle the appropriate item if the food being imported is the subject of prior notification import or planned import. (see Q30 – Q32)

- (3) Code of importer

If the importer has a corresponding importer code in the Japan Exporter-Importer Standard Code Table published by the Japan Association for Simplification of International Trade Procedures, that code should be entered. Otherwise, enter “99999.”

- (5) Name and code of country of production

- (6) Name, address and code of manufacturer

- (12) Name and code of warehouse

- (21) Item code

- (25) Usage and its code

- (26) Kind of package and its code

- (31) Ingredients or raw materials and their codes

- (32) Food additives and their codes

- (33) Method of manufacturing or processing and its code

- (8) Name and code of port of loading

- (10) Name and code of port of discharge

Enter the code from UN LOCOD table.

- (17) Accident, and if any, its brief explanation

Circle “Yes” if the cargo has any unpleasant odors, mold, or broken containers that degrade or may degrade product quality. Indicate the reason for the accident, the condition of the cargo, and the quantity affected.

- (20) Continuous import

Circle “Y” if there are valid test result statements available. Indicate if the test result statements are appended, or enter the notification receipt number issued at the time of the inspection in the Remarks space. (see Q29)

- (22) Description of article

Do not enter the brand name, but rather a generally-used name that readily identifies the article.

- (27) Registration number 1

If the article is registered under the pre-certification system for imported foods, enter the registration number. (see Q37)

- (28) Registration number 2

If the item is registered under the item registration system, enter the registration number. (see Q36)

- (29) Registration number 3

If the item is registered under the imported food safety information registration program of the Association for the Safety of Imported Food, Japan, enter that number. (see Q38)

- (30) Sanitary certificate number

Enter the sanitary certificate number for any meat or meat product requiring a sanitary certificate issued by the competent government agency of the exporting country.

Enter code numbers specified by the “Code Table Related to the Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” published by the Japan Food Hygiene Association. Code numbers need not be entered when the submission occurs in writing, but if they are present, they will be stored in the data processing system at the Quarantine Station and will be used as reference data for documentary examinations on the occasion of subsequent notifications, which simplifies and expedites examinations.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.

Name and address of importer
(Telephone number)

- (1) Notification receipt number
- (2) Classification of notification: Prior notification / Planned import
- (3) Code of importer
- (4) Registration number of importer responsible for food sanitation
- (5) Name and code of country of production
- (6) Name, address and code of manufacturer
- (7) Name, address and code of manufacturing factory
- (8) Name and code of port of loading
- (9) Date of loading: Year / Month / Day
- (10) Name and code of port of discharge
- (11) Date of arrival: Year / Month / Day
- (12) Name and code of warehouse
- (13) Date of storage: Year / Month / Day
- (14) Date of notification: Year / Month / Day
- (15) Marks and numbers of cargo
- (16) Ship name or flight number of aircraft
- (17) Accident, and if any, its brief explanation
- (18) Name and code of submitter
- (19) Classification of cargo: Food / Food additives / Apparatus / Container-packages / Toy
- (20) Continuous import: Yes / No
- (21) Item code
- (22) Description of article
- (23) Shipped volume (number of units)
- (24) Shipped volume (weight)
- (25) Usage and its code
- (26) Kind of package and its code
- (27) Registration number 1
- (28) Registration number 2
- (29) Registration number 3
- (30) Sanitary certificate number
- (31) If the cargo includes processed food, describe its ingredients and their codes.
If the cargo includes apparatuses, container/packages or toys, describe the raw materials and their codes.
- (32) If the cargo includes food with additives, describe the names and codes of additives.
If the cargo includes manufacturing agents in the additives, describe the names and codes of additives.
(Additives used as flavoring agents are excluded for either case.)
- (33) If the cargo includes processed food, describe the method of manufacturing or processing, and its code
- (34) Remarks

Stamp for receiving notification (Submitted)

<Notes>

- Do not fill in the column (1).
- When article in the cargo includes food additives that are generally supplied in food or drink and regulated by the relevant statutes, describe the names of substances used. When the article includes manufacturing agents in the additives, excluding flavoring agents or food additives that are generally supplied in food or drink, write the names of the agents.

The seal of importers can be substituted by a signature of importer.

Q13

Where should the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” be submitted?

A : The importer must submit all documentation to the Quarantine Station with authority over the port of entry through which food is being imported. For example, at Narita Airport, importers usually complete import procedures at the Narita Airport Quarantine Station (See Note).

Note: For example, if the cargo is transported in bonded status from Narita Airport to bonded warehouse in an area under the authority of the Tokyo Quarantine Station, the procedures are completed not at the Narita Airport Quarantine Station, but rather at the Tokyo Quarantine Station.

Procedure documentation is accepted at the times listed below at the various quarantine stations.

- Narita Airport Quarantine Station

Everyday 8:30 - 21:00

- Kansai Airport Quarantine Station

Everyday 8:30 - 21:00

(Delayed arrival cargo can be handled at any time of the day or night for temporary inspection if the Quarantine Station is contacted during normal business hours with a request to do so.)

- Fukuoka Airport Quarantine Branch

Normal business days 8:30 - 17:00 (until 20:00, fresh foods cargo only)

Saturdays and holidays 8:30 - 17:00 (fresh foods cargo only)

- Nagoya Airport Quarantine Branch

Normal business days 8:30 - 20:00

Saturdays and holidays 10:00 - 20:00

- Quarantine Stations other than the above

Normal business days 8:30 - 17:00 (except year-end and New Year's holiday)

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Q14

Who performs the procedures under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law?

A : It is common to hire a customs broker to fill out the import notification form, provide all necessary information, and submit all required documentation. (see Q102)

Using a customs broker is convenient if the importer is unaccustomed to acquiring the notification form and checking all the codes that must be entered on the form, or if the importer is located far away from the port of entry. Customs brokers charge a fee for their services.

Of course, the importer can go directly to the Quarantine Station and present all the documentation, or can send the documentation by mail. In the latter case, the importer can submit all required documentation as described above along with return postage. Sometimes if a question arises, the Quarantine Station will contact the importer by telephone, so it is advisable to put down the name of a contact person in the remarks space.

In addition, a computer-based paperless import procedure processing system is now available. For more information, please refer to Q39.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

SHORT MEMO

It is common to hire a customs broker to handle routine procedures as described heretofore. However, there are some people who want to do it themselves despite the time and energy involved.

Customs brokers purchase large supplies of the import notification forms. There are only a limited number of locations where the forms are on sale to individuals. You can try contacting the company where the forms are printed (Toyo Shingo Tsushinsha, Ltd., TEL: 045-662-1002) or the Customs Brokers Associations listed in Q102.

You can purchase as little as a single copy of the form, and the cost is ¥10 - 30 per copy.

Q15

What types of documentary examinations and cargo inspections are performed under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law?

A : After the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” is submitted, first it is examined to make sure all the items that need to be filled out (such as the exporting country, manufacturer, ingredients, food additives, and processing method). Next a check is done to determine whether the articles conform to specifications and standards established under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law.

A determination is made based on the results of this documentary examination whether or not a cargo inspection is required. The following instances result in such a determination.

1. An incident has occurred in transit that undermines or threatens to undermine the safety and health of the food.
2. The food is being imported into Japan for the very first time.
3. Similar foods have been associated with food sanitation violations in the past.
4. The food was exported from Japan and has been returned from the destination country due to health or sanitation related problems.
5. The food has been designated by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare as a target for ordered inspection.
6. The food is determined to require cargo inspection for some other reason.

(1) Ordered Inspections

If foods or related products with a high probability of the Food Sanitation Law violation are involved, the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare may order the importer to undergo the inspection. In this instance, the importer will be presented with an official inspection order statement. The importer is responsible for the cost of performing the inspection at either an official laboratory designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare or a competent official laboratory in the exporting country and for storing the cargo at a bonded area until a determination is made as to legality. The foods subject to inspection are stipulated by Cabinet Order, and details regarding specific product categories to be inspected are determined each fiscal year.

(2) Monitoring Inspections

For the foods that there is not a strong suspicion of a violation of the Food Sanitation Law, food sanitation inspectors at the Quarantine Station conduct monitoring checks for sanitary conditions such as residual agricultural chemicals and veterinary pharmaceuticals in foods, based on the annual plan for each product category. In this instance, the importer may proceed with the procedural process without waiting for the inspection results. However, if the monitoring inspection happens to reveal a violation of the Food Sanitation Law, the importer and purchaser may receive administrative guidance thereafter regarding how to deal with the situation.

(3) Other Administrative Inspections

If there is a concern that an incident occurred in transit that created a health-related problem, the food sanitation inspector will go to the bonded warehouse or container yard to inspect the conditions of storage, the composition of the lot, the foreign language labeling on the container or packaging, and to check for any abnormal colors or odors. In addition, depending on the circumstances, the inspector may collect samples and conduct analyses and inspections at the laboratory of Quarantine Station or National Institute of Health Sciences for microorganisms, additives, toxic and harmful substances, composition specifications, and residual agricultural chemicals.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Q16

What happens to cargo that fails inspection?

A : If cargo is determined to be out of compliance with requirements of the Food Sanitation Law and, therefore, unqualified to be brought into Japan, the Quarantine Station notifies the importer of the nature of the violation and instructs the importer what steps to take with the cargo.

The importer must then take one of the following steps as instructed in the notification.

- 1 Return the cargo to the shipper, or dispose of it
2. Process in bonded status

In some cases, cargo can be brought into compliance by having it heat treated, washed, or otherwise processed. In this instance, the cargo is subjected to sanitary processing in bonded status, and if it is brought into compliance as a result, the cargo may be imported into Japan.

3. Convert to non-food use

Some cargo may still be imported into Japan if it is converted to a non-food use (as animal feed, fertilizer, etc.).

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

SHORT MEMO

According to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, of the total number of import notifications filed in 2000 (about 1.55 million), approximately 112,000 were determined to require inspection, an inspection rate of 7.2%.

In addition, 1,037 of those inspections resulted in a finding of disqualification for import, which means that the failure rate was only 0.07% of the total import notifications.

Nevertheless, if a cargo is disqualified, not only does the importer lose any payments made to the exporter, but also incurs further losses of shipping costs, storage fees, and disposal fees, the economic impact of which is considerable.

Furthermore, failing inspection not only damages the image of the product but also has a negative impact on the image of imported foods as a whole. In order to make sure your shipment does not fail inspection, importers need to gather information in advance, obtain samples for voluntary inspection, and take other measures as part of a complete effort to avoid disqualification.

Q17

Are Food Sanitation Law procedures required even when a food is being imported for use as an ingredient?

A : In principle, all stipulated procedures, including filling of the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” are required even when the food is to be used as an ingredient in manufacturing.

However, the following foods are exempt from import notification requirements when used as manufacturing ingredients.

- Salt (unrefined)
- Copra
- Animal or vegetable fats and oils for processing edible fats and oils
- Crude alcohol
- Crude sugar
- Molasses
- Malt
- Hops

Note that manufacturing ingredients for food additives do not require filing of the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.”

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

SHORT MEMO

Hops are male and female varieties of herbs that belong to the mulberry family, the unfertilized female flowers of which are used in beer brewing. Hops add a distinctive fragrance and a refreshing bitter taste to beer while also inhibiting the replication of bacteria and improving the foaming quality of beer. Thus, hops are a distinctive ingredient of beer that perform important functional roles.

Growing areas for hops are located between the latitudes of 35 - 55 degrees. In Japan hops are cultivated in cool climate areas such as the northeastern region of Honshu and in Nagano Prefecture.

At the present time, about 80% of all hops used in beer brewing are imported from Germany, the Czech Republic and other countries.

Excerpted from The Encyclopedia of Beer (published by the Beer Brewers Association)

Q18

Is packaging for foods also subject to inspection?

A : “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” contains a space for “kind of package” to be filled out, but there are no special procedures of inspections that apply to container-packages (articles in which foods are contained or packaged and are to be offered when the foods are delivered to others).

However, when food container-packages are imported empty, they are subject to procedures mandated by the Food Sanitation Law (standards compliance inspection, filing of the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” and others).

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

SHORT MEMO

As is apparent from the above, Food Sanitation Law procedures do not apply only to foods. The same import procedures and inspection requirements also apply to knives and other cooking utensils, tableware, and to specified toys (items that pose a potential threat to the health of infants and young children when put in the mouth). (See Q9)

Japan imports a wide variety of porcelain tableware from all over the world. Porcelain tableware and containers sometimes use coloring agents during manufacturing, and if these coloring agents are not approved for use with foods under Japanese standards, the products cannot be imported into Japan. Importers need to be aware of this. However, if glazing or some other method of fixing the color to glass or enamel is used that eliminates the threat of having the coloring agent mix with the food, or if the coloring agent is processed so that it will not dissolve into the food, then the product can be approved for import into Japan.

Q19

Is a notification required even when the same food is already imported by another company?

A : The stipulated procedures must be followed when a different importer is involved. The manufacturing method must be examined, and the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” must be correctly filled out and submitted. It is impossible to verify that the manufacturing processes of the food being imported by two different companies is the same without investigating the processes.

If it is possible to verify that exactly the same food is involved, you can anticipate that the procedures can be completed more quickly. However, even when it is the same brand made by the same manufacturer, sometimes there are differences in the mixture proportions, amount of food additives, and the manufacturing methods for products intended for domestic distribution and for export. In addition, manufacturers can have multiple factories in different locations and even different countries. In such cases, the items are not considered to be completely identical foods. (see Q32)

There have been some cases in the past where products believed to be identical had to be returned to the shipper because unauthorized additives were detected. Even when you are importing the very same brand of food from the very same manufacturer as another company, your company needs to verify independently the safety of the product before you try to import it.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

SHORT MEMO

The same brand of food is not always made in the same place or imported through the same channel. For example, one well-known brand of American beer encompasses the following different methods of manufacture and distribution.

1. Manufactured at an American plant and imported through a Japanese import agent. (imported products)
2. Manufactured at an American plant, exported to a country other than Japan, and then imported into Japan. (parallel imported products)
3. American manufacturer outsources production to a Japanese production facility, and the product is manufactured in Japan. (domestic products)

Q20

Is a notification required if the food is being imported on a sample basis?

A : All foods being imported for sale or some other commercial or sales-related purpose require the filing of the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” Small volume imports (including samples) are not exempt from this requirement.

However, if a food is being imported “for internal company consideration,” and it is clear that the food is being used to decide whether or not to import the product in the future, inasmuch as it is not considered as being used for sale or other commercial purposes, there is no need to file the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” Nevertheless, depending on the quantity involved and the type of product, Customs may demand a memorandum or other document to the effect that the item is a sample being used only for “internal company consideration.”

In addition, a food being imported “for testing and research use” that will be used purely for testing and research in a laboratory or research facility also does not require an import notification inasmuch as it is not considered as being used for sale or other commercial purposes. Depending on the quantity involved and the type of product, however, Customs may demand a memorandum or other document to the effect that the item is being used for “testing and research use” and not for sale or other commercial uses.

SHORT MEMO

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) is a sanitation control methodology developed by NASA (the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration) during the Apollo Project to enhance the safety of food in outer space. Past sanitation control has relied mostly on inspections of the finished. In contrast, HACCP seeks to forecast food safety hazards and to identify and prioritize for control purposes manufacturing processes that are capable of controlling those hazards, as critical control points. By so doing, HACCP seeks to prevent the occurrence of hazards throughout all food manufacturing and processing processes, and thereby to assure the safety of foods.

This method has been adopted by the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Latin, meaning Food Law or Code, which has formulated the joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Program) as the basis for guidelines for a common international system for food safety management. Its adoption is being promoted in the United States and Europe in particular. When Japan amended the Food Sanitation Law in 1995, it established a certification program for “comprehensive sanitation-controlled manufacturing processes.”

A:**< For foods in general >**

If the food is being imported only to exhibit at a trade fair, and will not be sold nor become the subject of a sales contract, then the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” is not required. Depending on the quantity involved and the type of product, however, Customs may demand a memorandum or other document to the effect that the item is being used “for exhibition at a trade fair.”

Foods imported for exhibition at a trade fair may not be distributed free of charge at the fair. If the products are to be distributed to unspecified number of the general public, even free of charge, then all the import procedures under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law must be followed, including submitting the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.,” in order to verify the safety of the food. In this instance, however, the obligation for labeling at the time of sale as stipulated by the Food Sanitation Law and the JAS Law does not apply.

In addition, if the food is to be handed out on the street or elsewhere as part of a sales promotion, this is interpreted as a form of distribution to unspecified number of the general public. Therefore, all the import procedures under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law must be followed, including submitting the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.,” in order to verify the safety of the product. The obligation for labeling at the time of sale as stipulated by the Food Sanitation Law and the JAS Law does not apply, however.

< For alcoholic beverages >

If wine, whiskey, or other alcoholic beverages are being imported to exhibit at a trade fair, a domestic liquor retailer’s license must be obtained under provisions of the Liquor Tax Law (see Q64). In this instance, it is preferable to have a liquor retailer who already possesses a liquor retailer’s license participate in the trade fair and sell the product.

However, license holders are restricted in who may sell the alcoholic beverages and where it may be sold under terms of their liquor retailer’s licenses. Accordingly, the license holder must apply to the Taxation Office with jurisdiction over the trade fair venue for temporary permission to sell at a location other than the license holder’s regular store.

Holders of an imported liquor wholesaler’s license are authorized only to make wholesale of imported alcoholic beverages, not retail sales. Careful attention to the distinction is required.

SHORT MEMO

In the category of nuts, virtually all almonds are imported from California in the United States. Almonds are popular in Japan as a snack item with Western-style alcoholic beverages, and are also widely used in powdered form as an ingredient in confections. Somewhat less common uses of almond oils are as soap, shampoo, and nutritional cream.

Q22

Is a notification required if someone imports foods as an individual?

A : The Food Sanitation Law requires that an import notification be submitted whenever foods are imported for the purpose of sale or other commercial use. Therefore, individuals who are importing foods for their own consumption or for consumption by their own families need not file the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” However, individual importers thereby become personally responsible for any safety or health problems that may arise, and thus should exercise caution.

If foods have been imported for personal consumption, it is not permitted to sell those products to others. It is also not permitted to distribute such foods indiscriminately or to unspecified number of the general public at no charge. In such instances, an import notification is required. In addition, if someone imports a food to serve at a restaurant that one owns or operates, that is considered a form of commercial use even if the food was imported individually. This circumstance is subject to regulation under the Food Sanitation Law, and an import notification is required. (As described in Q21, in order to import and sell alcoholic beverages, either an imported liquor wholesaler’s license or a liquor retailer’s license is required under provisions of the Liquor Tax Law. However, if someone imports alcoholic beverages only to serve at a restaurant that one owns or operates, such license is not required.)

Individual importers should also be aware that meat products such as ham and sausage are items subject to animal quarantine (designated quarantine goods) under provisions of the Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control Law, and must undergo the same animal quarantine procedures as products imported for sale, even if imported for personal consumption. Also, agricultural products must undergo plant quarantine as required by the Plant Protection Law, but fresh fishery products do not require filing of the import notification for cholera quarantine.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

SHORT MEMO

Imported frozen shrimp are sometimes covered with a thick layer of ice, which results in a deceptively high weight. There is a reason why this happens. Even inside the freezer, the surface of the shrimp can dry out, become discolored, or otherwise deteriorate in quality, and the flavor can degrade as a result. To keep this from happening, the shrimp is sprayed with freezing (salt) water so that the surface of the shrimp is covered and thus kept free from direct contact with the air. This method is referred to as “ice-coating” or “glazing.” Recently a technique of wrapping the shrimp in film has come into use in place of glazing.

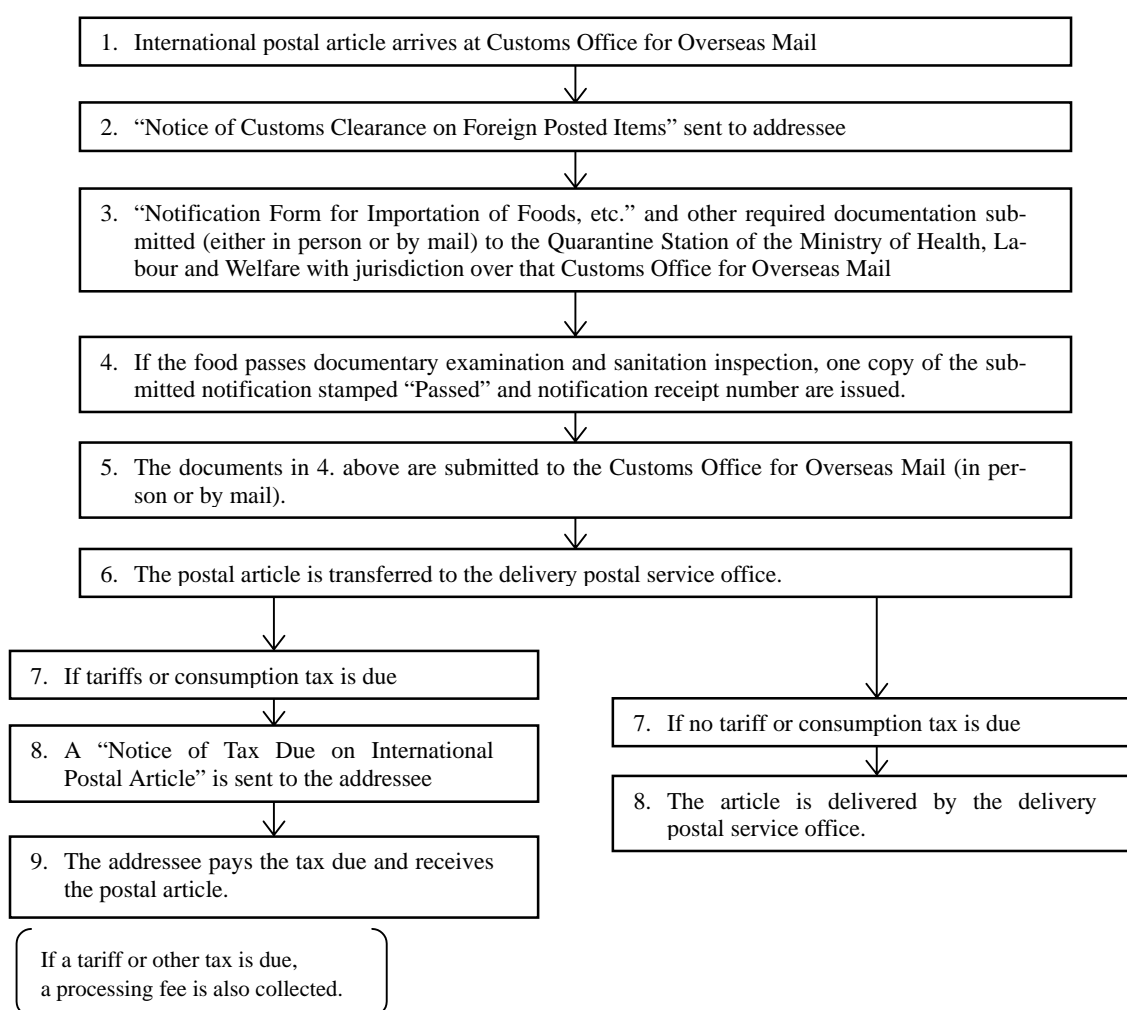
Excerpted from “Food and Life Q&A from the Consumer’s Room of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries”

Q23

Could you explain what procedures are required when importing foods by overseas mail?

A : Foods imported by overseas mail are subject to the same procedural requirements as foods imported through other avenues. Postal articles sent from foreign countries are temporally stored at post offices that handle overseas mail. These post offices have customs facilities within their offices. A postcard is sent informing the addressee that a postal article has arrived from a foreign country requiring customs procedures (i.e., arrival notification). The procedural process is shown in Figure 6 below.

Figure 6 Procedures Required for Articles Imported by Overseas Mail
(under the Food Sanitation Law)



Foods subject to legal regulation under provisions of the Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control Law or the Plant Protection Law in addition to the Food Sanitation Law must undergo animal or plant quarantine inspection prior to step 2. in the sequence shown above. (see Q4)

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)
Customs Office for Overseas Mail (Table 3)

Table 3 Customs Offices for Overseas Mail

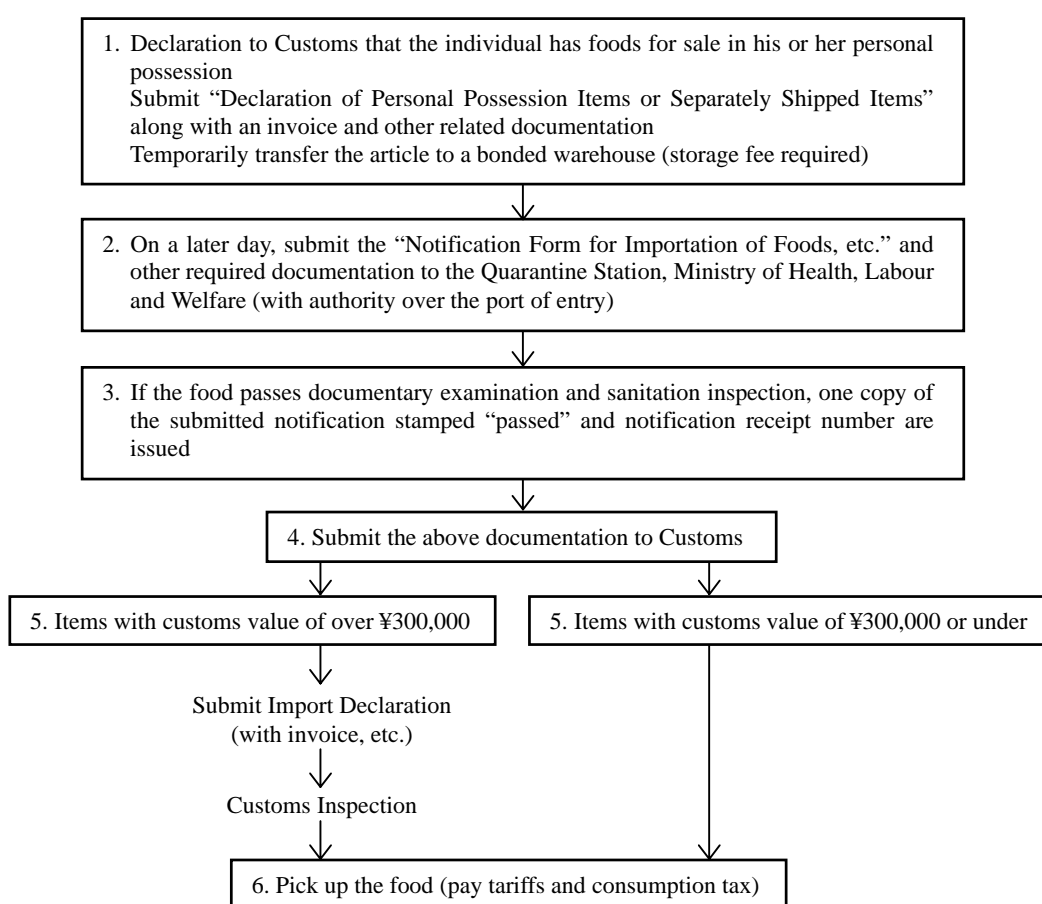
Name	Address	TEL No.
Tokyo Branch, Customs Office for Overseas Mail, Tokyo Customs	c/o Tokyo International Post Office, 2-3-3 Otemachi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-3131	03-3241-6652
Kawasaki Branch, Customs Office for Overseas Mail, Yokohama Customs	c/o Kawasaki Port Post Office, 1-3 Minamiwatarida-cho Kawasaki-ku, Kawasaki 210-0899	044-366-7766
Kobe Branch, Customs Office for Overseas Mail, Kobe Customs	c/o Kobe Central Post Office, 6-2-1 Sakaemachi-dori, Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-8799	078-361-3702
Osaka Branch, Customs Office for Overseas Mail, Osaka Customs	c/o Osaka International Post Office, 1 Senshu-Kuko-Minami, Sennan City, Osaka 549-8799	0724-55-1850 - 2
Nagoya Branch, Customs Office for Overseas Mail, Nagoya Customs	c/o Nagoya Central Post Office, 1-1-1 Tenjinyama-cho, Nishi-ku, Nagoya 451-8799	052-529-3121
Hakata Branch, Customs Office for Overseas Mail, Hakata Branch Customs, Moji Customs	c/o Hakata Post Office, 8-1 Hakataeki Chuo-gai, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka 812-8799	092-431-7515
Naha Branch, Customs Office for Overseas Mail, Okinawa Regional Customs	c/o Naha Central Post Office, 50 Tsubokawa, Naha City, Okinawa 900-0025	098-854-8292

Q24

Could you explain what procedures are required for foods imported in personal possession?

A : All foods imported for sale are subject to the same food regulatory requirements under the laws regardless of the quantity involved or the method of importation. The general sequence of procedures is as shown in the figure below. The process takes considerably more time when foods are imported for sale in the personal possession of the importer than it does for items in the personal possession of ordinary tourists.

Figure 7 Procedures Required for Foods Imported in Personal Possession
(under the Food Sanitation Law)



Foods subject to legal regulation under provisions of the Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control Law or the Plant Protection Law in addition to the Food Sanitation Law must undergo animal or plant quarantine inspection prior to step 2 (see Q4). Depending on the product category and the country of origin, if an item is subject to provisions of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law, if an item needs a certificate of country of origin in order to be eligible for Preferential tariff rates, or if a product that is the subject of a purchase contract is being brought into Japan partly in the personal possession of the importer, the importation process may be more difficult, and may take more time.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)
Customs Counselors Office (Q62)

2) Specifications and Standards based on the Food Sanitation Law

Q25

What sorts of specifications and standards have been defined under the Food Sanitation Law?

A : The Food Sanitation Law defines the following specifications and standards generally for all foods, and foods that fail to comply with these specifications and standards may not be imported into Japan. In addition, certain specific food items (Table 4) and additives are subject to separate requirements regarding specifications of composition, bacteria count, coliform group count, preservation temperature, processing or manufacturing methods, etc. The Ministerial Ordinance Concerning Compositional Standards, etc. for Milk and Dairy Products and the Specifications and Standards for Food and Food Additives, etc. is stipulated as specifications and standards on milk and dairy products.

1. Specifications of composition for foods in general

- (1) Foods shall not contain any antibiotics (except in separately defined circumstances).
- (2) Meat, poultry eggs, fish or shellfish shall not contain any chemically synthesized antibiotic substances (except for those items listed by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare as additives posing no threat to human health).
- (3) If a food consists wholly or partly of any organism created using recombinant DNA techniques, or if it contains wholly or partly any such organism, the food must explicitly state that it has undergone safety review stipulated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.
- (4) If a food was manufactured using a microorganism created using recombinant DNA techniques, or contains such a substance, the food must explicitly state that it has undergone safety review stipulated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.
- (5) Specific foods for good health must undergo safety and effectiveness review procedures stipulated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare.

2. Standards for manufacturing, processing, and preparation of foods in general (exerted)

- (1) Foods shall not be irradiated during manufacturing or processing (except when, for the purpose of manufacturing or processing process control, the food absorption line emits 0.10 gray or less of radiation, or when other separately defined circumstances apply).
- (2) Foods made from raw cow's milk or raw goat's milk shall be either heat pasteurized to a temperature of 62 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes, or be subjected to another heat pasteurization method with the same or equivalent effectiveness. Milk added to foods or used in food preparation must be cow's milk, special cow's milk, pasteurized goat's milk, partially skimmed milk, skim milk, or processed milk.
- (3) When blood, blood cell, or blood plasma (only of livestock) is used in the manufacture, processing, or preparation of foods, the food must be heat pasteurized to a temperature of 63 degrees Celsius for 30 minutes, or be subjected to another heat pasteurization method with the same or equivalent effectiveness.

3. Preservation standards for foods in general

- (1) When preserving a food by direct contact with ice, ice shall be used that shows a negative response to the coliform group (the testing method for detecting coliform group is also defined).
- (2) Antibiotics shall not be used in food preservation.
- (3) Foods shall not be irradiated for the purpose of preservation.

Table 4 Foods with Separate Defined Standards

1. Soft drinks	2. Powdered soft drinks	3. Ice	4. Flavored ices
5. Meat and whale meat (except frozen whale meat for raw consumption)			6. Poultry eggs
7. Blood, blood cell, and blood plasma		8. Meat products	9. Whale meat products
10. Fishery products (except oysters for raw consumption)	11. Oysters for raw consumption	12. Fish paste products	
13. Salmon roe (<i>ikura</i> , <i>sujiko</i>) and cod roe (<i>tarako</i>)	14. Boiled octopus	15. Boiled crab	
16. Agar-agar	17. Cereal grains, beans, fruit, vegetables, seeds, tea, and hops		
18. Bean jam for further processing	19. Soybean curd (<i>tofu</i>)	20. Instant noodles	21. Frozen foods
22. Container packaged pressure-heat pasteurized foods	23. Confectionary processed with fats and oil		

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)
Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)

A : The Food Sanitation Law defines a food additive as a “substance to be used in or on food, in the process of the manufacturing food or for the purpose of the processing or preserving of food, by adding, mixing, infiltrating, or other means.” Food additives are subject to regulation as described below.

1. Definition of food additives

The Food Sanitation Law specifies and lists food additives that pose no threat to human health given the culinary habits of the Japanese people. Food additives that do not appear on the list may not be used in foods, and therefore, foods that contain these additives may not be imported into Japan. In the past only chemically synthesized additives were subject to these standards, and separate measures were taken to prohibit the usage of natural additives that were discovered to have toxic properties. However, in 1995 the Law was amended to provide for an official publicly listed “Registry of Existing Natural Additives” containing the names of natural additives with existing usage history and verified safety (a total of 489 substances). Consequently, as of May 24, 1996, both chemically synthesized and natural additives must appear on the list in order to be imported or used in imported foods. In order to import a natural additive or a food that contains the additive that does not appear on the list, you must apply to the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare for approval of said additive. In general, substances generally provided as food and used as food additives (such as strawberry juice) and natural flavorings (such as vanilla flavoring and crab flavoring) are exempt from the approval requirement, and thus may be used as food additives.

Table 5 Food Additives to be used in Japan

(As of Feb. 2002)

• Designated additives (338 substances)	Stipulated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare based on Article 6 of the Food Sanitation Law and listed in Table 2 of the Enforcement Regulations for the Food Sanitation Law.
• Existing additives (489 substances)	The Food Sanitation Law was amended in 1995, and the amended Law expanded the definition of additives to include natural additives as well as chemically synthesized additives. Additives that were already in use in Japan at the time and that had a lengthy history of safe use in food were granted a special exception to Article 6 of the Law, and were authorized for continued use and sale. These existing additives are listed in the Registry of Existing Additives.
• Natural flavoring (about 600 substances)	Natural flavorings are natural substances obtained from plant or animal and used to add flavor to foods. Normally they are used only in very small quantities (such as vanilla flavoring and crab flavoring).
• General food additives (about 100 substances)	General food additives are additives that may be used with any and all foods or beverages (such as strawberry juice and green tea).

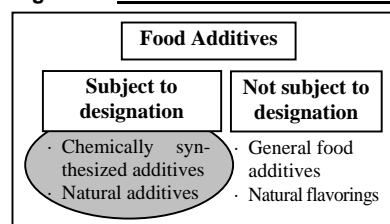
2. Food additive specification and usage standards

Many additives are subject to specifications of composition and usage standards (limits on the foods to be used, maximum quantity limits, purpose limits, etc.). Foods that contain additives in excess of permissible quantities under usage standards also may not be imported into Japan.

Some food additives that are legal in the exporting country are not permitted in Japan due to differences in culinary culture and culinary customs. In addition, some exporting countries use the same name as Japan for certain additives that in fact are not the same.

Foods containing additives that are not permitted in Japan must either be returned to the shipper or destroyed. Therefore, importers need to make sure before they import the food that it conforms to standards under the Food Sanitation Law.

Figure 8 Definition of Food Additives



Note: Japan’s food additive standards are published in the “Official Food Additive Definitions.”

3. Labeling for food additive

In principle, all additives used in food are subject to labeling requirements. (see Q71)

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)
 Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)
 Japan Food Additives Association (TEL: 03-3667-8311) <http://www.jafa.gr.jp>

A : The Food Sanitation Law includes as part of its food standards a “Standard for Residual Agricultural Chemicals,” defining permissible limits on levels of agricultural chemical residue. Levels are set separately for each chemical and each agricultural product. The regulation applies not only to domestic but also to imported agricultural products. The Law prohibits the importation and sale of agricultural products that do not conform to the standard.

The Food Sanitation Law adopts as its reference point for setting residual agricultural chemical standards as the level that does not exceed ADI (acceptable daily intake). These levels are calculated from long-term toxicity testing on experimental animals, and represent the levels of intake that a person can have every day over a lifetime without risk to his or her health. In general, the Law specifies a level 1/100th of the maximum level that produces no side effects in experimental animals. In other words, since intake levels posit a maximum possible value, the standard value is set at a far more strict level.

The calculations are performed under the following assumptions.

- The agricultural chemicals are applied to the entire crop for which a standard is defined.
- The standard value level is residually present in the entire crop to which the agricultural chemical is applied.
- Any reduction in residual agricultural chemical level due to cleansing or preparation processing is disregarded.

As of October 2001, more than 8,500 standards were in existence for 217 agricultural chemicals applied to some 130 agricultural products.

In March of 2003 levels of agricultural chemicals exceeding the content standard for fresh vegetables were detected in frozen vegetables from China. This led to a tightening of the imported vegetable inspection program. Residual agricultural chemical standards apply in principle to fresh, unprocessed agricultural products. However, they have been extended to include processed vegetables that are subjected to simple processes such as blanching or salt water boiling. Accordingly, prospective importers need to find out in advance, before the article is shipped from the exporting country, about usage standards and inspection programs for agricultural chemicals in Japan.

SHORT MEMO

Japanese agriculture generally uses the “pre-harvest” method, in which agricultural chemicals are applied prior to harvesting the crops. Some countries, however, permit the use of agricultural chemicals after harvesting in order to prevent insect pests and mold growth, and to maintain product quality (referred to as the “post-harvest” method).

In Japan it is sometimes said that there is worry over residual post-harvest agricultural chemicals in imported agricultural products. However, residual levels are affected by the concentration of chemicals used, the time from application to consumption, storage conditions, and other factors, and it is not fair to say as a generality that post-harvest residual levels are higher than pre-harvest levels.

A : Antibiotics, chemically synthesized antibiotic substances, insect pesticides and other compounds are sometimes used at the feeding or cultivation stage to treat or prevent illness in livestock (ducks, beef cattle, horses, deer, turkeys, sheep, hogs, chickens, dairy cattle, and fowl eggs) and fish used in fish farming. These chemical compounds are referred to as veterinary pharmaceuticals. Different compounds are used for these purposes in different countries. For example, in the United States and elsewhere, hormones are used to accelerate the fattening process in cattle. However, hormones are not used in Japan or the EU.

Japan's food additive standards (see Q25) stipulate with regard to veterinary pharmaceuticals in foods that "foods must not contain any antibiotics" and that "meat, poultry eggs, fish or shellfish must not contain any chemically synthesized antibiotic substances."

Thus, the Law includes a blanket proscription on residual antibiotics, etc. However, there is a need to maintain consistency with international practices and regulations, although not all substances have had their safety scientifically evaluated. Accordingly, Japan has been setting standard values for residual veterinary pharmaceuticals as needed research material becomes available to perform safety evaluations. Importation and sale of livestock, fish and shellfish that does not conform to these standard values is prohibited.

In addition, both domestic and imported livestock and fishery products are subject to monitoring inspections. If these inspections disclose a level of veterinary pharmaceuticals exceeding the standard value, the violating cargo is subject to recovery, return or destruction measures. Accordingly, prospective importers need to find out in advance, before the cargo is shipped from the exporting country, about usage standards and inspection programs for veterinary pharmaceuticals in Japan.

3) Programs and Methods to Expedite and Simplify Import Procedure

Q29

What ways are there to expedite the import procedural process?

A : First of all, it is important to import foods that comply with specifications and standards defined under the Food Sanitation Law. In addition, the following systems are in effect for various product categories to expedite the import procedural process. For more complete information about the requirements and methods for utilizing these systems, please refer to the respective questions herein, and check with the specified contacts to make sure.

Table 6 Systems for Expediting and Simplifying the Import Procedural Process

Systems	Outlines	
Prior Notification System	It is possible to submit the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” in advance of cargo arrival. After an advance documentary examination, if no inspection is required and if no incidents occur in transit, a certificate of notification can be issued quickly.	Q 30
Planned Import System	When a certain kind of food is repeatedly imported, if the importer can submit an import plan statement on the occasion of the initial import, and if no problems come up, the importer may be exempt from import notifications at each subsequent case of importation within a certain period of time (eligibility limited to specific food items).	Q 31 Q 32
Acceptance of Voluntary Inspection Result System	When the food has been voluntarily inspected in advance for specifications and standards compliance testing by an official laboratory designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, and if the inspection result statement is appended to the import notification, the cargo is exempt from corresponding inspections at the Quarantine Station in Japan.	Q 33
Acceptance of Inspection Results from Foreign Official Laboratories	If the food has been inspected by an official laboratory in the exporting country, and the inspection result statement is appended to the import notification, the cargo is exempt from corresponding inspections at the Quarantine Station in Japan.	Q 34
Continuous Import System of Same Items	When the same foods and related products are repeatedly imported, if inspection result statement by an official laboratory in either Japan or the exporting country is presented on the occasion of the initial import and no problem is found, corresponding inspections at each subsequent import can be waived within a certain period of time.	Q 35
Item Registration System	If the same foods are repeatedly imported, the importer may submit an item registration request form on the occasion of the initial import. Once the ingredients, manufacturing method, and food additives, etc. have been registered, for a period of one year, the importers need only list this registration number on the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.,” allowing a certificate of notification to be issued more quickly.	Q 36
Advance Confirmation System for Imported Foods and Related Products	If a manufacturer in the exporting country files an application for advance confirmation with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare via a government authority of the exporting country, the manufacturer can register ingredients, manufacturing methods, and additives, etc. in advance, and for a period of three years thereafter the importers need only list this registration number on the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” instead of exhaustively listing all those items as normally required. This makes it possible to be issued a certificate of notification more quickly.	Q 37
Imported Food Safety Information Registration System	Once a food has been registered with the imported food safety information registration system by the Association for the Safety of Imported Food, Japan, importers may omit, for a certain period of time, the normally required supplemental documentation at each subsequent import.	Q 38
Computer-based Notification	Importers who install designated software on their computer systems can make use of a paperless import notification and inspection notification system by connecting on-line with the Quarantine Station and designated official laboratories.	Q 39

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Q30

Is it possible to have the documentary examination carried out before the cargo arrives?

A : The import notification can be filed at any time beginning seven days prior to the arrival of the cargo (this is referred to as the Prior Notification System).

You should submit the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” and any other required documents to the Imported Foods Inspection Section of the Quarantine Station with authority over the port of entry. In this circumstance, you do not need to fill out item (17) on the form, namely, whether or not an accident has occurred in transit.

If it is determined based on the documentary examination that no inspections are required, a certificate of notification can be issued quickly before the arrival of the cargo (or after it is unloaded, if there is some concern about an incident having occurred with the cargo). Then, after the cargo undergoes customs inspection, it can be obtained expeditiously.

After the import notification is filed, if there is any change in the following items, a “Notice of Modification to Items on the Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” must be submitted promptly to the Quarantine Station to which the prior notification was submitted.

- (10) Port of discharge
- (11) Date of arrival
- (12) Name of warehouse
- (13) Date of storage
- (15) Ship name or flight number of aircraft

In addition, if it becomes known that an incident has occurred in transit, the importer may be required as needed to file an Incident Notification. Summary of the incident must be reported to the Quarantine Station immediately after unloading to the warehouse. The importer must follow the instructions issued thereafter by the Quarantine Station.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

A : If you intend to import a certain food or related products repeatedly, by filing an import plan statement at the time of the first import, you can handle all the notifications for an entire year's imports at the same time. For the remainder of that year, you do not need to file an import notification every time you import that product (referred to as the Planned Import System).

However, not all foods and related products are eligible for this system. In addition, the product in question must satisfy all the requirements to be deemed in fact the identical product (see Q32, Table 7).

If you intend to repeatedly import the same food, at the time of the initial importation you should file the following documents.

1. "Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc."

2. An import plan statement over the following year

Your import plan statement must include the description of article, shipped volume (weight), port of discharge, and date of arrival planned for cargo to be imported over the following year.

3. A previous three-year import history report

If you are importing foods described in Q32-2, you will also be required to file a statement of prior import results. Your previous three-year import history report must include the name of importer, shipped volume (weight), port of discharge, and dates of arrival. If you can prove that the item being imported is the identical product, it does not matter if another company did the importation. In principle, however, you or another company must have a history of importing of the product at least four times a year over the previous three years.

If there is no past history of violations, and no problems come up during the documentary examination and cargo inspection, the importer may be exempt from import notifications at each subsequent case of importation over the following year.

At the end of the year, you must list all the importation that took place without import notifications on the planned import achievements annual report, and submit this report to the Quarantine Station.

If an incident occurs (decay due to sea water leakage, etc.) involving cargo during the planned import term, an Incident Notification must be filed with the Quarantine Station immediately after the cargo is unloaded to the warehouse. The importer must follow the instructions issued thereafter by the Quarantine Station.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Q32

What does it mean for a product to be identical and thus eligible for planned import system?

A : There are two requirements that a food must meet in order to be eligible for the planned import system. Both requirements are valid for a period of one year from the day the import notification is submitted.

Requirement 1: The food must be absolutely identical.

<Eligible items> (listed in 1 and 2 of Supplemental Table 6-4, Article 15 of Enforcement Regulations for the Food Sanitation Law)

Barley, wheat, rice, kaoliang, soybeans, sesame seeds, vegetable protein, starches (except tapioca starch), animal fats and oils (except fats and oils from fish or marine mammals), ethyl alcohol, malts (undiluted liquor stored in a barrel for fermentation, except malts of fruit wines), distilled liquor, canned or bottled foods (except meat products and fruit wines), foods (other than meat products) which has been pasteurized by heating under pressure after packed in an airtight container-package and hermetically sealed (except canned or bottled foods), alphanized (pre-processed) rice, *soba* (buckwheat noodles), rye, etc.

Requirement 2: The importer has been importing the identical product since prior to filing a “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.,” and there have been no violations involving the same food in the past three years.

<Eligible items> (listed in 3 of Supplemental Table 6-4, Article 15 of Enforcement Regulations for the Food Sanitation Law)

Table salt, bean jam, temporarily stored fruits and fruit skin, cereal grains, beans or potato powder, boiled beans, noodles, saccharides, seaweed, konjak, fruit juice for use as raw material, tea, cacao beans (except roasted ones), cocoa products (except powdered soft drinks), coffee beans (except roasted ones), roasted or ground coffee beans, chocolate, vegetable creaming powder, fats and oils from fish or marine mammal, vegetable fats and oils, margarine, frozen foods to be heated before consumption, frozen fruits (except those frozen after manufacturing or processing), frozen vegetables (except those frozen after manufacturing or processing), additives other than chemically synthesized compounds, etc.

Table 7 Criteria for Treatment as Identical Products

Products	Criterion
Barley, wheat, rice, soybeans, kaoliang	Produced in the same country
Roasted or ground coffee beans, seaweed, cereal grains, beans or potato powder, frozen fruits, frozen vegetables	Processing factory, ingredients, and processing method are identical.
Other foods	Manufacturing factory, ingredients, manufacturing method are identical.

Consequently, wheat and soybeans from the same country are deemed to be identical even if the variety differs, while other foods are considered identical if they are made at the same place, from the same ingredients, and using the same method, even if the container volume differs. By the same token, foods made at the same place but from different ingredients or according to a different manufacturing method cannot be treated as identical foods. For each of these items a separate planned import procedure is required.

Could you explain about the voluntary inspection for compliance with the specifications and standards defined by the Food Sanitation Law?

A : If foods fail inspection after reaching Japan, the importer is obligated to either return the cargo to the shipper or to burn or otherwise dispose of the cargo. The cost normally falls upon the importer, so it is important to try and make sure in advance that the product conforms to the specifications and standards under the Food Sanitation Law.

If a food is being imported into Japan for the very first time, it is rather difficult to determine just from reference materials supplied by the exporter whether a product complies with the specifications and standards under the Food Sanitation Law. The following is one way in which an importer can try and determine whether a product is in compliance.

1. First of all, obtain detailed information for each product you plan to import from the overseas manufacturer regarding the ingredients, types and quantities of additives used, the manufacturing or processing method, the container-package materials, and others. If possible, also obtain samples.
2. Phone one of the official laboratories designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, (see Table 8) and make an appointment to go to the laboratory and ask for advice about whether the product in question complies with the specifications and standards defined by the Food Sanitation Law, and what type of inspections will be required at the time of import notification (fee required according to occasions).
3. Obtain samples from the overseas manufacturer in sufficient quantity to conduct the required inspections, and ask an official laboratory designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare to perform the inspections (fee required).
4. The official laboratory will issue an inspection result statement that will enable you to verify whether or not the product complies with Japanese specifications and standards.
5. By submitting the inspection result statements to the Quarantine Station along with the notification form, the cargo is exempt from corresponding inspections, which shortens the time required for the documentary examination and inspections.

Under these circumstances, it is very important that the samples on which the inspections were conducted be consistent with the cargo that is actually shipped. Make sure that the importer name, manufacturer name, product name, brand name, and article code listed on the inspection result statement and the notification form are the same.

You should be aware that inspection result statements from official laboratories in the exporting countries have equivalent validity to those from such official laboratories in Japan. If the importer can obtain a copy of such an inspection result statement from the overseas manufacturer, it is possible to verify the inspection results in advance, and thereby to expedite the actual import procedure process. For more detailed information, please refer to Q34.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)
Official laboratories designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare (Table 8)

Table 8 Official Laboratories Designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare

(As of November 2002)

Pref.	Name	Address	TEL No.
Hokkaido	Public Health Examination Center, Hokkaido Pharmaceutical Association	8-5-12 Hiragishi 1-jo, Toyohira-ku, Sapporo 062-0931	011-824-1348
	Sapporo Laboratory, Japan Frozen Foods Inspection Corporation	3-17, Kita Ichijo Nishi 21-Chome, Chuo-ku, Sapporo 064-0821	011-612-1530
Aomori	Sanitary Inspection Center, Aomori Pharmaceutical Association	1-16-17 Namiuchi, Aomori City, Aomori 030-0961	017-742-8825
Iwate	Iwate Pharmaceuticals Sanitary Inspection Center	4-5-34 Kamido, Morioka City, Iwate 020-0125	019-641-4401
Miyagi	Public Health Society of Miyagi Prefecture	7-1 Tsutsumi, Matsumori, Izumi-ku, Sendai 981-3111	022-771-4722
	Sendai Laboratory, Japan Frozen Foods Inspection Corporation	1-24-18 Takasago, Miyagino-ku, Sendai 983-0014	022-254-8991
Akita	Kozakura Inspection Center, Preventive Health Association of Akita Prefecture	281-15 Kozakura, Terauchi, Akita City, Akita 011-0901	018-845-5100
Yamagata	The Yamagata Physics and Chemistry Analysis Center	1-6-68 Matsuei, Yamagata City, Yamagata 990-2473	023-645-5308
Fukushima	The Fukushima Prefecture Health and Sanitation Association	19-6 Mitouchi, Katahita, Fukushima City, Fukushima 960-8550	024-546-0391
Ibaraki	Public Health Research Center of Ibaraki Pharmaceutical Association	3-5-35 Midori-cho, Mito City, Ibaraki 310-0034	029-225-9300
Tochigi	Okamoto Water Quality and Food Inspection Station, Tochigi Public Health Service Association	2145-13 Shimo-okamoto, Kawachi-machi, Kawachi-gun, Tochigi 329-1194	028-673-9900
Gunma	Gunma Health Foundation	16-1 Horinoshita-machi, Maebashi City, Gunma 371-0005	027-269-7815
Saitama	Inspection Center, Saitama Food Hygiene Association Institute	1450 Kamiko-cho, Saitama City, Saitama 331-0853	048-649-5331
Chiba	Food Inspection Department, Environmental Research Center of Chiba Pharmaceutical Association	2-3-36 Onodai, Midori-ku, Chiba 267-0056	043-205-8225
	Central Research Laboratory, Japan Grain Inspection Association	2-17-3 Arai, Ichikawa City, Chiba 272-0144	047-356-8711
Tokyo	Tokyo Head Office, Japan Food Research Laboratories	52-1 Motoyoyogi-cho, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 151-0062	03-3469-7131
	Nihonbashi Institute, Center of Food and Environmental Sciences, Tokyo Kenbikyoin Foundation	Imasu Hakozaki Bldg., 44-1 Nihonbashi Hakozaki-cho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-0015	03-3663-9681
	Institute of Food Hygiene, Japan Food Hygiene Association	2-6-1 Jingumae, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0001	03-3403-2121
	Food Research Laboratory, Tokyo Food Sanitation Association	1-19-10 Tokumaru, Itabashi-ku, Tokyo 175-0083	03-3934-5821
	Tokyo Office, Japan Chemical Innovation Institute (JCII)	2-22-13 Yanagibashi, Taito-ku, Tokyo 111-0052	03-3862-4841
	Japan Dairy Industry Association	1-14-19 Kudan-kita, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0073	03-3264-1921
	Japan Confectionery Research Center	1-18-7 Iriya, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0013	03-3874-4400
	Development Department, Japan Meat Processors' Association	1-5-6 Ebisu, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0013	03-3444-1946
	Consumer and Environmental Protection Division, Tokyo Health Service Association	1-2 Sadohara-cho, Ichigaya, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 162-8402	03-3269-1125
Kanagawa	Tokyo Laboratory, Japan Frozen Foods Inspection Corporation	Toyokuni Bldg., 2-4-6 Shiba Daimon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0012	03-3438-2811
	Mycotoxin Research Association	Kawanishi Soko 1F, 15 Daikokufuto, Tsurumi-ku, Yokohama 230-0054	045-506-1151
	Yokohama Laboratory, Japan Frozen Foods Inspection Corporation	2-12-9 Sachiura, Kanazawa-ku, Yokohama 236-0003	045-781-9211
	Central Research Laboratory, Shin Nihon Kentei Kyokai	Shinken Bldg., 2-12-13 Shin-Yokohama, Kohoku-ku, Yokohama 222-0033	045-473-5815
	Yokohama Office, Japan Inspection Association of Food and Food Industry Environment	2-15 Kitanaka-dori, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231-0003	045-201-7031
	Physical and Chemical Research Institute, Nippon Kaiji Kentei Kyokai (NKKK)	2-7-31 Fukuura, Kanazawa-ku, Yokohama 236-0004	045-781-6665
	Kanagawa Pharmaceutical Association	14-11 Nishi-cho, Isogo-ku, Yokohama 235-0007	045-752-2421
	Analytical Technical Laboratory, Japan Oil Stuff Inspectors Corporation	Bankokubashi Bldg., 5-26-1 Kaigan-dori, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231-0002	045-641-1037
	Kitasato Research Center of Environmental Science	1-15-1 Kitazato, Sagami-hara City, Kanagawa 228-0829	042-778-9208
Niigata	Research Institute for Animal Science in Biochemistry & Toxicology	3-7-11 Hashimoto-dai, Sagami-hara City, kanagawa 229-1132	042-762-2775
	Environmental Science Research Niigata	8-13 Higashisakae-cho, Yoshida-machi, Nishikanbara-gun, Niigata 959-0232	0256-93-4509
Ishikawa	Environmental Health Department, Ishikawa Health Service Association	115 Higashi, Kamino-machi, Kanazawa City, Ishikawa 920-0365	076-269-2344
Fukui	Hokuriku Institute of Public Health	4-11-22 Koyo, Fukui City, Fukui 910-0026	0776-22-0699
Yamanashi	Yamanashi Food Hygiene Association	6-5-1 Kokubo, Kofu City, Yamanashi 400-0043	055-228-1830

Pref.	Name	Address	TEL No.
Nagano	Food Hygiene Research/Testing Laboratory, Association of Nagano Prefecture for Food Hygiene, Inc.	545-3 Shotoku, Minami-Nagano, Nagano City, Nagano 381-0000	026-234-9001
Gifu	Gifu Research Center for Public Health	4-6 Akebono-cho, Gifu City, Gifu 500-8148	058-247-1300
Shizuoka	Hamamatsu Environmental and Hygienic Laboratory, Hamamatsu Pharmaceutical Association	3-33-11 Kamoe, Hamamatsu City, Shizuoka 432-8023	053-455-0900
	Shimizu Inspection Station, Japan Inspection Association of Food and Food Industry Environment	1-39 Hinode-cho, Shimizu City, Shizuoka 424-0922	0543-53-0181
	Institute of Hygiene Research Center, Japan Food Hygiene Association	22-6 Koyashiki, Yaizu City, Shizuoka 425-0076	054-626-4171
Aichi	Aichi Prefectural School Lunch Center, Aichi Prefectural School Lunch Association	87-1 Sosaku, Ano-cho, Toyoake City, Aichi 470-1141	0562-92-3161
	Nagoya Branch, Japan Food Research Laboratories	4-5-13 Osu, Naka-ku, Nagoya 460-0011	052-261-8651
	Chubu Microbiology Association	48 Shimokawa, Akane, Mito-cho, Hoi-gun, Aichi 441-0316	0533-76-2228
	Nagoya Laboratory, Japan Frozen Foods Inspection Corporation	5-3-1 Kuban-cho, Minato-ku, Nagoya 455-0008	052-661-7121
	Environmental Science Center, The Aichi Pharmaceutical Association	2-19-18 Tenma, Atsuta-ku, Nagoya 456-0034	052-683-1131
Mie	Mie Food Analysis and Development Center	2-3-29 Akahori, Yokkaichi City, Mie 510-0825	0593-54-1552
Shiga	Shiga Pharmaceutical Association	7-4-52 Kasayama, Kusatsu City, Shiga 525-0072	077-567-2416
Kyoto	Kyoto Microbiology Laboratory	16-2 Kamikazan Kubo-cho, Yamashina-ku, Kyoto 607-8464	075-593-3320
Osaka	Food Inspection Center, Society of Osaka Prefecture Food and Sanitary Association	2-11-13 Sangenya-Higashi, Taisho-ku, Osaka 551-0002	06-6554-7450
	Osaka Branch, Japan Food Research Laboratories	3-1 Toyotsu-cho, Suita City, Osaka 564-0051	06-6386-1851
	Osaka Office, Japan Chemical Innovation Institute (JCII)	1-5-3 Takaidanaka, Higashiosaka City, Osaka 577-0065	06-6788-8134
	Hanshin Research Laboratory, Shin Nihon Kentei Kyokai	Osaka Nanko Shinken Bldg., 6-2-57 Nankonaka, Suminoe-ku, Osaka 559-0033	06-6614-7627
Hyogo	Analytical Laboratory, Total Analytical Center, Japan Oil Stuff Inspectors Corporation	1-10-4 Mikagetsuka-machi, Higashinada-ku, Kobe 658-0044	078-841-4931
	Kobe Office, Japan Inspection Association of Food and Food Industry Environment	3-2-1 Minatojima, Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-0045	078-302-7771
	Hyogo Health Service Association	4-4-20 Mikagehon-machi, Higashinada-ku, Kobe 658-0046	078-856-2211
	Kobe Laboratory, Japan Frozen Foods Inspection Corporation	1-4 Nishi, Koyo-cho, Higashinada-ku, Kobe 658-0033	078-822-1348
Tottori	Tottori Health Science Association	6-176 Tachikawa-cho, Tottori City, Tottori 680-0061	0857-23-4841
Okayama	Okayama Health Foundation	408-1 Hirata, Okayama City, Okayama 700-0952	086-246-6257
Hiroshima	Living Science Center, Hiroshima Environment and Health Association	9-1 Hirosekita-machi, Naka-ku, Hiroshima 730-8631	082-293-1514
Yamaguchi	Environment Sec., Yamaguchi Health and Service Association	3243-1 Yoshiki, Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi 753-0811	083-933-0018
Kagawa	Inspection Center, Kagawa Pharmaceutical Association	9-20 Kameoka-cho, Takamatsu City, Kagawa 760-0006	087-834-5145
Tokushima	Inspection Center, Tokushima Pharmaceutical Association	1-58 Nakazu-cho, Tokushima City, Tokushima 770-8532	088-655-1112
Kochi	Food Inspection Center, Kochi Food Hygiene Association	2-4-11 Marunouchi, Kochi City, Kochi 780-0850	0888-23-3505
Fukuoka	Corporation for Kitakyushu City, Prefectural Pharmaceutical Association	2-13-26 Iwai-machi, Yahatahigachi-ku, Kitakyushu 805-0041	093-651-2255
	Kyushu Branch, Japan Food Research Laboratories	1-12 Shimogofuku-machi, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka 812-0034	092-291-1256
	Fukuoka Inspection Station, Japan Inspection Association of Food and Food Industry Environment	15-24 Sekijyo-machi, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka 812-0032	092-291-9851
	Fukuoka Laboratory, Japan Frozen Foods Inspection Corporation	1-2-15 Hakataeki-Minami, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka 812-0016	092-451-7259
	Japan Environment Sanitation Center	3-5-11 Shirakibaru, Onojo City, Fukuoka 816-0943	092-593-8237
	Kitakyushu Life Science Center	1-4 Nakabaru-shin-machi, Tobata-ku, Kitakyushu 804-0003	093-881-8282
Saga	Saga Environmental Sciences Inspection & Testing Institute	1-1-2 Hikari, Saga City, Saga 840-0033	0952-22-1651
Nagasaki	Research Center for Food and Environment, Nagasaki Food Hygiene Association	3640-3 Koudago, Nagayo-cho, Nishisonogi-gun, Nagasaki 851-2127	095-883-6830
Kumamoto	Inspection Center, Kumamoto Pharmaceutical Association	3-2-19 Honjo, Kumamoto City, Kumamoto 860-0811	096-366-9372
Miyazaki	Miyazaki Public Health Center	1-1-2 Kirishima, Miyazaki City, Miyazaki 880-0032	0985-24-7400
Kagoshima	Kagoshima Pharmaceutical Association	2-8-15 Yojiro, Kagoshima City, Kagoshima 890-8589	099-253-8935
Okinawa	Okinawa Environmental Technology Association	720 Kyojuka, Urazoe City, Okinawa 901-2111	098-875-1941

Q34

Is an inspection result statement prepared by foreign laboratories valid?

A : Inspection result statements prepared by official laboratories in exporting countries have the same validity as inspection result statements from official laboratories in Japan designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, as described in Q33. As of March 2002, the list contains 2,805 laboratories in 54 different countries. (see Table 9)

Note: The List of Official Laboratories in Exporting Countries is published by the Association for the Safety of Imported Food, Japan, and allows readers to find out the laboratory names and addresses in each respective country.

By acquiring an inspection result statement from an official laboratory in the exporting country, the importer can verify in advance whether or not the food complies with Japanese standards.

In addition, if the importer submits this inspection result statement to the Quarantine Station along with the import notification, corresponding inspections can be exempted at the Quarantine Station. In this case, it is important that the inspection result and the cargo lot that is the subject of the import notification be the same. Make sure that the inspection result statement lists the items to identify the cargo such as product name, brand name, shipped volume, manufacturer name, importer name, production number, etc.

However, such inspection items on which sanitary conditions may be subject to changes during transit on the ship or aircraft (bacteria, mold, etc.) are excluded. These inspections must be conducted separately at the Quarantine Station.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)
Association for the Safety of Imported food, Japan (TEL: 03-5965-0819)

Table 9 Number of Official Laboratories in Exporting Countries

As of March 2002

Nation and Area	No. of Official Laboratories
Iceland	5
Ireland	11
U. S. A.	66
Argentina	2
United Kingdom	112
Italy	217
India	8
Indonesia	4
Australia	134
Austria	18
Netherlands	24
Canada	48
Ghana	1
Cyprus	1
Cuba	2
Greece	11
Guatemala	1
Colombia	3
Singapore	4
Switzerland	28
Sweden	30
Spain	145
Republic of Sri Lanka	3
Slovenia	4
Thailand	10
Republic of Korea	39
Taiwan	7
People's Republic of China	344
Czech	3
Chile	18
Denmark	20
Germany	643
Turkey	4
New Zealand	105
Norway	107
Pakistan	1
Hungary	22
Paraguay	1
Philippines	5
Finland	5
Brazil	2
France	403
Bulgaria	12
Belgium	75
Hong Kong	4
Poland	2
Portugal	10
Honduras	5
South Africa	1
Mexico	51
Morocco	3
Yugoslavia	17
Romania	1
Luxembourg	3
Total 54 nations (including areas)	2,805

A : If the identical food and related products have previously passed inspection in the form of an administrative inspection (performed under the direction of the Quarantine Station), a voluntary inspection (conducted voluntarily at an official laboratory designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare), or an inspection conducted by an official laboratory in an exporting country, the food and related products can be exempt from the corresponding inspections on the occasion of subsequent imports within a certain period of time (referred to as Continuous Import System of Same Items).

If the identical food is being imported, subsequent imports require only a copy of the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” filed at the time of the initial importation along with a copy of one or another of the inspection result statements described above. For the specified time interval (normally one year in the case of foods), the food is exempt from the inspections listed on the inspection result statement.

However, such inspection items on which sanitary conditions may be subject to changes during transit on the ship or aircraft (bacteria, mold, etc.) cannot be performed in advance. These inspections must be conducted separately at the Quarantine Station.

The requirements for treatment as identical foods and the acceptance period for inspection result statements are as follows.

1. Requirements for treatment as identical foods

The foods must be produced in the same country, at the same processing factory, at the same manufacturing facility, with the same ingredients and additives, and according to the same processing and manufacturing method.

2. Acceptance period for inspection result statements

- (1) Food, food additives, toys for infants, apparatus and container-packages other than the following: normally, within one year
- (2) Uncolored glass, stainless steel, or aluminum apparatus or container-packages, and food manufacturing equipment: normally, within three years

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Could you explain about the method for simplifying the procedural process by registering the manufacturing method, etc.?

A : If a food is being imported on an ongoing basis, the importer can file an “Item Registration Request Form” along with the import notification form on the occasion of the initial import in order to request registration for the ingredients, manufacturing method, and additives used in processed food. If it can be verified that the product is in compliance with applicable specifications and standards, for the following year thereafter, the importer can carry out the import notification by entering that number in (28) “Registration Number 2” on the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” (see Q12), which allows the importer to file import notification without listing the manufacturing method, ingredients, or additives (referred to as the Item Registration System).

The following items must be filled out on the “Item Registration Request Form.” The form is filled out in exactly the same manner as the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.”

- Name and address of importer (or name of importing corporation and its address), and telephone number
- Code of importer
- Name and code of country of production
- Name, address and code of manufacturer
- Name, address and code of manufacturing factory
- Item code and description of article
- Ingredients, if the cargo includes processed food
Raw materials, if the cargo includes apparatus, container-packages, or toys
- Method of manufacturing or processing, if the cargo includes processed food
- Names of additives, if the cargo includes food with additives
Names of additives, if the cargo includes manufacturing agents in the additives
(Additives used as flavoring agents are excluded in either case.)

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

A : If a foreign manufacturer plans to export a certain food to Japan on an ongoing basis, the manufacturer may submit an “Application Form for Advance Confirmation” to the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare via a government authority of the exporting country, thereby applying for registration of ingredients, manufacturing methods, additives, etc. used in processed food.

If it can be verified that the content of the application for advance confirmation is in compliance with applicable specifications and standards, a registration number will be communicated to the manufacturer via the government authority of the exporting country. The manufacturer then lists that number on the container or packaging of the food being exported to Japan and in the supplemental documentation.

Importers in Japan can carry out the import notification process by entering that number in (27) “Registration Number 1” on the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” (see Q12), without listing the manufacturing method, ingredients, additives, etc. as normally requested. The registration is valid for a period of three years from the date of registration (referred to as the Advance Confirmation System for Imported Foods and Related Products).

The following documentation is required as part of the advance confirmation application process.

1. “Application Form for Advance Confirmation”
 - Manufacturer name and address, name of manufacturer representative, and the signature of the representative
 - Name and address of the manufacturing or processing facility, and the name of the country where it is located
 - Type and name of the food
2. Supplemental documentation (for foods)
 - 1) Documentation of the type and composition of ingredients used
 - 2) Documentation of the manufacturing or processing method
 - 3) Documentation of the type of additives used, their manufacturing method, and the quantity used
 - 4) A certificate of analysis issued by an official laboratory of the exporting country indicating that the ingredients used conform to Japanese specifications and standards
 - 5) A certificate of analysis issued by an official laboratory of the exporting country indicating that the food in question conforms to Japanese specifications and standards
 - 6) Documentation of facility and food sanitation control standards, prepared by a food sanitation supervisor

If any change occurs in the ingredients, manufacturing or processing method, or the additives used during the term of registration, an application for registration modification must be executed.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

Q38

Could you explain how to simplify procedure using programs administered by the Association for the Safety of Imported Food, Japan?

A : The Association for the Safety of Imported Food, Japan (ASIF) operates programs to encourage voluntary sanitation management of imported food. One of its programs involves collecting and compiling safety-related information based on 1) imported food test result statements (including certificates issued by official laboratories of the exporting country) and 2) food information from product descriptions and labeling, and providing this information to Quarantine Stations. The purpose of this program is to assure the safety of imported food and to improve the efficiency of import procedures (the program is known as the Imported Food Safety Information Registration System).

When an importer seeks to repeatedly import a food, the importer files a registration application with the ASIF. The application is reviewed, and if accepted, a registration number is granted for a stipulated period of time for items determined eligible for registration. If the importer enters this registration number in (29) “Registration Number 3” on the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” (see Q12) when importing the food, the importer may omit the statement of import results and other supplemental documentation normally required with each notification.

In order to utilize this program, however, it is necessary to be qualified as an “importer responsible for food sanitation” after training conducted by the ASIF under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

* Contacts: Association for the Safety of Imported Food, Japan (TEL: 03-5695-0819)

4) Inquiries

Q40

Could you give me contacts for more information about import procedures, specifications and standards under the Food Sanitation Law?

A : Quarantine Stations of Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare have information offices to respond to such issues. You should direct your inquiries to the Imported Foods Inspection Section of the appropriate Quarantine Station. The Quarantine Stations at Narita Airport and five other locations (Tokyo, Yokohama, Osaka, Kansai Airport, and Kobe) with unusually large volumes of imports have set up imported food information offices that can respond to questions about import procedures and offer advice about specific imported food items. Please check with the particular Quarantine Stations for information about hours of operation and to schedule appointments.

Table 10 List of Imported Foods Inspection Section Offices

Name	Address	TEL/FAX No.	Areas to be covered
Otaru Quarantine Station	Otaru Harbor Government Bldg., 5-3 Minato-machi, Otaru City, Hokkaido 047-0007	0134-32-4304 0134-25-6069	Hokkaido (except for areas covered by Chitose Airport Branch Office)
Chitose Airport Quarantine Branch	New Chitose Airport, Bibi, Chitose City, Hokkaido 066-0012	0123-45-7007 0123-45-2357	Hokkaido (New Chitose Airport only)
Sendai Quarantine Station	Shiogama Harbor Government Bldg., 3-4-1 Teizan-dori, Shiogama City, Miyagi 985-0011	022-367-8102 022-362-3293	Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi (, Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima Prefectures
Sendai Airport Quarantine Branch	Sendai Airport Terminal Bldg., Minamihara, Shimomasuda, Natori City, Miyagi 989-2401	022-383-1854 022-383-1856	Miyagi (Sendai Airport only)
Narita Airport Quarantine Station	2159 Amanamino, Komaino, Narita City, Chiba 282-8691	0476-32-6741 0476-32-6742	Chiba (Narita City, Taiei-machi and Takomachi in Katori-gun, and Shibayama-machi in Sanbu-gun only)
Tokyo Quarantine Station, 1st Food Inspection Division	Tokyo Harbor Government Bldg., 2-56 Aomi, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0064	03-3599-1520 03-5530-2153	Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Tokyo (except for areas covered by Tokyo Airport Quarantine Branch), Yamanashi, Nagano
Tokyo Quarantine Station, 2nd Food Inspection Division	Funabashi Harbor Government Bldg., 32-5 Shiomi-cho, Funabashi City, Chiba 273-0016	0474-37-1381 0474-37-1585	Chiba (Noda City, Kashiwa City, Nagareyama City, Matsudo City, Kamagaya City, Funabashi City, Narashino City, Urayasu City, Ichikawa City (except Baraki) and Higashi-Katsushikagun (Sekiyado-machi and Shonan-machi only)
Tokyo Airport Quarantine Branch	International Passenger Terminal Bldg., Tokyo International Airport, 3-4-4 Haneda Kuko, Ota-ku, Tokyo 144-0041	03-5756-4857 03-5756-4859	Tokyo Metropolis (Tokyo International Airport only)
Chiba Quarantine Branch	Chiba Harbor Government Bldg., 1-12-2 Chuo-ko, Chuo-ku, Chiba 260-0024	043-241-6096 043-241-7281	Chiba (except for areas covered by Narita Airport Quarantine Station and 2nd Food Inspection Division of Tokyo Quarantine Station)
Yokohama Quarantine Station	Yokohama Second Harbor Government Bldg., 1-1 Kaigan-dori, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231-0002	045-201-0505 045-212-0640	Kanagawa (except for areas covered by Kawasaki Quarantine Station)
Kawasaki Quarantine Station	Kawasaki Pilot Bldg., 23-1 Chidori-cho, Kawasaki-ku, Kawasaki 210-0865	044-277-0025 044-288-2499	Kanagawa (Kawasaki City only)
Niigata Quarantine Station	Niigata Harbor Government Bldg., 1-5-4 Ryugashima, Niigata City, Niigata 950-0072	025-244-4405 025-241-7404	Niigata
Nagoya Quarantine Station	11-1 Tsukiji-cho, Minato-ku, Nagoya 455-0045	052-661-4133 052-655-1808	Gifu, Aichi (except for areas covered by Nagoya Airport Quarantine Branch)
Shimizu Quarantine Branch	Shimizu Harbor Government Bldg., 9-1 Hinode-cho, Shimizu City, Shizuoka 424-0922	0543-52-4540 0543-53-1364	Shizuoka
Nagoya Airport Quarantine Branch	Nagoya Airport Bldg., Toyoba, Toyoyama-cho, Nishikasugai-gun, Aichi 480-0202	0568-28-2524 0568-28-5909	Aichi (Nagoya Airport only)

Name	Address	TEL/FAX No.	Areas to be covered
Yokkaichi Quarantine Branch	Yokkaichi Harbor Government Bldg., 5-1 Chitose-cho, Yokkaichi City, Mie 510-0051	0593-52-3574 0593-51-7666	Mie, Wakayama (Shingu City and Higashimuro-gun only)
Osaka Quarantine Station	Osaka Harbor Government Bldg., 4-10-3 Chikko, Minato-ku, Osaka 552-0021	06-6571-3523 06-6575-1803	Toyama, Ishikawa, Fukui, Shiga, Kyoto, Osaka (except for areas covered by Kansai Airport Quarantine Station), Nara, Wakayama (except for areas covered by Yokkaichi Quarantine Branch)
Kansai Airport Quarantine Station	Kansai Airport Area Government Bldg., 1 Senshu-Kuko Minami, Sennan City, Osaka 549-0021	0724-55-1290 0724-55-1292	Osaka (Kansai International Airport only)
Kobe Quarantine Station, 1st Food Inspection Division	1-1 Toyahama-cho, Hyogo-ku, Kobe 652-0866	078-672-9655 078-672-9662	Hyogo (except for areas covered by Second Food Inspection Division), Okayama, Tokushima, Kagawa
Kobe Quarantine Station, 2nd Food Inspection Division	Kobe Airport Cargo Terminal, 4-16 Koyo-cho Higashi, Higashi-Nada-ku, Kobe 658-0031	078-857-1671 078-857-1691	Hyogo (Higashi-Nada-ku and Nada-ku in Kobe City only)
Hiroshima Quarantine Station	Hiroshima Harbor Government Bldg., 3-10-17 Ujinakaigan, Minami-ku, Hiroshima City, Hiroshima 734-0011	082-255-1379 082-254-4984	Hiroshima (except for areas covered by Hiroshima Airport Quarantine Branch), Ehime, Kochi
Hiroshima Airport Quarantine Branch	Hiroshima Terminal Bldg., 64-31 Hiraiwa, Zennyuji, Hongo-cho, Toyota-gun, Hiroshima 729-0416	0848-86-8017 0848-86-8030	Hiroshima (Hiroshima Airport only)
Sakai Branch	Sakai Harbor Government Bldg., 9-1 Showa-machi, Sakaiminato City, Tottori 684-0034	0859-42-3517 0859-42-3517	Tottori, Shimane
Fukuoka Quarantine Station	Fukuoka Harbor Government Bldg., 1-22 Okihama-cho, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka 812-0031	092-271-5873 092-282-1004	Fukuoka (except for areas covered by Moji Quarantine Branch and Fukuoka Airport Quarantine Branch), Saga (Tosu and Karatsu City) Nagasaki (Iki-gun, Shimoagata-gun, and Kamiagata-gun), Kumamoto (Kumamoto City, Arao City, Tamana City, Kikuchi City, Yamaga City, Tamana-gun, kamoto-gun, Hotaku-gun Kikuchi-gun, and Aso-gun), Oita
Moji Quarantine Branch	Moji Harbor Government Bldg., 1-3-10 Nishi-Kaigan, Moji-ku, Kitakyushu 801-0841	093-321-2611 093-332-4129	Fukuoka (Kitakyushu City, Nogata City, Iizuka City, Tagawa City, Yamada City, Yukuhashi City, Buzen City, Nakama City, Onga-gun, Kurate-gun, Kahogun, Tagawa-gun, Miyako-gun, and Chikujogun only)
Shimonoseki Branch	Shimonoseki Harbor Government Bldg., 1-7-1 Higashi-Yamato-machi, Shimonoseki City, Yamaguchi 750-0066	0832-66-1402 0832-66-8145	Yamaguchi
Fukuoka Airport Quarantine Branch	Fukuoka Airport International Passenger Terminal Bldg., 739 Aoki, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka 816-0051	092-477-0208 092-477-0209	Fukuoka (Fukuoka Airport only)
Nagasaki Quarantine Branch	4-32-5 To-machi, Nagasaki City, Nagasaki 850-0952	095-878-8623 095-878-8627	Saga (except for areas covered by Fukuoka Quarantine Station), Nagasaki (except for areas covered by Fukuoka Quarantine Station), Kumamoto (except for areas covered by Fukuoka Quarantine Station)
Kagoshima Quarantine Branch	Kagoshima Harbor Government Bldg., 18-2-31 Izumi-cho, Kagoshima City, Kagoshima 892-0822	099-222-8670 099-223-5297	Miyazaki, Kagoshima
Naha Quarantine Station	Naha Harbor Government Bldg., 2-11-1 Minato-machi, Naha City, Okinawa 900-0001	098-868-4519 098-861-4372	Okinawa (except for areas covered by Naha Airport Quarantine Branch)
Naha Airport Quarantine Branch	174 Kagamimizu, Naha City, Okinawa 901-0142	098-857-0057 098-859-0032	Okinawa (Naha Airport only)

Q41

What type of information should we collect before making an inquiry about import procedures?

A : Before making an inquiry to the Imported Foods Inspection Section of the Quarantine Station, if you collect the following items of information and, if possible, obtain an (unopened) sample, you will be able to obtain more specific advice.

1. Ingredients
2. Place of origin
3. Composition
4. Names, amounts and purposes of additives used, if any
5. Manufacturing or processing method (such as pasteurization or extraction methods, described as specifically as possible)
6. Container-packages (materials, condition, coloring, etc.)

You must make an appointment for a specific consultation regarding procedures and other matters.

* Contacts: Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)

SHORT MEMO

Because dairy products are consumed by everyone from infants to the elderly, they are subject to special standards and manufacturing method requirements under Ministerial Ordinance based on the Food Sanitation Law.

These manufacturing standards have changed due to technological progress and other factors. For example, ice cream is now allowed to make use of previously unapproved ingredients as long as they are separately pasteurized and mixed together afterward, and can make use of non-heat pasteurization methods (with equivalent effectiveness to heat pasteurization; see Q91).

(3) Issues Related to the Animal Quarantine

Q42

What types of foods are subject to animal quarantine requirements?

A : All livestock products, both fresh and processed, are subject in principle to animal quarantine requirements, which are designed to prevent the spread of organisms that cause domestic animal infectious diseases to the livestock of Japan.

Please note the items below under “3. Import-prohibited items,” which cannot be imported into Japan because of the identity of the exporting country or the point of transit.

1. Items subject to animal quarantine (Designated Quarantine Goods)

- Flesh and organs of animals (cattle, hogs, sheep and other cloven-hoofed animals, and horse), and ham, sausage, and bacon
- Flesh of poultry (chickens, turkeys, quail, ducks, etc.)
- Flesh of rabbits

For more complete information, please consult Table 11 on the following page.

2. Items exempt from animal quarantine

Some products normally subject to animal quarantine requirements are exempted from inspection due to the processing method employed, etc. One example is completely heat pasteurized canned livestock products. The determination is made on a case-by-case basis depending on the extent of heat treatment, the condition of the container, etc., so it would be better to inquire in advance.

3. Import-prohibited items

In the case of some particularly virulent infectious livestock diseases (currently, cattle plague, foot-and-mouth disease and African hog cholera), it is difficult to completely prevent their spread into Japan with quarantine inspections alone. As a result, the Ministry maintains a list of import-prohibited areas and import-prohibited items based on livestock health condition reports from around the world. Livestock product from these areas or made from these products cannot be imported into Japan, and importers will be ordered to destroy them. Please refer to Table 12 on the following page for a list of areas from which imports of livestock products are prohibited or restricted.

* Contacts: Animal Quarantine Service (Q45)

SHORT MEMO

Foot-and-mouth disease is a highly contagious disease, and one of the most representative infectious diseases, affecting cloven-hoofed animals (with split hooves) such as cattle, hogs, and sheep. The disease is spread by virus, and when cloven-hoofed animals are infected they run a fever, lose appetite and grow thin as a result. It has a major impact on dairy and meat production. A case of foot-and-mouth disease was confirmed in Japan in March of 2000 for the first time in 92 years. Nevertheless, the disease was suppressed in short order due to the efforts of involved parties, and in September of 2000 Japan was re-confirmed as free of foot-and-mouth disease by the Office International des Epizooties (OIE). Today Japan is doing everything possible to prevent a recurrence.

**Table 11 Designated Quarantine Goods (Livestock Products)
Under the Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control Law**

Classification under the Law	Representative products designed as Designated Quarantine Goods	Products not subject to quarantine
Eggs	Eggs (breeding, edible, liquid, dried, frozen, etc.) of chickens, ducks, turkeys, quail and geese	Boiled eggs, pidans (duck/chicken eggs processed by Chinese cookery) and ostrich eggs, etc.
Bones	Raw bones, dried bones, crushed bones, bone meal, steamed bone meal, etc.	Completely processed bone products, ivory, etc.
Meat	Fresh, frozen, chilled, salted, boiled, dried, powdered or otherwise processed meat	Kangaroo meat, whale meat, etc.
Animal fat	Fresh, frozen, chilled, salted or otherwise preserved fat	Lard, tallow, etc.
Hides and skins	Raw, frozen, chilled, salted, pickled, dried or otherwise preserved hides and skins	Leather and leather products
Viscera (internal organ)	Fresh, frozen, chilled, dried or boiled viscera, casings, etc.	
Raw milk	Raw milk	Butter, cheese and other processed dairy products
Ham, sausage, bacon	Ham (all types), sausage (all types), bacon	Fish sausage

**Table 12 Areas Subject to Import Prohibition or Restriction
under the Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control Law**

(As of July 16, 2002)

Category	Regional Classification	Of cloven-hoofed animals			
		Carcasses	Semen, Embryo	Sausages, Ham, Bacon	Meat, Viscera
0	Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Netherlands, France, Austria, Germany, Belgium, Ireland, Iceland, Canada, U.S.A., Mexico, Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Dominican Republic, Chile, Northern Mariana, New Zealand, Republic of Vanuatu, New Caledonia, Australia, Hungary, Spain, Italy (except Sardegna Island) (31 Regions)	All importation allowed			
1	Singapore, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Switzerland (7 Regions)	Importation allowed			Importation prohibited (Note 1)
2	Others	Importation prohibited	Importation prohibited (Note 2)		
<p>“0” areas have had no outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease or other virulent livestock diseases for a certain period time, have in place an adequate quarantine program, and are believed have an extremely low risk of a virulent livestock disease outbreak.</p> <p>“1” areas have an adequate quarantine program, and no current outbreaks of foot-and-mouth disease, but are not completely without risk of an outbreak.</p> <p>“2” areas either have an active outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease or another virulent livestock disease, or do not have an adequate quarantine program in place.</p> <p>* Imports require an inspection certificate issued by the competent government agency of the exporting country.</p>					

Even products listed above as importation allowed may be subject to temporary import suspensions, if a disease outbreak occurs locally. For more complete and current information, please check with the Animal Quarantine Service.

Note 1: But importation is allowed when the articles have been heat treated in accordance with standards set by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. (Heat treatment processing facility designation may be made by a competent government agency of the exporting country.)

Note 2: But importation is allowed when the articles have been heat treated in accordance with standards set by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. (Designation of the processing facility must be made by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries).

Q43

Could you explain about the animal quarantine procedures?

A : Animal quarantine is a type of inspection performed in accordance with provisions of the Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control Law in order to prevent the spread of livestock infectious disease organisms from other countries to Japan.

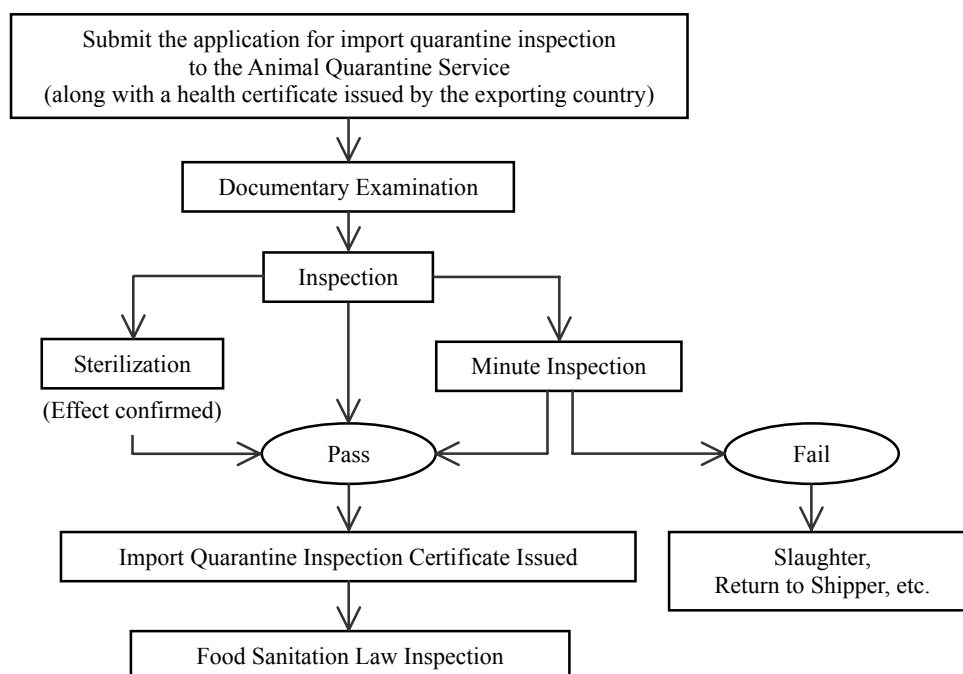
Items listed as Designated Quarantine Goods in Table 11 under Q42 undergo inspection in the sequence described below, and if they pass, then they proceed to the Food Sanitation Law sanitation inspections (Note 1).

First of all, before the procedural process begins, the importer must obtain a Health Certificate (confirming that there is no danger of the spread of disease organisms of livestock infections) issued by a competent government agency of the exporting country (Note 2). This health certificate is analogous to the passport that an individual must present when entering another country, and without the certificate, livestock products cannot be imported into Japan.

Note 1: Upon request by the importer, the food sanitation inspection and animal quarantine inspection can be performed simultaneously. Importers seeking such handling should be clearly write “requesting concurrent inspection” on the application for import quarantine inspection.

Note 2: An agency corresponding the Animal Quarantine Service of Japan. Health Certificate is also called as Sanitary Certificate, Veterinarian Certificate, or Veterinary Certificate.

Figure 10 Animal Quarantine Procedures (in the case of livestock products)



Note that animal quarantine inspections can only be performed at ports of entry with facilities to carry out not only import inspections but also sterilization and other required processes (see Q45).

* Contacts: Animal Quarantine Service (Q45)

Q44

What type of inspection is carried out during animal quarantine?

A : When the importer submits the application for import quarantine inspection along with the health certificate as described in Q43, an animal quarantine officer conducts a documentary examination. The main items the animal quarantine officer checks for are as follows.

1. Whether it consists of an import-prohibited item (including articles shipped via an import-prohibited area)
2. Whether the health certificate from a competent government agency of the exporting country is appended
3. Whether anything is missing from the content of the health certificate
4. Whether their storage location is a designated inspection facility

Next, the animal quarantine officer proceeds to the cargo inspection stage. The main items the animal quarantine officer checks for are as follows.

1. Whether brand and quantity of the cargo match with what is listed on the import inspection application and the health certificate
2. Whether there is any abnormality in the cargo
3. Whether a minute inspection or sterilization is required

If the cargo passes inspection, an import quarantine certificate is issued, and it proceeds to the Food Sanitation Law sanitation inspection. If the cargo fails animal quarantine inspection, an order will be issued to either slaughter or bury it, or return it to the shipper, depending on the product and the nature of the violation.

* Contacts: Animal Quarantine Service (Q45)

SHORT MEMO

September of 2001 saw Japan's first confirmed case of BSE (so-called "mad cow disease"). Japan halted imports of beef from the EU, where BSE has become a long-term problem, as of January 2001. In addition to this legal measure taken under the Domestic Animal Infectious Disease Control Law, Japan also instituted steps under the Food Sanitation Law, recognizing that more definite measures were needed to prevent the spread of BSE into Japan. Accordingly, as of February 15, 2001, Japan has prohibited imports of beef, beef organs and products made from these materials originating in countries with confirmed outbreaks of BSE (the EU nations, Switzerland, Lichtenstein, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland and Israel).

Note) EU nations include Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Denmark, Ireland, United Kingdom, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Finland, Austria and Sweden.

Q45

Could you give me contacts for more information about animal quarantine?

- A :**
- For questions pertaining to the law, contact:
Animal Health Division, Livestock Industry Department, Agricultural Production Bureau,
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)
 - For questions pertaining to procedures, contact one of the following:

Table 13 Contacts for Animal Quarantine Questions

Contacts	Address	TEL No.
Animal Quarantine Service	11-1 Hara-machi, Isogo-ku, Yokohama 235-0008	045-751-5921
Narita Branch	No. 2 Passenger Terminal Bldg., New-Tokyo International Airport, 1-1 Furugome, Furugome, Narita City, Chiba 282-0004	0476-34-2342
Nagoya Branch	Nagoya Harbor Government Bldg., 2-3-12 Irifune-cho, Minato-ku, Nagoya 455-0032	052-651-0334
Kansai Airport Branch	CIQ Government Bldg., 1 Senshu-Kuko Naka, Tajiri-machi, Sennan-gun, Osaka 549-0011	0724-55-1956
Kobe Branch	Kobe Disaster Prevention Government Bldg., 1-4-3 Wakihama Kaigan-dori, Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-0041	078-222-8991
Moji Branch	Moji Harbor Government Bldg., 1-3-10 Nishi-Kaigan, Moji-ku, Kitakyushu 801-0841	093-321-1116
Okinawa Branch	Naha Harbor Government Bldg., 2-11-1 Minato-machi, Naha City, Okinawa 900-0001	098-861-4370

Table 14 Designated Animal Quarantine Ports of Entry

Seaport or Airport	Category			Seaport or Airport	Category		
	1	2	9		1	2	9
New Tokyo International Airport				Sendai-Shiogama Port			
Kansai International Airport	o	o	o	Akita Port			
Keihin Port				Fushikitoyama Port		o	
Nagoya Port				Kanazawa Port			
Osaka Port				Sakai Port			
Kobe Port				Imari Port			
Kanmon Port				Muroran Port			
Naha Port	o	o	o	Chiba Port		o	
New Chitose Airport				Wakayamashimotsu Port			
Tokyo International Airport				Matsuyama Port			
Nagoya Airport				Kashima Port			
Fukuoka Airport				Mizushima Port			
Kagoshima Airport				Ishimaki Port			
Naha Airport				Hososhima Port		o	o
Hakodate Airport				Sakata Port		o	
Aomori Airport				Onahama Port		o	
Sendai Airport				Ooita Port			
Fukushima Airport				Nagasaki Port		o	o
Niigata Airport				Hiroshima Port		o	o
Toyama Airport				Kochi Port		o	
Komatsu Airport				Hachinohe Port			
Okayama Airport		o	o	Shibushi Port			
Hiroshima Airport				Himeji Port			
Takamatsu Airport				Naoetsu Port		o	
Matsuyama Airport				Ishikariwan Port			
Nagasaki Airport				Wakkanai Port			
Kumamoto Airport				Shonai Airport			
Oita Airport				Yamagata Airport			
Akita Airport				Tottori Airport			o
Miho Airfield		o	o	Izumo Airport			
Miyazaki Airport				Yamaguchi-Ube Airport			
Hakata Port	o	o	o	Kochi Airport			
Kagoshima Port	o	o	o	Saga Airport			
Tomakomai Port	o			Hitachinaka Port			
Niigata Port			o	Mikawa Port			
Tokushima-Komatsujima Port			o	Maizuru Port			
Otaru Port				Karatsu Port			
Shimizu Port				Imabari Port			
Yokkaichi Port		o	o	Kumamoto Port			
Takamatsu Port				Yatsushiro Port			
Amagasaki-Nishinomiya-Ashiya Port				Sendai Port			

(As of October 21, 2002,
seaports: 50, airports: 32)

1. Clove-hoofed animals,
horses, poultry (chick-
ens, ducks, geese, tur-
keys, and quail), rabbits,
honeybees; the carcasses
of same; and the eggs of
poultry (with shell intact
only)

2. Eggs of poultry (with
shell removed); flesh,
fats, blood, tendons, and
internal organs of ani-
mals listed in 1. above;
sausage, ham, and bacon

9. Items listed above as
Designated Quarantine
Goods imported in the
personal possession of
the importer.

Note:
Categories 3-8 omitted

(4) Issues Related to the Plant Quarantine

Q46

What types of foods are subject to plant quarantine requirements?

A : In principle, all agricultural products, both fresh and processed, are subject to plant quarantine requirements, the purpose of which is to prevent the spread into Japan of harmful microorganisms, insect pests, and parasites that would cause serious damage to crops and forest resources of Japan.

Please note the agricultural products below under “3. Import-prohibited items,” which cannot be imported into Japan.

1. Items subject to quarantine

- Fresh produce and nuts
- Frozen and dried produce
- Cereal grains and flour (examples: barley, wheat flour)
- Legumes
- Flavorings and spices (including coffee beans and spice), Chinese-style herbal medicinal materials
- Fats and oils (examples: rapeseed, sesame)

2. Items not subject to quarantine

Some agricultural products normally subject to plant quarantine requirements are exempted as a result of the processing method employed, etc. These include agricultural products preserved in salt, sugar or vinegar, designated dried fruits, and dried spices packaged for retail sale. However, since so many different processing methods are being employed for other agricultural products, importers would be well-advised to inquire in advance about other products.

3. Import-prohibited items

The importation of the following agricultural products is prohibited.

- 1) Any item with soil attached.
- 2) Fresh fruits, etc. (see Note) from specific regions (example: countries with Mediterranean fruit fly infestations)

Since there exist disease organisms and insect pests (such as Mediterranean fruit flies, mandarin orange fruit flies, and Lodling moth), all of which have caused great harm abroad, and could cause similarly great harm if they spread to Japan, the importation of agricultural products that serves as host for disease and pests sent from or through infested areas is prohibited. There is a separate list of import-prohibited items for every infested region. If one of these foods is brought into Japan, an order will be issued to burn the cargo, etc.

Note: Plants prescribed by Plant Protection Law Enforcement Regulations in Supplemental Table 2

* Contacts: Plant Protection Station (Q50)

Q47

Could you explain about the plant quarantine procedures?

A : Plant quarantine is a type of inspection performed in accordance with provisions of the Plant Protection Law in order to ensure that no harmful insect pests or disease organisms spread from other countries and cause harm to the fauna of Japan.

Agricultural products subject to plant quarantine requirements as described in Q46 undergo inspection in the sequence described below. If they pass, they proceed to the Food Sanitation Law sanitation inspection stage (Note 1).

First of all, before the procedural process begins, the importer must obtain a Phytosanitary Certificate (Note 3) issued by a competent government agency of the exporting country (Note 2). This phytosanitary certificate is analogous to the passport that an individual must present when entering another country, and without the certificate, agricultural products normally cannot be imported into Japan.

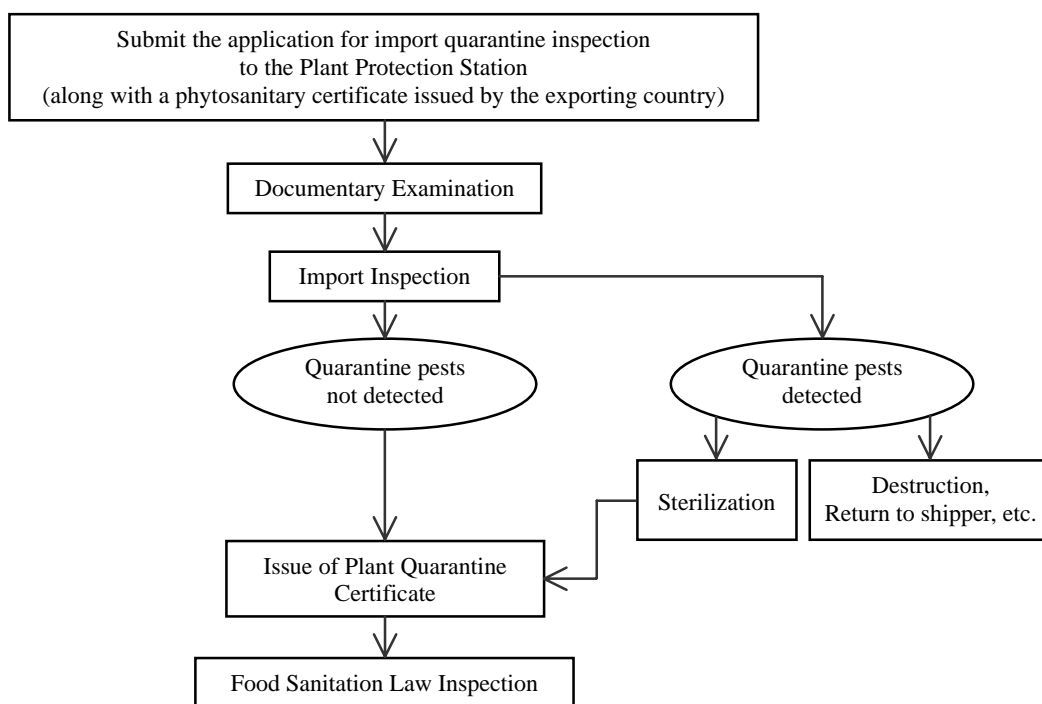
Please note that plant quarantine inspections can only be performed at seaports and airports with facilities to carry out plant quarantine (see Q50).

Note 1: Upon request by the importer, the food sanitation inspection and plant quarantine inspection can be performed simultaneously. Importers seeking such handling should clearly write “requesting concurrent inspection” on the application for import quarantine inspection.

Note 2: An agency corresponding to the Plant Protection Station of Japan.

Note 3: A certificate verifying based on the results of inspections performed by an official laboratory in the exporting country that no harmful insect pests are present in the cargo. The issuance and the format of phytosanitary certificates are governed by the International Plant Protection Convention.

Figure 11 Plant Quarantine Procedures



*Contacts: Plant Protection Station (Q50)

Q48

What type of inspection is performed during plant quarantine?

A : When the importer submits the application for import quarantine inspection along with the phytosanitary certificate as described in Q47, a plant quarantine inspector begins by conducting a documentary examination. The main items the quarantine official checks for are as follows.

1. Whether it consists of an import-prohibited plant
2. Whether a phytosanitary certificate issued by the competent government agency of the exporting country is appended
3. Whether anything is missing from the content of the phytosanitary certificate

Next, the plant quarantine inspector inspects the cargo by sampling, screening and other methods to check:

1. Whether any soil is attached to the plant
2. Whether any disease organisms, insect pests, or parasites are present

Bulk cargo (see Note) is subjected to sample extraction inspection from every portion. Bagged cargo is subject to bag-opening inspection of a specific number of bags. Citrus fruit is subject to extraction inspection of a specific number of cartons.

If the cargo passes, a plant quarantine inspection certificate is issued. If the cargo fails, an order will be issued to either sterilize (fumigate) the cargo, destroy it (by burning or burial), separate it out, or return it to the shipper.

Note: Cargo of substantial weight and not directly wrapped (not individually packaged)

* Contacts: Plant Protection Station (Q50)

SHORT MEMO

Japan's leading fresh fruit import on a volume basis is bananas. However, the yellow bananas you are accustomed to seeing in the stores cannot be imported into Japan. The reason is that ripened yellow bananas can act as hosts for insect pests that are not present in Japan (such as Mediterranean fruit flies and mandarin orange fruit flies).

Nevertheless, bananas begin to ripen as soon as they are cut down from the banana tree. To make sure the bananas are still green when they reach the port, they are kept at low temperatures in reefer containers so the bananas will stay asleep, as it were, until the right time for them to wake up.

From The Story of Bananas (published by the Japan Banana Importers Association)

Q49

How is sterilization (fumigation) performed during plant quarantine?

A : If an insect pest is detected during the import quarantine inspection as described in Q48, the importer is routinely ordered to have the cargo sterilized. Because plant quarantine sterilization needs to kill all the pests on a large volume of plants in a short period of time, all the while maintaining consideration for agricultural product safety, the sterilization is carried out inside a sealed warehouse or other enclosure using sterilization gas.

When a sterilization order is issued, the procedure involves filing a sterilization plan statement with the Plant Protection Station in accordance with established sterilization requirements depending on the type of disease or pest and the type of plant. Then the cargo is transferred to a designated sterilization facility (warehouse, etc.) where the sterilization is carried out. Normally the cost of sterilization is borne by the importer.

Japanese law makes the importer responsible for fumigation. If the importer lacks the technology and equipment to carry out fumigation, then the task may be delegated under contract between the importer and a private-sector service provider that does possess fumigation technology.

After the cargo is sterilized and the plant quarantine inspector determines that the organism or pest has been completely killed and removed, a plant quarantine inspection certificate will be issued.

However, some varieties of insect pests cannot be killed by sterilization. In this case, the cargo must be destroyed.

* Contacts: Plant Protection Station (Q50)

SHORT MEMO

Fruits that are prohibited for import into Japan may not be imported even if they have been frozen. However, frozen fruits may be imported in some cases if they meet all of the following conditions.

- 1) The fruit was frozen at a temperature of below -17.8°C (0 degrees F) at a facility in the exporting country.
- 2) The frozen condition in 1) above was maintained until the cargo reached plant inspection in Japan.
- 3) The freezing measure in 1) above is indicated on the phytosanitary certificate issued by the plant quarantine agency of the exporting country.

The certificate mentioned in 3) above may be issued by competent public agency approved by the Plant Protection Station of Japan. Please consult with the Plant Protection Station for more detailed information.

Q50

Could you give me contacts for more information about plant quarantine?

A :

1. For questions pertaining to the law, contact:

Plant Protection Division, Agricultural Production Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)

2. For questions pertaining to procedures, contact one of the following:

Table 15 Contacts for Plant Quarantine Questions

Contacts	Address	TEL No.
Yokohama Plant Protection Station	No. 2 Yokohama Government Bldg., 5-57 Kita-Naka-dori, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231-0003	045-211-7150 045-211-7152~4
Sapporo Branch	1 Hitsujigaoka, Toyohira-ku, Sapporo 062-0045	011-852-1808
Shiogama Branch	Shiogama Harbor Government Bldg., 3-4-1 Teizan-dori, Shiogama City, Miyagi 985-0011	022-362-6916
Niigata Branch	Niigata Harbor Government Bldg., 1-5-4 Ryugashima, Niigata City, Niigata 950-0072	025-244-4401
Narita Branch	No. 2 Passenger Terminal Bldg., New Tokyo International Airport, 1-1 Furugome, Furugome, Narita City, Chiba 282-0004	0476-34-2350 0476-32-6690
Tokyo Branch	Tokyo Harbor Government Bldg., 2-56 Aomi, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0064	03-3599-1137
Nagoya Plant Protection Station	Nagoya Harbor Government Bldg., 2-3-12 Irifune, Minato-ku, Nagoya 455-0032	052-651-0112~3
Fushiki Branch	Fushiki Harbor Government Bldg., 11-15 Nishiki-cho, Fushiki, Takaoka City, Toyama 933-0105	0766-44-0954
Shimizu Branch	Shimizu Harbor Government Bldg., 9-1 Hinode-cho, Shimizu City, Shizuoka 424-0922	0543-52-3775
Kobe Plant Protection Station	Kobe No. 2 Local Government Bldg., 1-1 Hatoba-machi, Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-0042	078-331-2806 078-331-4201
Osaka Branch	Osaka Harbor Government Bldg., 4-10-3 Chikko, Minato-ku, Osaka 552-0021	06-6571-0801
Kansai Airport Branch	CIQ Government Bldg., 1 Senshu-Kuko Naka, Tajiri-machi, Sennan-gun, Osaka 549-0011	0724-55-9010
Kansai Airport Branch	Kansai Airport Area Government Bldg., 1 Senshu-Kuko Minami, Sennan City, Osaka 549-0011	0724-55-1938
Hiroshima Branch	Hiroshima Harbor Government Bldg., 3-10-17 Ujinakaigan, Minato-ku, Hiroshima 734-0011	082-251-5881
Sakaide Branch	Sakaide Harbor Government Bldg., 1-6-10 Irifune-cho, Sakaide City, Kagawa 762-0002	0877-46-4108
Moji Plant Protection Station	Moji Harbor Government Bldg., 1-3-10 Nishi-Kaigan, Moji-ku, Kitakyushu City, Fukuoka 801-0841	093-321-2601
Fukuoka Branch	Fukuoka Harbor Government Bldg., 1-22 Okihama-cho, Hakata-ku, Fukuoka 812-0031	092-291-2504
Kagoshima Branch	Kagoshima Harbor Government Bldg., 18-2-33 Izumi-cho, Kagoshima City, Kagoshima 892-0822	099-222-1046
Naze Branch	Naze Government Bldg., 1-1 Nagahama-machi, Naze City, Kagoshima 894-0036	0997-52-0459
Naha Plant Protection Station	Naha Harbor Government Bldg., 2-11-1 Mintao-machi, Naha City, Okinawa 900-0001	098-868-2850

(5) Issues Related to the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law

Q51

What types of foods are subject to import restrictions?

A : Nearly all foods may be freely imported into Japan provided that they complete procedural requirements stipulated by law. However, a very small number of products are subject to import trade control orders based on provisions of the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law, and thus require an import quota (I/Q), an import license (I/L), or prior confirmation from the competent Minister with authority over the particular product field.

1. Import quota items (Import Notice No. 1)

In order to import products designated as import quota items, the importer must first apply to the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry for an import quota allocation, after which import license must be obtained. Under normal circumstances (see Note), the applications for an import quota (I/Q) and an import license (I/L) may be filed simultaneously (see Q53). If an import quota allocation cannot be obtained, the item cannot be imported into Japan.

Note: When the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Law was amended in 1997, it authorized the simultaneous filing of import quota and import license applications, under most circumstances. However, fishery products and marine products must apply in the former way, first obtaining an import quota and only then applying for import license.

(1) Non-liberalized items

These items are generally referred to as IQ (Import Quota) items. As of April 1, 2002 there were 8 food products (on HS classification basis) in the Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan that were subject to import quotas.

(2) Wild plant and animal species and their derivatives protected by the Washington Convention (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) in Appendix I and the products made from their species.

2. Import approval items (Import Notice No. 2)

In order to implement international and bilateral treaties and other agreements, certain imported products originated in or shipped from specific areas must obtain import approval from the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry in order to enter Japan. The products subject to this requirement are published in issue No. 2 of the Import Notice, and as a result are commonly referred to as “No. 2 approval items.”

3. Prior confirmation items

Some items require confirmation from the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry prior to importation, while others require confirmation from Customs at customs clearance time. This system is not intended as a direct import restriction. Rather, its purpose is to monitor imports, oversee compliance with treaties and other international agreements, and supplement the import quota and approval systems.

Q52

What foods are designated as import quota items?

A : The list of import quota items is published by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. As described in Q51, the list breaks down into two main categories: 1) non-liberalized items, and 2) wild plant and animal species and their derivatives protected by the Washington Convention and processed items from these species.

1. Non-liberalized items (IQ items)

As of April 1, 2002, the following foods were defined as non-liberalized items. For more complete information, direct your inquiries to the contact points listed below.

Table 16 Non-Liberalized Items (Foods)

Items	Contacts	Telephone No.
Fish caught in coastal waters of Japan (Note 1)	Agricultural and Marine Products Office, Trade Licensing Division, Trade Control Department, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	03-3501-1511
Scallops, adductors of shellfish, and squid (Note 2)		
Edible seaweed (<i>nori, konbu</i>) (including preparations)		

Note 1: Herrings, codfish, yellowtail, mackerel, sardines, horse mackerel, saury

- 1) live,
- 2) fresh or chilled,
- 3) frozen,
- 4) fillets and other fish meat,
- 5) dried, salted, or in brine, and fish meal made from these fish; cod roes (*tarako*); dried sardines.

Note 2: All types of squid except for *mongo* squid

2. Wild plant and animal species and their derivatives protected by the Washington Convention (classified in Appendix I) and processed items from these species

Commercial trade in the 559 species of wild plants and animals and their derivatives, as well as the products made from their species, listed in Appendix I (species are in immediate danger of extinction which are or may be affected by trade) of the Washington Convention (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is prohibited. Japan reserves the right to continue trade in six of these species, including sperm whales, but all others are designated as Import Quota items.

No import quota certificate will actually be issued, in principle, for products made from wild plant and animal species listed in Appendix I.

* Contacts: Agricultural and Marine Products Office, Trade Licensing Division, Trade Control Department, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (TEL: 03-3501-1511)

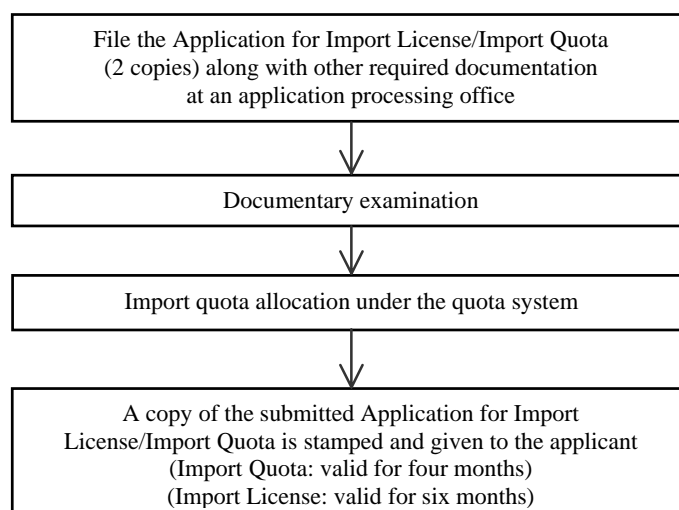
Q53

Could you explain how to apply for an import quota allocation for import quota items?

A : In the case of import quota (IQ) items, normally an import quota limit is set once per year. Those limits are set in consideration of the food supply situation, price trends, foreign relations issues, and other factors. Import quotas are granted within the confines of those limits. In principle the quotas are numeric, although monetary limits are set for some products for which numeric quotas are difficult to define.

Information about where to file applications (processing offices), filing date, applicant qualifications, range of items covered, and supplemental documentation to be filed appears in the METI public bulletin published by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and in the JETRO Tsusho Koho.

Figure 12 Import Quota Application Procedure



There are two quota allocation systems: 1) allocation to trading companies (for articles available directly to consumers); and 2) allocation to users (allocated to manufacturers and organizations that use the imported products as raw materials to make the products). At present, both allocations are sometimes applied depending on individual circumstances, and in some product categories there is a quota application system on a first-come, first-served basis for new market entrants.

* Contacts: Ministry contacts with authority over the IQ items (Q52)

Q54

What types of foods require an application for an import license?

A : Foods that require an application for an import license (I/L) include 1) import quota items (those IQ items as described in Q52 for which an import quota allocation has been obtained), and 2) specific foods originated in or shipped from specific areas (referred to commonly as “No. 2 approval items.”

No. 2 approval items are foods requiring import license when there is a need to limit imports from certain specific areas to adhere to international product conventions and other agreements, or to prohibit or limit imports from specific locations under provisions of bilateral agreements, including the following items.

(1) Whales and their preparations, originated in or shipped from non-member countries of the International Whaling Convention

Under normal circumstances, no import license is granted. Depending on the exporting country, however, there are some case in which an import license is granted, provided the whaling does not undermine steps intended to conserve whale resources as determined by the International Whaling Commission (IWC).

* Contacts: Whaling Section, Far Seas Fisheries Division, Resources Management Department, Fisheries Agency (TEL: 03-3502-8111)
Import Divisions at Regional Bureaus of Economy, Trade and Industry, Regional Offices of International Trade and Industry, and at the Okinawa General Bureau

(2) Salmon, trout and their preparations, originated in or shipped from China, North Korea and Taiwan

In order to preserve the principle of state of origin over salmon and trout under general international law, importation is not approved if the product being imported was caught in violation of that principle. This does not apply, however, if the importer has obtained a certificate of confirmation from the Fisheries Agency.

* Contacts: Trade Licensing Division, Trade Control Department, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (TEL: 03-3501-1511)
Far Seas Fisheries Division, Resources Management Department, Fisheries Agency (TEL: 03-3502-8111)

(3) Fish, shellfish, molluscs, edible seaweed, etc. (shipped from the open seas or in the territorial water of another country and transferred from foreign fishing boats before being imported into Japan) (specific import approval)

The importation of fishery products caught by foreigners is regulated in order to prevent damage to the maintenance of normal order in the fishery industry in Japan.

* Contacts: Same as (2) above

(4) Foods originated in or shipped from specific areas, including Iraq, Belize, Honduras, and Equatorial Guinea (All articles from Iraq, and blue-finned tuna and its preparation, etc. from other countries including Belize are covered).

* Contacts: Trade Licensing Division, Trade Control Department, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (TEL: 03-3501-1511)

(5) Plant and animal species listed in Appendix II and III of the Washington Convention, and processed products made from these species (when imported from non-signatory countries; however, in principle, an import license is never granted)

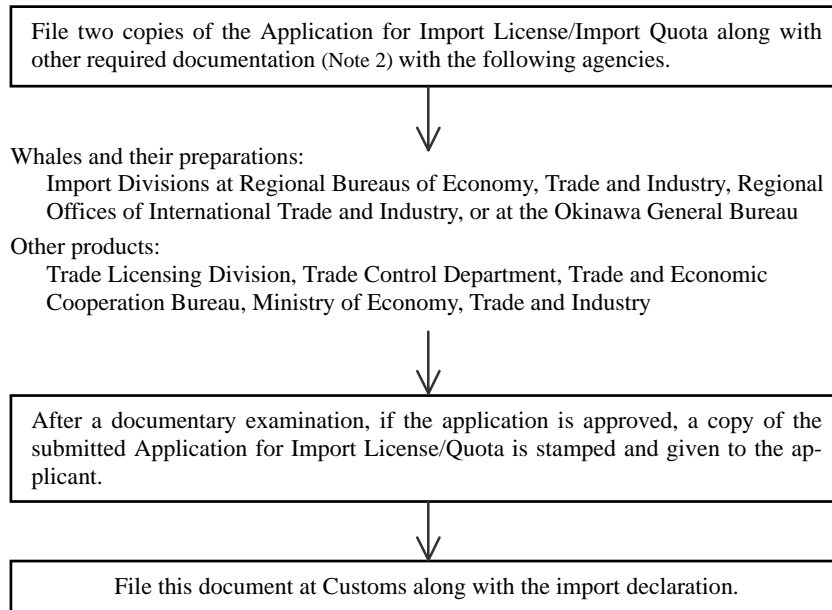
* Contacts: Same as (4) above

Q55

Could you explain about the procedure for applying for an import license?

A : Prior to actually importing the No. 2 approval items, you must follow the sequence of steps shown below to obtain an import license.

Figure 13 Import License Application Procedure



Note 1: The Application for Import License/Import Quota may be purchased at the Government Publications Service Center.

Note 2: Import contract, letter of confirmation from the Fisheries Agency, etc.

Q56

What types of foods are subject to prior confirmation requirements, and what procedures must be followed?

A : Foods requiring prior confirmation are those that require prior confirmation from the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry before being imported, and those that require confirmation from the Customs at customs clearance time. The purpose of this system is not to directly restrict imports, but rather to monitor imports, assure compliance with treaties and other international agreements, and supplement the import quota and import license systems.

1. Prior Confirmation System

The foods listed below require prior confirmation from the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry before being imported into Japan. The procedure is to file an application for confirmation as indicated below.

Table 17 Foods Covered by Prior Confirmation System

Items subject to prior confirmation system	Contacts/application filing office
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuna imported by vessel (fresh, chilled or frozen tuna excluding long-finned tuna, blue-finned tuna and southern blue-finned tuna), and fresh, chilled or frozen marlin (including sword fish) • Frozen blue-finned tuna, southern blue-finned tuna and big-eye tuna 	Agricultural and Marine Products Office, Trade Licensing Division, Trade Control Department, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (TEL: 03-3501-1511)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whales and their preparations (Imported from signatory nations of the International Whaling Convention, and not requiring an import quota or an import license) 	Import Divisions of Regional Bureaus of Economy, Trade and Industry, Regional Offices of International Trade and Industry, or Okinawa General Bureau

Also some foods made from species listed in Appendix II and III of the Washington Convention may be subject to prior confirmation requirements.

* Contacts: Trade Licensing Division, Trade Control Department, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (TEL: 03-3501-1511)

2. Customs Confirmation System

In order to import fresh or chilled blue-finned tuna and southern blue-finned tuna, the importer must file a blue-finned tuna statistical certificate or a southern blue-finned tuna statistical certificate with Customs for its confirmation at the time of customs clearance.

* Contacts: Agricultural and Marine Products Office, Trade Licensing Division, Trade Control Department, Trade and Economic Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (TEL: 03-3501-1511)

Also, some foods made from species listed in Appendix II or III of the Washington Convention may be subject to the Customs confirmation system.

* Contacts: Same as 1. above

Q57

Are processed foods made from import quota items also treated as import quota items?

A : Processed foods and preparations are also treated as import quota items in some cases. For instance, seaweed and other preparations must follow the sequence of procedures described in Q53 and Q55 for an import quota and an import license.

In addition, processed foods or preparations that use import quota items as a portion of their ingredients may be treated as import quota items depending on preparation method, ingredient ratio, flavoring conditions, and others. Prospective importers of these products would be well-advised to consult with Customs Counselors in advance, after checking how large a proportion of the product is made up of IQ items.

* Contacts: Customs Counselors Offices (Q62)

SHORT MEMO

The following fishery products are defined as import quota items.

- Fish caught by foreign vessels on the open seas (including exclusive economic zone)
- Fish caught by foreign vessels in territorial waters of other nations
- Fish caught by Japanese vessels in foreign territorial waters, with permission of the foreign country

The following items are treated as domestic cargo (domestic products).

- Fish caught by Japanese vessels in Japan's territorial waters
- Fish caught by Japanese vessels on the open seas (including exclusive economic zone)

(6) Issues Related to the Tariffs and Consumption Tax

Q58

Could you explain what taxes (tariffs, consumption tax, etc.) are due on imported products?

A :

1. Tariffs

A tariff is a tax imposed on imported products. The taxable basis is either the customs value (= the price of the food itself + insurance + freight charges) or the volume. For more complete information, consult the Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan (Note). The following generalizations can be made regarding tariffs. Also, if it is difficult to determine which tariff rate should be applied to the product in question, you would be well-advised to discuss the matter with the Customs Counselors Offices.

- (1) The applicable tariff rate sometimes differs by the country of origin. In general, imports from developing countries are subject to a lower tariff rate.
- (2) Some product categories have a two-tiered tariff rate under the tariff quota system (examples: natural cheese, tomato puree and paste).
Under the tariff quota system, up to a certain amount imports are subject to a low tariff rate (the primary tariff rate), after which a higher tariff rate (the secondary tariff rate) applies. In order to obtain the primary tariff rate, importers have to apply and be granted a tariff quota allocation. (see Q60)
- (3) Some products are subject to differential tariff rates if they are individually packaged or shipped in bulk (example: tea).
- (4) Products can be subject to different tariff rates depending on their ingredients (example: different rates based on whether the product has added sugar).
- (5) Products can be subject to different tariff rates depending on time of importation (example: bananas and oranges, etc.).

Note: The Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan is published by the Japan Tariff Association (TEL: 03-3263-7221).

2. Liquor Tax

Products treated as alcoholic beverages under provisions of the Liquor Tax Law are subject to liquor tax on a volume basis when imported.

3. Consumption Tax

Consumption tax (5%) is imposed on the sum of the customs value and any applicable tariffs (or liquor taxes, in some cases).

In principle, neither tariffs nor consumption tax are due when the customs value is under ¥10,000, whether the item is being imported for business or personal purposes. Alcoholic beverages are also exempt from tariffs and consumption tax if the value is under ¥10,000, but they still are subject to liquor taxes.

* Contacts: Customs Counselors Offices (Q62)

Q59

Could you explain how to read and interpret the Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan?

A : The Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan are divided into 21 sections by product category, and provide listings of applicable tariff rates for each product. Foods appear in section I (live animals and animal products), section II (vegetable products), section III (animal or vegetable fats and oils and their cleavage products; prepared edible fats; animal or vegetable waxes), and section IV (prepared food-stuffs; beverages, spirits and vinegar; tobacco and manufactured tobacco substitutes).

The example below illustrates how tariff rates appear in the next four columns after the columns for the product code and product name. Those rates are as follows.

1. General rate (defined under the Customs Tariff Law)
2. WTO rate (defined by the WTO or under the Customs Law)
3. Preferential rate (applicable to imports from certain countries or places of origin under Article 8, Paragraph 2 of the Temporary Tariff Measures Law)
4. Temporary rate (defined under the Temporary Tariff Measures Law)

The actual applicable tariff rate even for the same product differs depending on the exporting country. For more complete information, please refer to the “Applicable Rate by Country or Area” in the Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan. In general, imports from non-WTO member countries are subject to General rate, imports from developed countries (WTO member states) are subject to WTO rates, and imports from developing countries are subject to Preferential rates.

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 regulation are met. Also, WTO rates apply when those rates are lower than Temporary or General rates.

Table 18 Example from the Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan

番号 No.	統計 細分 Stat. Code No.	N A C S 用	品 名	税 率 Rate of Duty				単位 Unit	Description
				基 本 General	協 定 WTO	特 恵 Prefer- ential	暫 定 Tempo- rary		
08.01			ココヤシの実、ブラジルナット及び カシューナット(生鮮のもの及び乾 燥したものに属するものとし、殻又は 皮を除いてあるかないかを問わな い。)						Coconuts, Brazil nuts and cashew nuts, fresh or dried, whether or not shelled or peeled;
			ココヤシの実						Coconuts:
8801.11	000	4	乾燥したもの	6%	3%	無税 Free		KG	Desiccated
8801.19	000	3	その他のもの	6%	3%	無税 Free		KG	Other
			ブラジルナット						Brazil nuts:
8801.21	000	1	殻付きのもの	4%	3%	無税 Free		KG	In shell
8801.22	000	0	殻を除いたもの	4%	3%	無税 Free		KG	Shelled
			カシューナット						Cashew nuts:
8801.31	000	5	殻付きのもの	無税 Free	(無税) (Free)			KG	In shell
8801.32	000	4	殻を除いたもの	無税 Free	(無税) (Free)			KG	Shelled

A : As discussed in Q58, some products are subject to a two-tiered tariff rate system. During FY 2002 the following foods were covered by tariff quota system.

- Natural cheese (for use in making processed cheese)
- Corn (for use in making corn starch, etc.)
- Cocoa preparations without added sugar (for use in making chocolate)
- Malt (for use in beer brewing)
- Molasses (for use in making alcohol)
- Tomato puree and tomato paste (for use in making tomato ketchup or tomato sauce)
- Canned pineapple
- Powdered skim milk, sugar-free condensed milk, whey, butter and butter oil, processed food fats, other dairy products
- Miscellaneous legumes, starch, inulin and starch preparations, peanuts, tubers of *konnyaku*

Under the tariff quota system, up to a certain amount imports are either duty free or subject to a low tariff rate (the primary tariff rate), thereby providing users with low-cost imported products. However, imports in excess of that amount are subject to a high tariff rate (the secondary tariff rate), which provides protection to domestic producers.

For example, in the case of tomato puree and tomato paste, the tariff quota limit for FY 2002 was 38,000 tons (primary tariff rate: duty free). Above this level, though, imports were subject to the secondary tariff rate (General rate: 20%, WTO rate: 16%).

In general, applications for quota allocation are filed once a year during a predetermined interval. Applicants are required to actually use the product in accordance with a specific purpose in order to obtain a quota allocation. In the case of tomato puree and tomato paste, for instance, the eligibility criteria (for FY 2002) were as follows.

1. The quota recipient must possess manufacturing facilities for tomato ketchup and other tomato sauces as of April 1, 2002.
2. The quota recipient must be deemed to actually use the tomato puree and tomato paste as ingredient to make tomato ketchup or other tomato sauces.

* Contacts: International Trade Policy Coordination Division, International Affairs Department,
General Food Policy Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
(TEL: 03-3502-8111) <http://www.maff.go.jp>

Q61

If the return or destruction is judged to be unavoidable, can the importer get a refund on tariffs paid at the time of import?

A : Tariff and consumption tax refunds can be granted if certain requirements are met if the return or destruction is judged to be unavoidable.

1. If the return or destruction is determined to be unavoidable (Note 1)

- (1) The quality and volume of the shipment differs from contract stipulations.
- (2) After importation, it becomes apparent that law or regulation prohibit the sale of the article in Japan.

2. Conditions

- (1) The cargo in question must have been transported to a bonded area within six months, normally, from the date of the import permission (Note 2).
- (2) No alteration must have been made in the character or form of the article as it was at the time of importation.

3. Required procedural documentation

- (1) When obtaining a refund due to re-export for the purpose of returning the article

In addition to the normal export procedures, the following documentation is also required.

- 1) Tariff refund (reduction or exemption) pertaining to exportation of a breach-of-contract item, etc., 2 copies
- 2) Breach-of-contract item, etc., bonded area transit-in report receipt (presented to the exporter when the cargo is transported to the bonded area and the “breach-of-contract item, etc., bonded area transit-in report” is filed)
- 3) Import permit form obtained at time of importation, or any customs certificate substituting for the above (when imported by mail, the notice of tax for foreign posted items)
- 4) One of the following:
 - A copy of the contract document demonstrating the substance of the agreement and how the product violates the agreement, and any documentation of consent regarding the return.
 - Document or other material obtained after importation demonstrating that the importation and sale of the product in Japan is prohibited by law.

- (2) When obtaining a refund due to destruction of the article

As with a return, the documentation described in 2) through 4) above, along with two copies of the application for approval for extinction (or destruction), and any documentation demonstrating that the article must be destroyed. After the application is approved, the importer will receive a confirmation that the article has been destroyed.

Sometimes there are limitations on the bonded area for the cargo, so you would be well-advised to check with the Customs with authority over the port of exit.

Note 1: Aside from the conditions above, returns are not eligible for tariff refunds. For example, unsold merchandise being returned to the manufacturer is not eligible.

Note 2: If the six-month limit was exceeded unavoidably, the Director-General of Customs may grant an extension to one year.

* Contacts: Customs Counselors Offices (Q62)

Q62

Could you give me contacts for more information about tariffs and tariff rates?

A : The Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan list tariff rates for a food by product code (referred to as HS Numbers). If you still have some question, though, you can contact the Customs Counselors Offices at your nearest Customs.

As discussed in Q58, some items are subject to differential tariff rates according to the ingredients or their proportions. Before you pose questions about tariffs, you need to have complete information about the content and ingredients, especially for processed foods and prepared foods.

Table 19 Customs Counselors Offices

Name	Address	TEL No.	URL
Hakodate Customs	Hakodate Harbor Government Bldg., 24-4 Kaigan-machi, Hakodate City, Hokkaido 040-8561	0138-40-4261	http://www.hakodate-customs.go.jp
Tokyo Customs	Tokyo Harbor Government Bldg., 2-56 Aomi, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-8615	03-3529-0700	http://www.tokyo-customs.go.jp
Yokohama Customs	1-1 Kaigan-dori, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231-8401	045-212-6000	http://www.yokohama-customs.go.jp
Nagoya Customs	2-3-12 Irifune, Minato-ku, Nagoya 455-8535	052-654-4100	http://www.nagoya-customs.go.jp
Osaka Customs	Osaka Harbor Government Bldg, 4-10-3 Chikko, Minato-ku, Osaka 552-0021	06-6576-3001	http://www.osaka-customs.go.jp
Kobe Customs	12-1 Shinko-cho, Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-0041	078-333-3100	http://www.kobe-customs.go.jp
Moji Customs	Moji Harbor Government Bldg, 1-3-10 Nishi-Kaigan, Moji-ku, Kitakyushu 801-0841	093-332-8372	http://www.moji-customs.go.jp
Nagasaki Customs	1-36 Dejima-machi, Nagasaki City, Nagasaki 850-0862	095-828-8619	http://www.nagasaki-customs.go.jp
Okinawa Regional Customs	4-17 Tondo-cho, Naha City, Okinawa 900-0035	098-863-0099	http://www.okinawa-customs.go.jp

You can ask questions any time of the day or night by phone or fax by calling one of the numbers listed below and entering the appropriate code (service available 24 hours a day, year-round). Please obtain a list of codes by dialing the fax number and entering code 0000. A similar service is also available over the Internet.

Customs Information Telephone/Fax Service

Tokyo	03-3528-3666
Yokohama	045-212-0300
Nagoya	052-655-1790
Osaka	06-6576-1130
Kobe	078-333-4410
Moji	093-332-8800

2. Laws and Regulations that Apply at the Time of Sale

(1) Overview

Q63

What is required generally in order to sell imported foods in Japan?

A : All foods sold in Japan, whether they were imported or produced in Japan, are subject to legal and regulatory requirements for what items of information must appear on labels. Foods that do not bear required labeling not only cannot be sold in Japan, but also cannot be displayed for the purpose of sale or used for any other commercial purposes.

In addition, as is the case with food produced in Japan, food retailing licenses are required for certain types of businesses and certain types of imported foods. The Food Sanitation Law and local ordinances mandate license system (including licenses, notifications, or registrations) of designated business types with a particularly acute need to maintain sanitation. In order to obtain a business license, facilities must comply with specified standards.

The Food Sanitation Law imposes these requirements on food and beverage service establishments, dairy product retailers, meat retailers, fishery retailers, and others. Also, some local ordinances mandate the appointment of a food sanitation supervisor.

The sale of alcoholic beverages requires license, while the sale of table salt and rice requires registration.

*** Contacts:**

Operating license: Local public health centers (with jurisdiction over the sales location)

Alcoholic beverages: Taxation Office (with jurisdiction over the sales location)

Rice: Food Agency Offices, or prefectural supervisory bureau

Salt: Tobacco and Salt 1st Section, Tobacco and Salt Industries Office, General Administration Division, Financial Bureau, Ministry of Finance (TEL: 03-3581-4111)

Customs (with jurisdiction over the business location)

A : In order to import and sell (either at wholesale or retail) alcoholic beverages (beverages with at least 1% alcohol content), the Liquor Tax Law requires a liquor vendor's license (imported liquor wholesaler's license or a liquor retailer's license).

1. Imported liquor wholesaler's license

This license authorizes the holder to sell imported alcoholic beverages at wholesale to liquor stores, but not to make retail sales. Holders may not sell alcoholic beverages produced in Japan under this license.

2. Liquor retailer's license

This license authorizes the holder to make retail sale of alcoholic beverages to consumers (or restaurants), but not to sell at wholesale. It does, however, authorize holders to individually import alcoholic beverages and sell them at retail.

The license application form must be accompanied by the supplemental documentation listed below. Please note, however, that the requirements and types of documentation differ according to whether the applicant is seeking a wholesale or retail license. For more complete information, please consult with your local Taxation Office.

- Business plan (listing anticipated suppliers, anticipated main customers, and evidence substantiating prospective income statement and expected sales volume)
- Documentation of required funds, detailed listing of required funds, and statement of procurement method
- Exemplified copy of the register book for land and building of sales location for which application is filed
- Physical facility description of sales location for which application is filed
- Resume of the applicant, etc.

* Contacts: Taxation Office with jurisdiction over the sales location

SHORT MEMO

The liquor business licensing system once included a minimum distance standard requiring that license applicants be located a minimum distance away from existing license holders. The purpose of this standard was to achieve a balance between supply and demand. However, this standard was abolished as of January 1, 2001. In addition, the current population standard for balancing supply and demand is being phased out under provisions the three-year deregulation plan adopted in 1998. It is scheduled to be abolished completely as of September 1, 2003.

(2) Labeling

Q65

What legal requirements apply to food labeling?

A : The table below lists the principal laws applying to food product labeling, along with their scope of application and their purpose. Imported food is subject to the same legal requirements of the Food Sanitation Law and other provisions of law as foods made in Japan. Foods that do not bear required labeling not only cannot be sold in Japan, but also cannot be displayed for the purpose of sale or used for any other commercial purposes.

Table 20 Principal Laws Related to Food Labeling

Statute Name	Competent Agency	Scope of Application	Purpose
Food Sanitation Law (Labeling standards)	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Processed foods in containers or packaging (including some fresh foods), chicken eggs, additives	To prevent sanitation related health harm from food and beverages
JAS Law (Quality labeling standards)	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries	All fresh foods, all processed foods, unpolished rice, milled rice	To set appropriate standards for quality labeling to provide information needed for product selection
Measurement Law	Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	Foods stipulated by Cabinet Order (specific foods)	To assure appropriate measurement quantities
Nutrition Improvement Law (Nutritional labeling standards)	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Processed foods and chicken eggs, when they bear nutritional labeling	To provide appropriate information regarding food nutritional content
Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations	Fair Trade Commission of Japan	Prevent improper advertising and labeling on the product and containers or packaging	To assure fair competition and benefit to consumers

Additional labeling is required for alcohol content under the Liquor Tax Law, as well as labeling required by local government ordinance. Some foods are also subject to the Guidelines, and the Fair Competition Codes that, although voluntary, establish industry practices.

* Contacts:

Food Sanitation Law, Nutrition Improvement Law:

Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau,
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)

JAS Law: Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau,

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)

Standard and Labeling Department, Headquarters, (TEL: 048-600-2371)
Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services <http://www.cfqlcs.go.jp>

Measurement Law:

Weight and Measures Office, Measurement and Intellectual Infrastructure Division,
Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau,
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (TEL: 03-3501-1511)
Prefectural Inspection Institute of Weights and Measures

Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations:

Consumer Related Division, Fair Trade Commission of Japan (TEL: 03-3581-5471)

Guidelines: Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau,

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)

Fair Competition Codes:

Fair Trade Commission of Japan (TEL: 03-3581-5471)

Fair Competition Councils (TEL: 03-3501-6047)

A : The foods listed in Table 21 and sealed in wrapping or containers have labeling standards set by the Food Sanitation Law. Labels must list the product name, date of minimum durability or best-before date, name and address of the importer, additives used, whether any allergenic substances are present (see Q74), and others. The Law sets forth specific labeling requirements for particular products in addition to these basic items of information.

For example, a food with health claims would be required under the Food Sanitation Law to include the following in its labeling.

- Product name, best-before date or date of minimum durability, name and address of importer, additives used, allergenic substances (if present), preservation method, usage method, statement that the product is a food with health claims

Note: Foods with health claims are also subject to labeling requirements under the JAS Law, the Measurement Law, and the Nutrition Improvement Law.

In addition, milk, dairy products and other products made principally from milk are subject to labeling requirements set forth in other Ministerial Ordinances.

Labeling must be in the Japanese language, and it must be accurate, legible, and readily visible without opening the packaging. However, foods in packaging with a total surface area of less than 30 cm² may omit labeling.

Table 21 Foods with Labeling Standards set by the Food Sanitation Law

1	Margarine	
2	Alcoholic beverages	
3	Soft drinks	Frozen fruit drinks, fruit juice for ingredient, mineral water, other soft drinks
4	Meat products	Dried meat products, non heat-treated meat products, specified heat-treated meat products, heat-treated meat products
5	Fish ham, fish sausage, whale meat bacon, and such other products	
6	Legumes containing cyanogens	
7	Frozen foods	Filleted fresh fish or shucked shellfish (except fresh oysters) Other frozen foods
8	Irradiated foods	
9	Packaged foods heat pasteurized under pressure	
10	Chicken eggs	Chicken egg in shells, liquid chicken egg
11	Foods sealed in wrapping or containers (other than above 1 to 9 listed)	(1) Meats, fresh oysters for raw consumption, fresh oysters (other than those for raw consumption), fish paste products, instant noodles, fresh noodles (including boiled noodles), lunch boxes, prepared bread, daily dishes, fresh confections, fresh fish and shellfishes for raw consumption, boiled crab
		(2) Boiled octopus Other processed foods
		(3) Citrus fruits, bananas
12	Foods and processed foods listed in Supplemental Table 5-3, Enforcement Regulations for the Food Sanitation Law	
13	Foods with health claims	
14	Food additives	

*Contacts: Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau,
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)

Q67

What kind of labeling does the JAS Law require in order to sell imported processed foods?

A : The JAS Law establishes the “Processed Food Quality Labeling Standards” that apply to all processed foods (specifically those listed in Table 22) sold for consumer use. The following items of information must be listed all together in a readily visible location on the container or packaging.

- Product name
- List of ingredients
- Net contents
- Best-before date or date of minimum durability
- Preservation method
- Country of origin
- Importer’s name and address

Certain foods with particular characteristics are subject to their own separate quality labeling standards, and must include quality-related items of information other than those stipulated by the “Processed Food Quality Labeling Standards.” Please consult with the contact agencies listed below for more complete information.

*Contacts: Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau,
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)
Standard and Labeling Department, Headquarter,
Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services (TEL: 048-600-2371)

SHORT MEMO

The World Trade Organization (WTO) went into operation in 1995 as part of increasing steps toward economic globalization. WTO provisions require signatory nations to base their domestic standards on international standards (internationally established rules) unless they have a rational cause for doing otherwise. Food product labeling needs to be harmonized under consistent international labeling standards in order to facilitate trade. Thus, in 1999 Japan amended the JAS Law in order to make Japanese standards conformant with internationally recognized food labeling standards (CODEX Standards).

Table 22 Foods Defined by the Processed Food Product Quality Labeling Standards

1. Barley	Polished barley
2. Flour	Rice flour, wheat flour, mixed cereal grain flour, soybean flour, potato flour, preparative cereal grain flour, other flour
3. Starches	Wheat starch, corn starch, cane sugar starch, potato starch, tapioca starch, sago starch, other starches
4. Processed vegetable products	Canned or bottled vegetables, processed tomato products, processed mushroom products, salt-packed vegetables (excluding Japanese-style pickles), pickled vegetables, frozen vegetable products, dried vegetables, vegetables boiled in sweetened soy sauce, other processed vegetable products
5. Processed fruit products	Canned or bottled fruit, jam, marmalade, fruit butter, pickled fruit, dried fruit, frozen fruit products, other processed fruit products
6. Tea, coffee and cocoa preparations	Tea, coffee products, cocoa products
7. Spices	Black pepper, white pepper, red pepper, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, saffron, laurel, paprika, allspice, Japanese pepper, curry powder, mustard powder, horseradish, ginger, other spices
8. Noodles and breads	Noodles, breads
9. Processed cereal grain products	Alphanized (pre-processed) grain, processed rice products, oatmeal, bread flour, <i>fu</i> (wheat-gluten bread), barley tea, other processed cereal grain products
10. Confections	Biscuits, baked confections, rice confections, fried confections, fresh Japanese-style confections, fresh Western-style confections, semi-fresh confections, Japanese-style dry confections, candies, chocolates, chewing gum, confections preserved in sugar, snack confections, frozen confections, other confections
11. Processed bean products	Bean jam, boiled beans, <i>tofu</i> (soybean curd), fried <i>tofu</i> , dried <i>tofu</i> , frozen <i>tofu</i> , <i>natto</i> (fermented soybeans), soybean flour, peanut products, roasted soybeans, other bean preparations
12. Sugar and sweeteners	Sugar, molasses, saccharide
13. Other processed agricultural products	<i>Konnyaku</i> (paste made from the starch of the devil's-tongue), other processed agricultural products not separately classified under 1-12 above
14. Meat products	Processed meat products, canned or bottled fowl meat, frozen fowl meat products, other meat products
15. Dairy products	Milk, processed milk, lactic beverages, condensed milk, concentrated milk, powdered milk, fermented milk and lactic bacillus beverages, butter, cheese, ice cream, other dairy products
16. Processed egg products	Processed chicken egg products, other processed egg products
17. Other processed livestock products	Honey, other processed livestock products not separately classified under 14-16 above
18. Processed fishery products	Dried fishery products, salting-dried fishery products, boiled fishery products, salt-packed fishery products, canned fishery products, fish paste, other processed fishery products
19. Processed seaweed	Tangle, processed tangle products, dried laver, processed laver, dried <i>wakame</i> seaweed, dried <i>hijiki</i> seaweed, dried <i>arame</i> seaweed, agar-agar, other processed seaweed products
20. Other processed fishery products	Other processed fishery products not separately classified under 18 or 19 above
21. Flavorings and soups	Table salt, <i>miso</i> (soybean paste), soy sauce, other sauces, vinegar, tasting flavorings, flavoring related products, soups, other flavorings and soup products
22. Cooking oils and fats	Vegetable-based cooking oils and fats, animal-based cooking oils and fats, processed cooking oils and fats
23. Cooked foods	Pre-cooked frozen foods, chilled foods, retort pouch foods, boxed lunches, daily dishes, other cooked foods
24. Beverages	Drinking water, soft drinks, ice, other beverages
25. Other processed foods and beverages	Yeasts and leavenings, powdered juices, other processed foods and beverages not separately classified under 21-24 above.

A : The JAS Law provides for the “Fresh Food Product Quality Labeling Standards” that apply to agricultural products, livestock and fishery products and other fresh foods sold to consumers (definition of fresh food: food or beverage other than processed foods as listed in Table 23). It is required to place labeling of the following two items.

- 1) Product name
- 2) Country of origin

In addition, fishery products are subject to the “Fishery Product Quality Labeling Standards,” under which the following items of information are required.

- 1) Products that were previously frozen and subsequently thawed must use the word “thawed”
- 2) Products that were deliberately cultivated must use the word “cultivated”

The Law requires non-retail vendors to include labeling on the container or packaging in a readily visible location, and on the bill of parcels or statement of delivery. The Law requires retailers to place labeling on the container or packaging in a readily visible location, or to display it in a readily visible location adjacent to the applicable fresh food item.

*Contacts: Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau,
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)
Standard and Labeling Department, Headquarter,
Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services (TEL: 048-600-2371)

Table 23 Foods Defined by the Fresh Food Product Quality Labeling Standards

1. Agricultural food products
(products that are prepared, sorted, or washed after harvesting, including those that are merely cut)
 - (1) Rice (including mixtures with polished barley or other grains)
Unpolished rice (brown rice), polished rice
 - (2) Other grains
Corn, millet, barn millet, buckwheat, broomcorn millet, Indian millet, pearl barley, other grains
 - (3) Beans (not including unripened beans)
Soybeans, adzuki beans, kidney beans, peas, string beans, broad beans, green beans, peanuts, other beans
 - (4) Vegetables (including those merely cut)
Tuberous vegetables, leaf vegetables, fruit vegetables, spice vegetables, picking vegetables, mushrooms, edible wild plant, fruit pulp vegetables, other vegetables
 - (5) Fruits (including those merely cut or frozen)
Citrus fruits, nucleolus fruits, kernel fruits, berries, shell fruits, tropical and subtropical fruits, other fruits
2. Livestock food products
 - (1) Meats (including chilled, frozen, sliced, and cut meats)
Beef, pork, wild boar meat, horse meat, mutton, goat meat, rabbit meat, poultry meat, other fresh meats
 - (2) Edible fowl eggs (fresh eggs in shells)
Chicken eggs, duck eggs, quail eggs, other edible eggs
3. Fishery food products
(including round, semi-dressed, dressed, filleted, cut, *sashimi* (fresh slices of raw fish; not including combinations), stripped, frozen, thawed and live fishery products)
 - (1) Fish
Fresh-water fish, salmon and trout, sardines and herring, bonito, tuna and mackerel, horse mackerel, yellowtail and common dolphin, cod and sole, flatfish and flounder, sea bream and red snapper, other fish
 - (2) Shellfish
Corbicula and pond snails, oysters, ark shells, alaga shells, clams, short-necked clams, hen clams, abalone, top shells, other shellfish
 - (3) Fishery animals
Squid, octopus, shrimp, lobster, prawns and crayfish, crabs, other crustaceans, sea urchins, sea slugs, turtles, other fishery animals
 - (4) Marine mammals
Whales, dolphins, other marine mammals
 - (5) Seaweed
Tangle, *wakame*, laver, sea lettuce, agar-agar, other seaweed

A : As discussed in Q65, the Food Sanitation Law, the JAS Law (Law Concerning Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products), the Measurement Law and the Nutrition Improvement Law all have mandatory provisions related to labeling.

1. Food Sanitation Law

The Food Sanitation Law defines that “any food for which a labeling standard is defined must bear labeling that conforms to the standard, or else it may not be sold, displayed for the purpose of supplying it for sale, or for any other commercial purpose.”

In the case of imported products as well, the person who intends to sell the product to the general public is responsible for attaching the labeling required by the Law.

2. JAS Law

The Law was amended in 1999 to require product quality labeling for all food products sold to ordinary consumers (see Q67, Q68). In the case of imported foods, the labeling obligation under the product quality labeling standard falls upon the importer.

3. Measurement Law

The Measurement Law obligates any entity importing and selling foods packed in airtight container-packages to accurately measure and provide that accurate measurement of the net content volume on the label. The Law also stipulates a permissible tolerance for how much the actual volume may vary from the stated volume. Products that exceed this tolerance may not be sold in Japan.

* Contacts:

Food Sanitation Law:

Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau,
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)

JAS Law:

Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau,
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)

Standard and Labeling Department, Headquarter,
Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services (TEL: 048-600-2371)
<http://www.cfqlcs.go.jp>

Measurement Law:

Weight and Measures Office, Measurement and Intellectual Infrastructure Division,
Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau,
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (TEL: 03-3501-1511)
Prefectural Inspection Institute of Weights and Measures

Q70

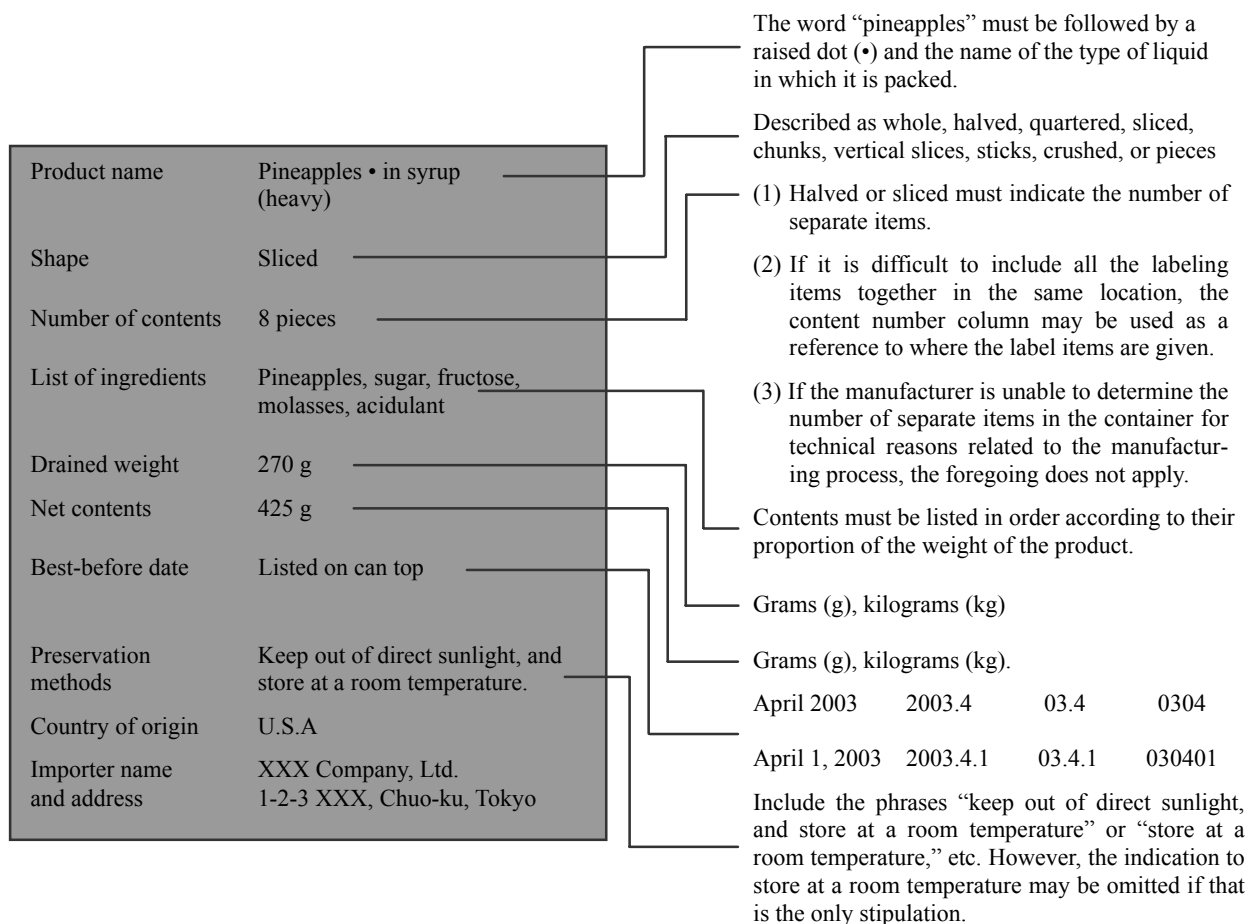
Does it suffice to translate foreign language labeling on imported products into Japanese?

A : As stated in Q66, labeling must be in Japanese, and must use easy-to-read and readily understandable in accordance with the law. If you simply translate the labeling that appears on the product in the exporting country, you take the risk that the labeling may be inadequate in some way, because the required labeling items differ from the country of origin, because different units of measure are used, or some other reason.

Take the case of food additives, for example. A food additive with the same name may be produced according to different standards in Japan and other countries. Also, some substance that is listed as an ingredient in the exporting country labeling may have to be listed as a food additive in Japan (such as vitamins added as a nutritional supplement).

Consequently, the requirement is that it conform to Japanese labeling standards, and that the items of information on the label be stated accurately.

Figure 14 Labeling Example: Canned or Bottled Pineapples



Q71

What is the right way to describe food additives in labeling?

A : In principle, all additives used in food products are subject to labeling requirements.

Normally, an additive shall be declared by both substance name and category name when used for one of the following eight purposes.

- Sweetener
- Coloring agent
- Preservative
- Thickening agent, stabilizer, gelling agent
- Antioxidant
- Color fixative
- Bleaching agent
- Anti-mold agent

Designated additives must be listed in accordance with the names in Supplemental Table 2 of the Enforcement Regulations for the Food Sanitation Law (including alternate names) (example: L-ascorbic acid (Vitamin C)). Existing additives must be listed according to the names that appear in the registry of existing additives (example: caffeine).

SHORT MEMO

Sometimes confections imported from Europe contain alphanumeric symbols or codes in their list of ingredient labeling, such as “E123.” This labeling indicates a food additive.

Normally Japan requires that food additives appear by name in the product labeling. However, because there are so many different languages used within the European Union, the EU has adopted this three-digit code labeling system. Food additives on which the Food Science Committee has completed safety evaluations composed of EU member nations and approved for use within the EU has the letter “E” appended as a prefix to the additive code. In this case, “E123” is the code for “Food Red No. 2.”

To find out the official Japanese translations for these E-codes, consult the Food Additives Manual, published by the Japan Food Additives Association (TEL: 03-3667-8311).

A : International food standards (CODEX standards) employ the date marking concept, as do many foreign countries. In Japan, by amendment of the law in 1997, the date marking program was introduced in order to make Japanese labeling standards conformant with international practices. There are two types of date marking:

1. Use-by Date

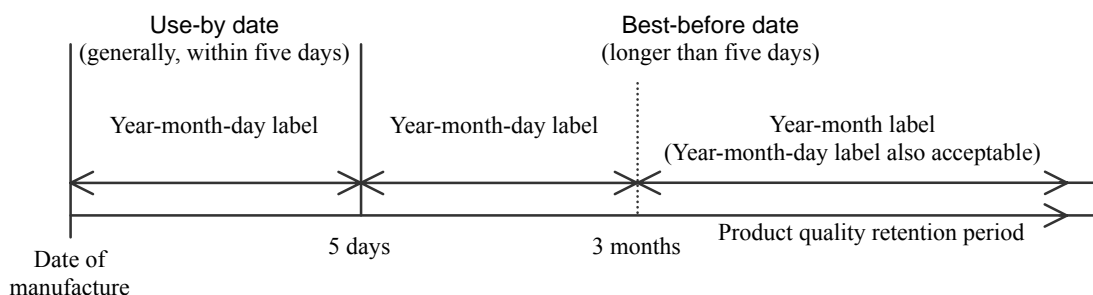
Foods that undergo rapid degradation in product quality (in general, those that retain their quality for five days or less, from the date of manufacture) provide a “use-by date.” This means “eat-before date,” the date which signifies the end of the estimated period under any stated storage conditions, after which the food probably will not have the quality attributes normally expected by consumers. After this date, the food should not be regarded as marketable. Use-by date must of the day, the month and the year.

2. Best-before Date (Date of Minimum Durability)

Foods that undergo comparatively moderate degradation in product quality (in general, those that retain their quality for more than five days, from the date of manufacture) provide a “best-before date.” This indicates to the date before which they can eat the food and still have it retain its quality, although beyond the date the food may still be perfectly satisfactory. Food that retain their full quality for more than three months shall consist at least of the month and the year (year-month-day format is also acceptable).

Dates are set in relation to the properties of foods, based on results of scientifically and rationally performed microbe experiments, physicochemical experiments, and functional testing. Furthermore, date of minimum durability (best-before date) take into consideration the interval during which there is no risk of health or sanitation related harm due to decay or other degradation in food quality, when the food has been preserved by some definite method after manufacture. The date is set so as to provide a fully adequate buffer prior to the end of this interval of time.

Figure 15 Distinction between Use-by Date and Best-before Date (Date of Minimum Durability)



SHORT MEMO

The term “date of minimum durability” is defined by the Food Sanitation Law as “the date indicating the last time when a food or food additive can adequately retain its complete product quality.” On the other hand, the JAS Law defines the term “best-before date” as “the last date when a food in an unopened container or packaging and preserved according to an indicated preservation method can adequately retain its complete expected product quality characteristics.” The two terms are interpreted as semantically identical for administrative purposes. Nevertheless, there have been complaints that the non-uniformity of definition in these terms make them difficult for both consumers and providers to understand. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries have agreed to look into unifying the definition of these terms.

A : The country of origin of a food represents an important piece of information for consumers when choosing a product. Country of origin labeling is subject to the following requirements under provisions of the JAS Law and the Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations.

1. Regulations under the JAS Law

Product quality labeling standards based on the JAS Law require country of origin labeling for all processed foods and fresh foods sold to consumers.

In the case of agricultural products, the name of a commonly known geographic place may be used instead of the name of the country of origin. In the case of fishery products, the name of the sea area where they was caught may be shown along with the country of origin. (see Q67 and Q68)

2. Regulations under the Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations

All products, including food products, must include labeling that indicates the country of origin in a way that does not mislead general consumers. Labeling that fails to do so is prohibited as a form of misleading representation. Imported foods that do not clearly indicate the actual country of origin in the instances described below are judged to have engaged in “misleading representations.”

- 1) When the label gives a country name or a place name in a country, or shows a national flag or crest of a country other than the country of origin of the product.
- 2) The label gives a manufacturer name, brand name or trademark of a business in a country other than the country of origin of the product.
- 3) The literal description used in the entire labeling or in the main portion of the labeling is Japanese.

For example, a confectionery made by a Japanese company at a plant in China puts a Japanese-language label on the product and sells it under a Japanese brand label. If the country of origin labeling does not say “Made in China,” it constitutes a form of misleading representation.

The Fair Trade Commission of Japan defines the country of origin as “a country in which a treatment or process effecting substantial change to the substance of the goods made.” Examples of an action that produces substantial change would be baking or frying in the case of a rice cracker; manufacturing processes applied to unrefined tea to make black tea; and diluting an a stock solution or fruit juice concentrate to make a soft drink. If pasta is imported in bulk from Italy and packaged for retail sale in Japan, the country of origin is still Italy.

* Contacts:

JAS Law: Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau,
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)

Standard and Labeling Department, Headquarter,
Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services (TEL: 048-600-2371)

Act Against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations:
Consumer Related Division, Fair Trade Commission of Japan (TEL: 03-3581-5471)

A : An increasing number of people suffer from food allergies, which cause rashes or a drop in blood pressure when food is ingested. In some cases the allergic reaction can cause potentially fatal breathing problems. Therefore, it is important to provide consumers with information about allergenic substances present in foods. Internationally, the CODEX Commission agreed in 1999 to include any of eight kinds of foods containing ingredients known to be allergens in labeling for foods.

Following this measure, in April of 2001 the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare instituted its Labeling Program for Foods Containing Allergens, based on provisions of the Food Sanitation Law. Allergenic labeling is required for five items designated as “specified ingredients,” substances with a great need for such labeling given the number of allergenic reactions and the risk to health they pose. Labeling is recommended for another 19 items designated as “items corresponding to specified ingredients.”

<Foods Subject to Ingredient Labeling Requirements>

Processed foods and food additives containing the following foods must state in the labeling that this food is present (additives may use the phrase “made from XX” or “derived from XX”).

Allergenic reactions can occur even from extremely small quantities of allergenic substances. Accordingly, labeling is required regardless of how little is present.

Table 24 Foods Subject to Ingredient Labeling Requirement as Allergens

<p>[Specified ingredients] Labeling mandatory (5 items)</p>	Wheat, buckwheat, eggs, milk, peanuts
<p>[Items corresponding to specified ingredients] Labeling recommended (19 items)</p>	Abalone, squid, salmon, salmon roe (<i>ikura</i>), mackerel, crabs, shrimp/prawn, beef, pork, chicken, oranges, peach, kiwi fruit, apples, walnut, soybeans, yams, gelatin, <i>matsutake</i> mushroom

<Scope of Labeling Requirement>

The requirement applies to processed foods and food additives sealed in wrapping or containers for sale. The requirement applies to food ingredients not regulated under the JAS Law and not sold directly to consumers, so it also applies to foods during the distribution stage.

* Contacts: Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau,
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)

Q75**Could you explain about labeling for organic agricultural products and organic agricultural product processed foods?**

A : The JAS Law instituted the Specific JAS standards (standards for specific production and manufacturing methods and unique ingredients) applying to organic agricultural products and organic agricultural product processed foods. These standards clarified definitions and set standards for production methods and labeling.

Only those food products that comply with the standards are allowed to display the Organic JAS Mark and include in their labeling the phrase “organic.”

The term “organic agricultural product” normally refers to a product cultivated in a field to which no agricultural chemicals or chemical fertilizers have been applied for three years prior to harvest, and have not been grown from seeds, shoots or crops that have been produced using recombinant DNA techniques.

The term “organic agricultural product processed food” normally refers to a product for which 95% of the total weight other than salt and water in the product consists of an organic agricultural product or organic processed agricultural product. And it must be made using a physical or biological (fermentation, smoking, etc.) processing method that keeps the use of food additives to a required minimum.

Among the future issued to be examined include how standards for “organic livestock,” “organic fishery product” and processed foods made from these products should be framed in light of the actual conditions of production, distribution and consumption.

Organic JAS Mark*** Contacts:**

Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau,
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

(TEL: 03-3502-8111)

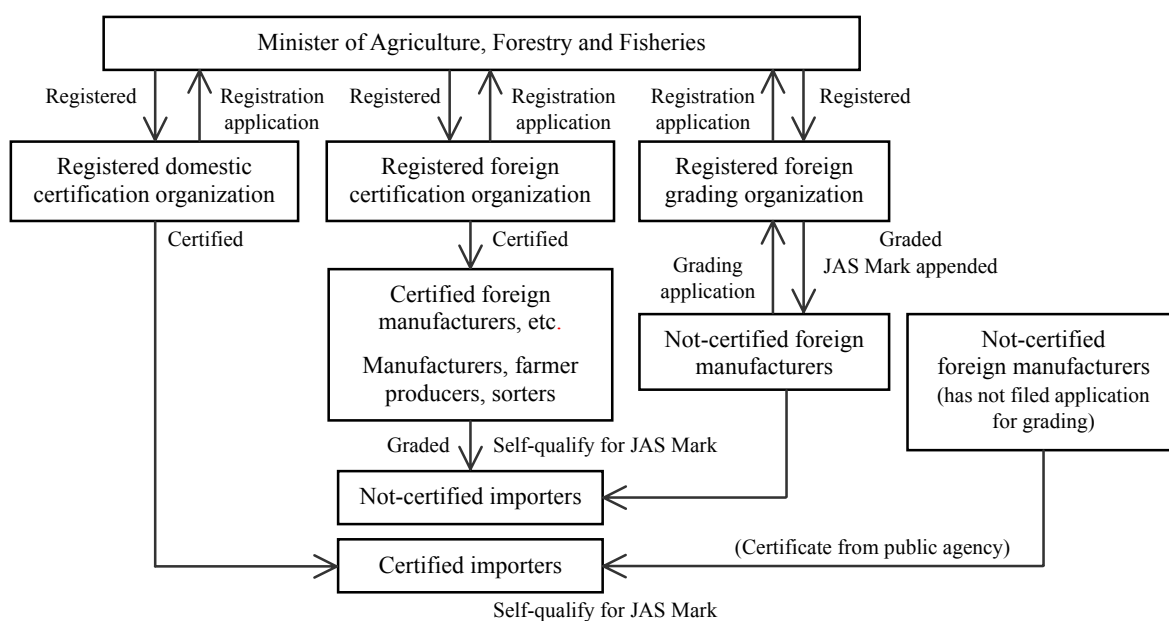
Standard and Labeling Department, Headquarter,
Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services

(TEL: 048-600-2371)

A : Organic agricultural products and organic agricultural product processed foods produced abroad must be certified through one of the following methods to display the Organic JAS Mark and to use the term “organic” to describe the product.

- (1) Product is qualified by a foreign grading organization registered with Japan’s Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and is imported with the Organic JAS Mark attached.
- (2) Foreign manufacturers, production process supervisors (farmer producers) and sorters shall be authorized to self-qualify with the approval of a registered foreign certification organization, and to export the product with the Organic JAS Mark attached.
- (3) Importers may obtain approval to qualify from a registered certification organization in Japan, and they may sell the imported product, in which accompanied a certificate (or copy) issued by a public agency abroad, with the Organic JAS mark attached.

Figure 16 Inspection and Certification System for Imported Organic Agricultural Products and Organic Agricultural Product Processed Foods



Some countries have programs equivalent to the JAS system under which products are graded or certified by registered foreign grading organizations or certification organizations. As of August of 2002, the following countries had programs that Japan recognizes as equivalent to the JAS system.

Ireland, United States, Italy, Australia, Austria, Netherlands, Greece, Sweden, Spain, Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, Belgium, Portugal, Luxembourg, United Kingdom

* Contacts:

Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau,
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)

Standard and Labeling Department, Headquarter,
Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services (TEL: 048-600-2371)

A : The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has adopted a labeling requirement for genetically modified foods recognized as safe (see Table 25), based on provisions of the Food Sanitation Law and the JAS Law. The purpose of the requirement is to provide appropriate information about whether or not genetically modified or recombinant DNA techniques has been used with the product.

<Labeling Method>

There are three labeling methods, based on similar provisions of the Food Sanitation Law and the JAS Law. Products that violate the requirement are subject to legal measures and penalties based on either or both Laws and their regulations. Please be aware of this fact.

- (1) Foods produced from a genetically modified agricultural product and it is confirmed that it has been treated under a identity preserved handling (see Note):
 - Compulsory labeling of “soybeans (genetically modified),” etc.
- (2) Foods produced or distributed without segregation between GM agricultural products and non-GM agricultural products:
 - Compulsory labeling of “soybeans (GM not segregated),” or “soybeans (GM mixed)”
- (3) Foods produced from a non-GM agricultural product and it is confirmed that it has been treated under a identity preserved handling:
 - Voluntary labeling of “soybeans (not genetically modified),” etc.

(Note) “Identity preserved handling” refers to management method in which segregation between genetically modified agricultural products and non-GM agricultural product is accomplished, under the care of good manager at each stage of production, distribution and processing. Further, it must be verified by using documents clearly indicating that segregation has been made.

Labeling may be omitted in the following cases:

- When the genetically modified agricultural product is not one of the main ingredients (not among the top three ingredients by weight, and less than 5% of all ingredients by weight)
- When the recombinant DNA or proteins generated from them are dissolved or removed from the product (soy sauce, oils and fats)

* Contacts:

Food Sanitation Law:

Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau,
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)

JAS Law:

Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau,
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (TEL: 03-3502-8111)

Standard and Labeling Department, Headquarter,
Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services (TEL: 048-600-2371)

Table 25 Foods Subject to Labeling Requirements for Genetically Modified Foods

Agricultural Products (5 items)	Soybean (including green soybeans and soybean sprouts), corn, potato, rapeseed, cottonseed	
	Items subject to labeling	Ingredient subject to labeling
Processed Foods (30 groups)	1 <i>Tofu</i> (soybean curd) and fried <i>tofu</i> 2 Dried soybean curd, soybean refuse, <i>yuba</i> (dried soybean curd) 3 <i>Natto</i> (fermented soybeans) 4 Soy milk 5 <i>Miso</i> (soybean paste) 6 Cooked soybean 7 Canned or bottled soybean 8 <i>Kinako</i> (roasted soybean flour) 9 Roasted soybean 10 Item containing food of items 1 to 9 as a main ingredient 11 Item containing soybeans (for cooking) as a main ingredient 12 Item containing soybeans flour as a main ingredient 13 Item containing soybeans protein as a main ingredient	Soybean
	14 Item containing green soybeans as a main ingredient	Green soybeans
	15 Item containing soybeans sprouts as a main ingredient	Soybean sprouts
	16 Corn snacks 17 Corn starch 18 Popcorn 19 Frozen corn 20 Canned or bottled corn 21 Item containing corn flour as a main ingredient 22 Item containing corn grits as a main ingredient (except corn flakes) 23 Item containing corn (for cooking) as a main ingredient 24 Item containing food items 16 to 20 as a main ingredient	Corn
	25 Frozen potato 26 Dried potato 27 Potato starch 28 Potato snacks 29 Item containing food items 25 to 28 as a main ingredient 30 Item containing potatoes (for cooking) as a main ingredient	Potato

(Note) In addition to the above, labeling is also required for “high oleic acid soybeans” and processed foods made from the same in the Product Quality Labeling Standards under the JAS Law, only when the safety of which has been confirmed by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

SHORT MEMO

Safety review of genetically modified foods have been mandatory in Japan since April of 2001. The Food Sanitation Law prohibits the importation and sale of products that have not yet undergone this review, even if they have been approved for use in other countries. The Enforcement Regulations for the Food Sanitation Law have been amended to require reporting of genetically modified foods and processed foods thereof, as part of the notification system for imported foods. Sometimes verifying documentation is required of identity preserved handling, while the requirement may not be mentioned on the import notification form. Accordingly, it is important to thoroughly investigate requirements and consult with the Imported Foods Inspection Section at the Quarantine Station ahead of time.

A : Some countries have already mandated nutritional content labeling, but Japan does not yet have such a requirement. However, if Japanese-language nutritional ingredient or calorie content labeling does appear on processed foods sold to consumers, that labeling must conform to the nutritional content labeling standards program of the Nutrition Improvement Law.

<Targeted Foods>

Processed foods for sale (including chicken eggs)

<Overview of Nutritional Content Labeling Standards>

- 1) When listing the main nutritional ingredients, the calorie content, and the volume of listed ingredients:

Labeling must list calories, protein, fat, carbohydrates, sodium, and other nutritional content in order by volume.

- 2) When using highlighted or emphatic labeling for nutritional ingredients with high content (calcium, vitamin A, etc.) or low content (low-calorie, non-fat, etc.):

Labeling must list only eligible nutritional ingredients, and the volume level must conform to standard values.

<Label Location>

Product must be labeled in readily visible location without opening the container or packaging.

< Example Label >

Cream-Filled Biscuit	
One biscuit contains the same Vitamin C as 10 strawberries! Strawberry flavor	
(Per pastry xx g)	
Calories	54 kcal
Protein	0.4 g
Fat	2.9 g
Carbohydrate	6.5 g
Sodium	56 mg
Vitamin C	120 mg

* Contacts:

Office of Health Policy on Newly Developed Foods, Policy Planning Division,
Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau,
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)

Could you explain about labeling requirements for foods with health claims?

A : Foods that meet stipulated regulatory and labeling standards established under the Food Sanitation Law may be sold using the phrase “food with health claims.” The category of food with health claims is divided into two types, “foods for specified health uses” and “foods with nutrient function claims,” based on differences in purpose and function.

Foods for specific health uses have been approved after review by the Japanese government for effectiveness and safety of their special physiological and health-promoting properties. These products may display the mark of foods for specified health (based on the Nutrition Improvement Law) in their labeling.

In contrast, foods with nutrient function claims contain specific nutritional ingredients in conformance with the specifications and standards, and labeling includes stipulated items of information. There is no need to apply for approval or file any type of notifications with the government. Foods with nutrient function claims may be freely manufactured and sold in Japan.

< Classification of Foods with Health Claims >

	----- Foods with health claims -----		
Pharmaceuticals (including quasi-drugs)	Foods for specified health uses (Individual approval type)	Foods with nutrient function claims (Specifications and standards type)	General foods (including so-called “health foods”)

< Required Labeling Items >

In addition to the labeling requirements under the Food Sanitation Law, foods with health claims are also subject to the following labeling items.

Foods for specified health uses	Foods with nutrient function claims
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statement that this product is a food with health claims (food for specified health use) 2. Nutritional ingredients (including ingredients to be functional for specified health uses) 3. Specified health uses (approved labeling) 4. Recommended daily dosage of the food 5. Method of intake 6. Ratio to required daily nutritional dose (only when required nutritional dose has been established) 7. Warnings associated with taking the food 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statement that this product is a food with health claims (food with nutrient function claims) 2. Nutritional ingredients (including nutritional ingredients to be functional) 3. Nutritional function 4. Recommended daily dosage of the food 5. Method of intake 6. Ratio to required daily nutritional dose 7. Warnings associated with taking the food 8. Statement that this product has not received separate examination by the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare as a food for specified health uses

The following nutrients may include mention of nutritional function in labeling:

Minerals: calcium, iron

Vitamins: niacin, pantothenic acid, biotin, vitamin A, vitamin B1, vitamin B2, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, vitamin C, vitamin D, vitamin E, folic acid

* Contacts:

Office of Health Policy on Newly Developed Foods, Policy Planning Division,
 Department of Food Safety, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau,
 Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)

Q80

Could you explain about the recycling mark shown in food containers and packaging?

A : The Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources requires identifier labeling designed to promote recycling of containers and packaging. Covered types of containers and packaging include steel cans or aluminum cans used for soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, PET bottles used for soft drinks, alcoholic beverages and soy sauce, plastic containers and packaging, and paper containers and packaging. (see Fig. 17)

In the case of imported foods, importers bear the responsibility, in principle, of making sure the recycling mark appears. There is no legal requirement to put recycling marks on paper packs (non-aluminum) used for soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, or on cardboard packaging. However, the industries involved have voluntarily adopted their own recycling mark used on labeling. (see Fig. 18)

Figure 17 Legally Required Recycling Mark for Food Products



Figure 18 Voluntary Recycling Marks



* Contacts:

Recycling Promotion Division, Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	(TEL: 03-3501-4978) http://www.meti.go.jp
The Japan Containers and Packaging Recycling Association	(TEL: 03-5532-8591) http://www.jcpa.or.jp
Japan Steel Can Recycling Association	(TEL: 03-5550-9431) http://www.rits.or.jp/steelcan/
Japan Aluminum Can Recycling Association	(TEL: 03-3582-9755) http://www.alumi-can.or.jp/
The Council for PET Bottle Recycling	(TEL: 03-3662-7591) http://www.petbottle-rec.gr.jp/
Paper Packaging Recycling Council	(TEL: 03-3501-6191) http://www.kami-suisinkyo.org/
Plastic Packaging Recycling Council	(TEL: 03-3501-5893) http://www.pprc.gr.jp/
Beverage Paper Carton Recycling Council	(TEL: 03-3264-3903) http://www.kami-suisinkyo.org/
Cardboard Recycling Council	(TEL: 03-3248-4851)

3. Product-Specific Procedures and Labeling

Q81

What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling meat in Japan?

A : As discussed in Q42, importation of the flesh, bones, or organs of livestock (cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, and water buffalo) or poultry (chickens, ducks, and turkeys), and of meat products containing these items, must first pass animal quarantine inspection, after which it undergoes inspection to assess safety for human health under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law.

Since animal quarantine stipulations differ depending on the exporting country, please consult with the Animal Quarantine Service for more complete information (Q42, Table 12). If the importer indicates “requesting concurrent inspection” on the application for import quarantine inspection when applying for animal quarantine, the animal quarantine inspection and food sanitation inspection can be performed simultaneously, which expedites the procedural process.

The food sanitation inspection requires that a health certificate issued by a competent government agency of the exporting country be appended to the documentation submitted. If such a certificate is not present, or if the certificate is not complete, then the meat will not be approved for import. The Law allows for the contents of the health certificate from the competent government agency of the exporting country to be transmitted to the computer at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare. In this instance, a health certificate need not be appended to the documentation.

The following items are subject to food sanitation inspection.

1. Does the meat comply with meat specifications and standards?

- The meat does not contain meat from diseased animals.
- The name of the organization in the exporting country that performed the livestock inspection is clearly listed.
- A document certifying that the slaughtering or dismemberment, etc. was conducted in a sanitary manner in accordance with the laws of the exporting country.
- The meat must either contain no residual veterinary pharmaceuticals, or the content level must be below standard limits.
- The bacteria count is within standard limits.

2. Has the meat been appropriately managed?

The meat must be stored at 10 degrees Celsius or under; if frozen, stored at -15 degrees Celsius or under.

3. Is the container-package material in compliance with standards?

The meat must be stored and shipped in a clean, sanitary container with a cover, or wrapped in a synthetic resin film, synthetic resin treated paper, paraffin paper, vitriol paper, or in cloth in a clean and in a sanitary condition.

In addition, any party desiring to sell meat is sometimes required to obtain a business license for a “retailer license of meat.” For more complete information, please check with the health center with jurisdiction over the sales location.

<Example Label>
(in the case of pre-packaging)

Product name	Beef ribs (for Korean barbecue)
Net contents	300 g
Use-by date	2003. 2. 1
Preservation method	Store at 4°C or under
Country of origin	U.S.A.
Importer	XXX Company, Ltd. 1-1-1 XXX, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Q82

What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling processed meat products (ham, sausage, and bacon)?

A : Importation of ham, sausage, bacon, or other processed meat products made from the flesh of livestock (cattle, horses, hogs, sheep, water buffalo) or poultry (chickens, ducks, turkeys) is subject to food sanitation inspection under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law, after passing animal quarantine inspection. You must present a health certificate issued by a competent government agency of the exporting country. (see Q42)

Since animal quarantine stipulations differ depending on the exporting country, please consult with the Animal Quarantine Service for more complete information (Q42, Table 12). Upon request by the importer, the food sanitation inspection and animal quarantine inspection can be performed simultaneously. Importers seeking such handling should clearly write “requesting concurrent inspection” on the application for import quarantine inspection.

The Food Sanitation Law specifies a general specification for all meat products of no more than 0.070 gram per kilogram of nitrous acid ions. In addition, the following specifications and standards apply to particular product categories.

(1) Dried meat products (example: beef jerky, salami sausage)

At smoking or drying time, the water activities must be reduced to less than 0.87 while maintaining the meat products at the standard temperature.

(2) Non-heat-treated meat products (example: country ham, sausage)

Separate specifications have been defined for composition (*E. coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Salmonella ssp.*), ingredient meat preservation methods, pH, salt pickling methods, water activation, and smoking or drying methods.

(3) Specified heat-treated meat products (example: roast beef)

Separate specifications have been defined for composition (*E. coli*, *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Clostridium ssp.*, *Salmonella ssp.*), ingredient meat preservation temperature, pH, salt pickling methods, heat sterilization methods and temperature, and water activation.

(4) Heat-treated meat products (examples: boneless ham, pressed ham, bacon, etc.)

Specifications of composition differ for boneless ham, which is heat-sterilized after packed in container-packages, and for bacon, which is packed in container-packages after being heat-sterilized. In addition, manufacturing standards have been defined for ingredient meat, water used, heat sterilization method and temperature, and usage methods for flavorings.

Accordingly, it is essential to determine to which category of meat product your prospective imported product belongs, and verify whether it complies with composition specifications and manufacturing standards.

<Example Label>

Product name	Beef jerky
List of ingredients	Beef, soy sauce, fructose, spices, flavorings (amino acids, etc.), coloring agents (sodium nitrate)
Net contents	25 g
Best-before date	2002. 4
Preservation method	Avoid direct sunlight, store at as low a temperature as possible.
Country of origin	Australia
Importer	XXX Company, Ltd. 1-1-1 XXX, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Q83**What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling shrimp in Japan?**

A : Shrimp (plus prawns and lobsters, etc.) account for a large share on a value basis of Japan's fishery product imports. They are imported in a wide variety of forms, including live, chilled, frozen, salted, and prepared. Frozen shrimp is by far the most common form on a volume basis.

Importers of fresh shrimp from areas with active cholera outbreaks (countries in Asia and Africa identified by WHO) must submit a health certificate issued by a competent government agency of the exporting country.

The food sanitation inspection mainly checks fresh shrimp for food additives (nitrites used to prevent change to black, boric acid used as a preservative, etc.). In addition, antibiotics are often used on cultivated shrimp to prevent disease, and sometimes any residual antibiotics are detected. Accordingly, fresh cultivated shrimp are designated as products requiring close scrutiny at Quarantine Station.

Frozen shrimp that are thawed and used to make *sushi* and *sashimi* constitute a type of frozen food served without heating. These frozen shrimp are subject to bacteria count standards requiring 100,000 or fewer organisms per gram and no active coliform group. If there is inadequate temperature control in transit, bacteria can multiply, and importers should be aware of this risk.

<Example Label>

Product name	Black tiger (thawed)
Net contents	500 g
Best-before date	2002.12
Preservation method	Store at -18° C or lower
Heated before freezing yes/no	Not heat-treated
Need for reheating after thawing	Heat before consuming
Country of origin	Thailand
Importer	XXX Company, Ltd. XXX, YY City, ZZ Prefecture

SHORT MEMO

Narita Airport near Tokyo ranks first class international airport in the world in the volume of air cargo handled. In 2001 total value of food imports at Narita Airport were about ¥192.6 billion, more than 50% of which (¥108.7 billion) were fishery products or their preparations. Importers are taking advantage of airfreight to bring in fresh fishery products from all over the world, and freighters are constantly being unloaded from early morning until late at night. Many importers now refer jokingly to the airport as the Narita Fish Market.

Of all food imports at Narita Airport, tuna represents the largest on a value basis. Other high-ranking items in value include salmon and trout, and shrimp.

Q84

What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling fresh shellfish in Japan?

A : Although domestic production is declining, advances in shipping, freezing and other distribution technologies have led to increased imports of shellfish. The leading varieties of imported shellfish are short-necked clams, oysters, clams, ark shell, corb shell and abalone.

Importers of fresh oysters for raw consumption and of any variety of shellfish from an area with an active cholera outbreak must submit a health certificate issued by a competent government agency of the exporting country to Quarantine Station when filing the “Notification of Importation of Food, etc.” Shellfish sometimes contain toxins that are harmful to humans (causing paralysis or diarrhea), and there have been more and more cases of shellfish rejected for import because the food sanitation inspection detected these toxins. Consequently, it is advantageous to find out in advance whether these shellfish toxins are present in the area where the shellfish were caught, and to carry out a shellfish toxin inspection in advance to confirm its safety.

Increased incidents of food poisoning caused by enteritis vibrio in stripped shellfish have prompted quarantine stations to tighten monitoring during summertime.

Of all shellfish, oysters lose their freshness most rapidly, and viral organisms often cause food poisoning. Strict processing, content and preservation standards apply to fresh oysters for direct consumption. Prospective importers need to pay close attention to food health issues and to check with the Quarantine Stations in advance.

Storefront resellers of fish and shellfish to consumers and retailers must possess a “retailer license of fish and shellfish.” For more complete information, please check with the public health center with jurisdiction over the store location.

<Example Label>
(in the case of pre-packaging)

Product name	Fresh oyster (for direct consumption)
Use-by date	2002. 2. 1
Preservation method	10°C or under
Sea area caught	XX Sea
Country of origin	South Korea
Processor	XXX Company, Ltd. 1-1-1 XXX, YY City, Miyagi Prefecture

Q85

What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling fresh fruit in Japan?

A : All fresh fruit is subject to plant quarantine requirements. No plant with soil attached is allowed into Japan. In addition, fresh fruit from areas with Mediterranean fruit fly and other insect pest infestations or plant diseases is designated as an import-prohibited article. Importers need to check in advance with the Plant Protection Station. (see Q50)

Upon request by the importer, the food sanitation inspection and plant quarantine inspection can be performed simultaneously. Importers seeking such handling should clearly write “requesting concurrent inspection” on the application for import quarantine inspection.

The food sanitation inspection mainly checks for food additives (anti-molding agent, film compounds, coloring agent, etc.) and residual agricultural chemicals. Regulations specify the types of fruit with which anti-molding agent may be used and the permissible level of residue. Usage standards have also been defined for film compounds and coloring agents. If non-designated additives are found, the fruit must be burned or otherwise disposed of. Importers need to be aware of this.

Residual agricultural chemical standards have been defined for each variety of fruit. It is essential to find out in advance what agricultural chemical usage patterns prevail in the producer nation (including whether the producer nation uses chemicals post-harvest, which is normally not done in Japan).

Product quality of fresh produce in particular often differs according to the place of origin. So, it is essential to display proper labeling at the time of sale. Under provisions of the Fresh Food Product Quality Labeling Standard by the JAS Law, it is required to place labeling of the product name and the country of origin on the container or packaging or in a readily visible location to the consumer.

<Example Label>
(in the case of store front display)

Product name	Banana
Country of origin	Taiwan

SHORT MEMO

Generally speaking, fresh fruit is apt to spoil rapidly, and it is common to find citrus fruit that deteriorated in transit due to plant diseases in storage or to growth of mold. Shippers often use anti-molding agents to combat this problem, but Japanese regulations limit the variety of fruits for which anti-molding agents are authorized as well as the volume of detectable residue.

It appears, though, that in practice shippers almost always use considerably less than the authorized limit.

A : The leading varieties of frozen vegetables imported into Japan are French fried potatoes, sweet corn, green soybeans and mixed vegetables, although recent times have seen a much richer variety of types of vegetable and manner of preparation.

All vegetables, both fresh and processed, are subject to provisions of the Plant Protection Law. Even import-prohibited items may be imported if it can be verified that they were frozen at a temperature of -17.8 degrees Celsius or lower. In this instance, either a phytosanitary certificate or a certificate issued by the competent public agency of the exporting country stating that fact is required. If the product is not an import-prohibited item, the importer should obtain documentation from the manufacturer demonstrating that the vegetable was frozen at a temperature of -17.8 degrees Celsius or lower. If the freezing was inadequate, the vegetable will fail the plant quarantine inspection.

Upon request by the importer, the food sanitation inspection and plant quarantine inspection can be performed simultaneously. Importers seeking such handling should clearly write “requesting concurrent inspection” on the application for import quarantine inspection.

Frozen vegetables fall into two main categories according to the method of handling.

- (1) Fresh vegetables are taken either as-is or after being cut into pieces and put in container-packages before freezing.
- (2) The vegetables are blanched (see Note) or fried or otherwise heat-treated, after which they are frozen.

Note: Vegetables undergo deterioration in product quality even after freezing due to the action of yeast. If the vegetables are blanched, which involves applying heat for a very brief period of time, it inhibits the activity of yeast, and then the vegetables can be frozen.

The food sanitation inspection treats (1) frozen vegetables in much the same way as fresh vegetables, and thus checks to make sure there are no bleaching agents, coloring agents, or other prohibited additives, no residual agricultural chemicals, and no insect pests or other contaminants present. However, (2) frozen vegetables are subject to composition specifications for bacteria count and presence of coliform group. The applicable composition specification differs according to whether heat treatment was applied immediately before the vegetables were frozen, whether the vegetables are meant to be eaten as-is after thawing, or whether the vegetables are meant to be reheated before eating.

A succession of violations of the Food Sanitation Law by frozen vegetables from China in 2002 led to tightened import inspections of frozen vegetables. Residual agricultural chemical inspections were expanded from fresh vegetables to include processed vegetables subjected to simple processes such as blanching or salt water boiling. Prospective importers need to check in advance to make sure their products conform to specifications and standards.

<Example Label>

Product name	Frozen vegetable (green soybeans)
Ingredients	Green soybeans
Net contents	400 g
Best-before date	Shown outside the frame
Preservation method	Store at -18°C or lower
Heated before freezing yes/no	Not heat-treated
Need for reheating after thawing	Heat before consuming
Country of origin	China
Importer	XXX Co, Ltd. X-X, Higashi-ku, ZZ City

What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling pre-cooked frozen foods in Japan?

A : An ever more diverse range of pre-cooked frozen foods are now available, including frozen fries, frozen hamburgers, frozen shao-mai dumplings, frozen noodles, and even frozen rice. Imports of pre-cooked frozen foods are also increasing.

Pre-cooked frozen foods are subject to specifications of composition (bacteria count, E. coli dormancy, etc.) and preservation standards (-15 degrees Celsius or lower) defined under the Food Sanitation Law. Also, some food additives are prohibited in Japan entirely, while others are allowed but are subject to usage limit standards. Prospective importers need to verify in advance whether their products conform to these standards, and should obtain manufacturing process lists and ingredient mixture lists, and perform voluntary inspections, etc.

Importers of frozen rice with a rice content of 30% or greater sometimes are required under provisions of the Foodstuff Law to pay a “Payment for Importation of Rice, etc.” and to file a declaration of the import volume with the Food Agency Office. Please check with the Food Agency Office with jurisdiction over the location for more complete information.

<Example Label>

Product name	Frozen fried shrimp
List of ingredients	Shrimp, batter (bread flour, wheat flour, eggs, starch, sugar, table salt, vegetable protein powder, palm oil, protein hydrolyzate), flavoring (amino acid), baking powder, sodium caseinate, spice extracts (also includes beef, pork and soybean derivative materials)
Net contents	200 g (12 per package)
Best-before date	Shown outside the frame
Preservation method	Store at -18°C or lower
Usage method	Shown outside the frame
Heated before freezing yes/no	Not heat-treated
Need for reheating after thawing	Heat before consuming
Country of origin	Thailand
Importer	XXX Frozen Foods Co., Ltd. X-X, XXX, Minato-ku, Tokyo

What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling beer in Japan?

A : In order to import and sell beer in Japan, you must obtain a liquor vendor's license (see Q64). This is true not only for storefront sales but also for mail order sales of imported liquor, and it also applies even when you as importer are merely acting as an agent. For more complete information, contact the Taxation Office with jurisdiction over the location.

At Customs you will be required to pay liquor taxes under provisions of the Liquor Tax Law in addition to consumption tax and any tariffs that apply. The Customs Tariff Law defines beer as an alcoholic beverage derived by fermentation of barley malt broth. However, such beverages with an alcohol content of 0.5% or less are considered soft drinks, and are not treated as beer for liquor tax assessment purposes.

The Liquor Tax Law designates the following alcoholic beverages as beer (beverages with alcohol content of 1% or higher), and imposes liquor taxes of ¥222 per liter.

- (1) Fermented beverages made from barley malt, hops, and water.
- (2) Fermented beverages made from barley malt, hops, water, rice, corn, kaoliang, potato, starch, saccharide, and coloring agents (caramel). However, the content by weight of these substance shall not exceed five parts out of ten of the barley malt content by weight.

Please be aware that the Liquor Tax Law limits which additives can be used as preservative mixtures in alcoholic beverages.

<Example Label> Canned Beer

Name	Beer
List of ingredients	Barley malt, hops, starch
Alcohol content	Approximately 5%
Net contents	355 ml
Best-before date	2003. 7
Importer	XX Enterprises X-X, YYY-machi, Kita-ku, Osaka
Country of origin	U.S.A
Usage warnings	Please put the empty can in the trash.
<i><u>You must be 20 to drink beer.</u></i>	

Note: Alcohol content is expressed as the percentage of ethyl alcohol present per hundred-weight at a temperature of 15 degrees Celsius.

A : It has been a longstanding custom in Europe to use mineral water not only for drinking water but also for medicinal purposes. European nations have thus adopted strict standards and safety protocols for mineral water. In Japan, the term “mineral water” refers to a soft drink made from drinking water only. Mineral water is subject to separate specifications and standards under the Food Sanitation Law, including specifications for composition (including testing methods), manufacturing and preservation standards. Accordingly, when importing mineral water, in order to verify whether a product conforms to the specifications and standards defined by the Food Sanitation Law, the water content must be tested, and a thorough check must be conducted of all the processes from extraction to bottling at the manufacturing facility.

In addition, importers need to pay attention to and look into the issues of pasteurization methods and internal container pressure for carbonated products, as discussed below, and contact the Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station in advance.

(1) Pasteurization Methods

- Heat pasteurization : center portion temperature and heat treatment duration
- Ozone processing or ultraviolet irradiation : implementation method
- Active carbon absorption processing or filtration, or other filtering-based decontamination method: structure and mesh size

(If the mineral water is not sterilized or decontaminated, it is necessary to obtain information from the local producer about manufacturing methods and discuss the matter with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.)

(2) Carbonated Products

Carbonated products are checked to see if the carbon dioxide pressure inside the container is 1.0 kgf/cm² or higher at 20 degrees Celsius.

The Food Sanitation Law, JAS Law and other laws mandate labeling for mineral water and other soft drinks, and voluntary Mineral Water Product Quality Labeling Guidelines also have been defined by the Notice from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

**Table 26 Classification of Mineral Water (Bottled for Drinking)
under the Product Quality Labeling Guidelines**

Category	Product Name	Water Source	Processing Method
Natural water	Natural water	Ground water collected from specific water springs	No physical and chemical processing other than filtration, precipitation and sterilization
	Natural mineral water	Ground water collected from specific water springs which acquire inorganic salts while underground (including; mineral water, hot spring water, etc.)	
Mineral water	Mineral water		Filtration, precipitation and sterilization, plus the following; mixing waters from multiple sources, adjustment of mineral contents, ozone sterilization, or ultraviolet sterilization
Bottled water	Bottled water or drinking water	Pure water, distilled water, stream surface flow water, tap water, etc.	No restriction

Note: Prospective importers should be aware that these guidelines are unique to Japan, and they may not accord precisely with current guidelines in the EU.

Table 27 European Mineral Water Standards

Product Name	Standards
Natural mineral water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must not be disinfected, or have any mineral content added, or be subject to any type of preparation or other artificial processing. • Examination and authorization by a public agency is required. • Must contain a stipulated level of mineral content beneficial to human health. • In order to prevent water contamination, collection area must have consistent environment conservation.
Spring water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be collected directly from underground water source at a single location, with no additives added.
Processed water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must not be heat pasteurized, filled, or have any mineral content added, or be subject to any type of preparation or other artificial processing.

<Example Label>

Product name	Natural mineral water Non-pasteurized (naturally non-sparkling)
Ingredient	Water (mineral water)
Net contents	1,000 ml
Best-before date	2002.4.1
Preservation method	Keep out of direct sunlight
Source of water	Evian
Country of origin	France
Importer	XX Company, Ltd. 2-5-1 XXX, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Note: If additives are added to mineral water, they must be listed in order by weight as a percentage of the total product weight, as “calcium chloride,” “sodium hydrogen-carbonate,” etc.

SHORT MEMO

In Europe, the term “mineral water” is interpreted as referring to natural mineral water. In Japan, however, nearly all of what is called “mineral water” is actually processed water. What is called “spring water” or “eau de source” is sometimes translated into Japanese as “natural mineral water.” But, Europeans clearly differentiate between spring water and natural mineral water. (see Table 27)

This illustrates how ideas and perceptions of mineral water are closely intertwined with climate, land forms and other natural conditions, as well as with history and culture. All these factors differ from one country or area to another, and so caution is required.

A : Natural cheese is generally classified by water content as follows:

- (1) Soft cheeses (examples: Cream cheese, Camembert, etc.)
- (2) Semi-soft cheeses (examples: Roquefort, Bleu, etc.)
- (3) Hard cheeses (examples: Cheddar, Gouda, etc.)
- (4) Extra-hard cheeses (examples: Parmesan, Romano, etc.)

Demand for cheese in Japan is split between natural cheese and processed cheese. Natural cheese is imported not only for direct consumption as food but also for use as an ingredient in making processed cheese. Most of imported cheese in Japan consists of the hard cheese varieties, although imports of soft cheese varieties have been rising of late on a volume basis for use in direct consumption, and there are many more varieties of such cheeses available nowadays.

Some countries permit the use of antibiotics in cheeses. But, any foods shall not contain antibiotics in Japan, and importers need to be aware of this fact.

With natural cheese there is a risk of mold and yeast growth during transit due to irregularities in manufacturing or storage. People involved in shipping and storing cheese need considerable expertise to exercise proper temperature and humidity control for each variety of cheese.

Soft and semi-soft cheeses are made from milk with less heat treatment, and if the heating conditions are inadequate, *Listeria monocytogenes* can survive. Accordingly, soft and semi-soft cheeses imported from all countries are designated as products requiring close scrutiny for *Listeria monocytogene* contamination (some countries, such as France and Denmark, have their own programs to combat *Listeria monocytogene* contamination, including factory approval for natural cheese exports and issuance of certificates by official agencies).

Thus, when importing natural cheese it is important to obtain information from the manufacturer about manufacturing methods, food additives and others, and to investigate all food sanitation related issues in advance.

<Example Label>

Product type name	Natural cheese
Main ingredient	Milk
Type of milk used as ingredient	Sheep
Net contents	125 g
Best-before date	2002.12.1
Preservation method	Refrigerate (at around 5°C)
Country of origin	New Zealand
Importer	XX Foods X-X, YYY machi, Naka-ku, Yokohama

Q91

What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling ice cream in Japan?

A : The category of ice cream includes the three subcategories of ice cream, ice milk, and lacto ice, all of which are subject to composition specifications (milk solids, milk fat, bacteria count, coliform group) and manufacturing standards under the Food Sanitation Law (Ministerial Ordinances Concerning Compositional Standards, etc. for Milk and Milk Products).

The specifications and standards were partly modified in 1994 to exclude lactic acid bacteria and yeast counts from bacteria count standards, inasmuch as products are being made with fermented milk and lactic acid bacteria drinks added to the base dairy product.

When importing ice cream, importers need to obtain detailed information from the manufacturer in advance about the ingredients, additives and manufacturing methods, and study that information thoroughly. Sometimes imported ice cream uses emulsifiers, coloring agents, and other additives that are not approved in Japan, and importers need to be aware of this.

<Example Label>

Product name	Ice cream (vanilla)
Non-fat milk solid content	10.0%
Milk fat content	8.0%
List of ingredients	Cow's milk, milk products, sugar, fructose, molasses, millet jelly, emulsifiers, stabilizers, flavorings, coloring agent (carotene)
Net contents	150 ml
Country of origin	U.S.A.
Importer	XXX Company, Ltd. 3-5-1 XXX, Chuo-ku, Tokyo

Note: Product names must be displayed in 14-point or larger type.

A : Chocolate is made by adding sugar, dairy products, and other substances to ground cocoa beans, though products differ widely in their ingredient contents, additives, and form in which they are presented. For example, some chocolate has coloring agents added to the surface (such as white chocolate), while others have cream filling packed in the middle, and peanuts, almonds, macadamia nuts, or other nuts added.

The food sanitation inspection mainly checks for food additives. Importers need to investigate thoroughly in advance whether any emulsifiers, preservatives (such as sorbic acid or benzoic acid added as a cream thickener), and coloring agents present comply with the Food Sanitation Law standards.

Nuts are prone to have problems with aflatoxin (mold toxin), and all nuts, including those contained in chocolate, are subject to aflatoxin inspection at the time of importation. The varieties of nuts subject to inspection, as well as the sampling method, the inspection frequency, and other matters related to inspections are all specified by law. If you are planning to import chocolate containing nuts, there needs to be very close attention paid to countermeasures against aflatoxin contamination.

Chocolate is governed by labeling standards of the Food Sanitation Law as well as the Chocolate Fair Competition Code.

<Example Label>

Product name	Chocolate
List of ingredients	Cocoa powder, sugar, skim milk, cocoa butter, emulsifier (derived from soybean), flavoring
Net contents	80 g
Best-before date	2002. 10. 1
Preservation method	Store in a cool place at 20°C or under.
Country of origin	U. K.
Importer	XX Enterprises, Ltd. X-X, YYY-machi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo

Note: The country of origin indicates the country where the tempering and forming (including cooling) processes were carried out. If a package contains a mixture of items from different countries of origin, those countries should be listed in order by prevalence on a weight basis.

Q93

What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling biscuits in Japan?

A : Biscuits are a type of baked confection made from a mixture of wheat flour, dairy products, eggs, flavorings, and blowing agents (baking powder), as well as a wide variety of food additives, all of which have to be thoroughly checked for compliance with Japanese standards.

In particular, sulfur dioxide is sometimes used as a bleaching and preservative agent. However, the Food Sanitation Law places a residual content limit of 0.030 gram per kilogram and importers need to pay attention to this regulation.

Chocolate covered biscuits sometimes add sorbic acid as a preservative during the production process. Biscuits are not on the list of food products for which sorbic acid is an approved additive in Japan, and therefore cannot be used on biscuits imported into Japan.

Also, ingredient fats and oils, especially butter, sometimes contains coloring agents and emulsifiers not approved for use in Japan. Therefore, importers need to thoroughly investigate in advance the ingredients and additives as well as the manufacturing methods used.

Biscuits are governed by labeling standards of the Food Sanitation Law and the JAS Law, as well as the Fair Competition Code Concerning Representations of Biscuit.

<Example Label>

Product name	Biscuit
List of ingredients	Wheat flour, sugar, shortening, table salt, emulsifier (derived from soybean), flavoring
Net contents	200 g
Best-before date	2002.1
Preservation method	Avoid exposure to direct sunlight and high temperatures.
Country of origin	U. K.
Importer	XX Enterprises, Ltd. X-X, YYY-machi, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo

Note: When it is difficult from a manufacturing standpoint to produce uniform net contents, it is also permitted to list the number of pieces or number of items.

A : Honeybees are vulnerable to a disease (foul brood) that causes the hatchlings to turn chocolate color and start to die. Beekeepers in some countries use antibiotics to combat this condition, which can leave residues in honey, of course, as well as in royal jelly and propolis. As a result, honey is subject to closer scrutiny at the time of importation.

Honey itself is not subject to animal quarantine requirements, but honeybees are items subject to quarantine (designated quarantine goods). Consequently, if honey is collected and shipped as-is (not packed in a bottle, etc. as a product) and happens to contain some honeybee carcasses, it must go through animal quarantine before proceeding to the food sanitation inspection.

It is believed that honeybee carcasses may be mixed in the honey, importers can request that the animal quarantine inspection and food sanitation inspection be conducted at the same time by writing “requesting concurrent inspection” on the application for import quarantine inspection filled as part of the animal quarantine procedures.

<Example Label>

Product name	Honey
List of ingredients	Honey, royal jelly
Net contents	500 g
Best-before date	2002.8.1
Preservation method	Avoid exposure to direct sunlight and store at a room temperature.
Country of origin	Argentina
Importer	XXX Company, Ltd. X-X, YYY-machi, ZZ Prefecture

A : Tea is a general term for beverages made from the young leaves and buds of tealeaf trees. Tea is classified according to whether or not it is fermented and by the extent of fermentation employed into the following categories: unfermented tea (example: Japanese green tea), semi-fermented tea (example: oolong tea), and fermented tea (example: black tea).

The Food Sanitation Law imposes a residual agricultural chemical standard as composition specifications on tea, so importers need to check on agricultural chemical usage regulations and usage patterns in advance where the tea is grown. In addition, dried tea leaves sometimes become infested with ticks and other animal contaminants. Careful attention needs to be paid to conditions during production, storage, and shipping.

Teas made from the leaves of plants other than tealeaf trees, such as mate tea from South America and the many varieties of herbal teas, are often treated as forms of wild grasses, some of which are not approved as food in Japan. Thus, importers need to examine food usage conditions in the exporting country and address any food sanitation issues that may arise. Also, careful attention needs to be paid whether dried herbs contain sulfur dioxide residues.

Certain herbs with medicinal properties are subject to provisions of the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law. Importers should check in advance with the Evaluation and Licensing Division, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, or with a prefectural pharmaceutical affairs bureau, to make sure the product they plan to import does not violate the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law.

<Example Label> (Teabags)

Product name	Black tea
List of ingredients	Black tea
Net contents	100 g (50 bags)
Best-before date	2003. 12
Preservation method	Avoid direct sunlight, high temperature, and high humidity. Store in a cool place.
Country of origin	Sri Lanka, India
Importer	XXX Company, Ltd. 3-1-20 XXX, Chuo-ku, Tokyo

What issues should importers pay attention to when importing and selling dried spices and herbs in Japan?

A : Imports of dried spices and herbs are normally subject to regulation under the Plant Protection Law. While dried turmeric and dried pepper seeds are subject to plant quarantine inspection, they do not require a Phytosanitary Certificate from the exporting country. Also, dried species packed in sealed containers for retail are exempt from plant quarantine. Dried herbs also sometimes become exempt because of processing steps they undergo. Please consult with the Plant Protection Station with jurisdiction over the port of entry for more complete information.

Food sanitation inspections sometimes prompt a mandatory inspection, depending on the exporting country or the product category. There have been numerous cases of aflatoxin infection, a form of mold infection (especially of nutmeg and paprika), and of violations due to detected impurities. Prospective importers need to exercise caution. Natural spices often become contaminated with microorganisms, so close attention to product quality control is needed during the production in the country of origin, storage and transportation stages.

Dried herbs need to be checked for possible sulfur dioxide residue. Please also be careful of possible radioactive contamination in imports from Europe.

Some herbs with medicinal properties are subject to provisions of the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law. Prospective importers should confirm in advance with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare or the prefectural pharmaceutical affairs bureau whether or not the article they plan to import is covered by the Law.

<Example Label>

Product name	Allspice
List of ingredients	Allspice
Net contents	15 g
Best-before date	2002.12. 1
Preservation method	Avoid direct sunlight, high temperature, high humidity.
Country of origin	U.S.A.
Importer	XXX Company, Ltd. 1-1 XXX, Naka-ku, Yokohama

A : The salt monopoly system was abolished as of April 1, 1997, and replaced by the Salt Business Law. The interim-measures phase came to an end on March 31, 2002, importation and sale of salt was completely unrestricted.

The Salt Business Law classifies salt into “general-use salt” and “special purpose salt (for non-food uses),” each of which is subject to different procedural requirements. Prospective importers need to find out in advance how the article they plan to import will be classified.

To import and sell general-use salt (rock salt, sea salt, table salt, etc.), the importer must register as a designated salt seller (importer) with the Director-General of the Customs with jurisdiction over the location of the principal place of business. In contrast, to import special purpose salt, the importer needs to submit a notification to the Director-General of the Customs as a special use salt specified seller.

Those who wholesale or retail salt purchased from designated salt seller must register as a salt wholesaler with the Local Finance Bureaus with jurisdiction over the principal place of business. Please check with the Customs and the Local Finance Bureaus regarding the specific application procedures.

In some countries, ferrocyanides are added to salt as a solidifying agent. Japan’s Food Sanitation Law formerly prohibited the use of ferrocyanides, and salt containing this substance could not be imported into Japan. But ferrycyanides were designated as a food additive as of August 1, 2002, and now salt containing ferrocyanides can be imported as long as they conform to applicable specifications and standards.

* Contacts:

Salt Business Law:

Tobacco and Salt Industries Office, General Administration Division,
Financial Bureau, Ministry of Finance (TEL: 03-3581-4111)

Food Sanitation Law:

Imported Foods Inspection Section, Quarantine Station (Q40)
Department of Food Sanitation, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau,
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (TEL: 03-5253-1111)

A : There is no legally established definition for health foods, but in general, the category of health foods includes two different types of foods:

- (1) Foods traditionally regarded as good for one's health, and processed items made from their ingredients
Examples: products made from embryo buds, ginseng, royal jelly, etc.
- (2) Foods with nutritional supplements to add some ingredients or enhance the nutritional value of existing ingredients
Examples: vitamin C enhanced candies, chlorella gum

The Food Sanitation Law treats health foods in the same manner as all other foods. Consequently, the import procedures for health foods are the same as for other foods, and importers must pay attention to the same provisions of the Law as for other foods, such as whether the food contains anything harmful or toxic, whether additives are used appropriately, etc. Additives used in health foods include all types of vitamins, minerals, and amino acids, some of which are not approved for use in Japan, and others of which have defined usage standard. Thus, importers need to confirm in advance about the types and amounts of additives used in products.

Some health foods fall under provisions of the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law as pharmaceuticals due to their ingredients, shape, or labeling. If it is difficult to determine whether a product is a health food or a pharmaceutical, importers need to check with the Evaluation and Licensing Division, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, or with a prefectural pharmaceutical affairs bureau. For the classifications of a health food and a pharmaceutical, the Notification #46, issued by the Director-General on June 1, 1971, entitled "Recommended Disposition of Pharmaceuticals Lacking Authorization or Approval," contains a subsection "Standard for Scope of Pharmaceuticals" addresses the distinction between pharmaceuticals and foods on the following.

- (1) Whether the ingredient is used as a pharmaceutical
- (2) Whether it makes claims of medical effect or benefit
- (3) Whether a shape is judged to be a pharmaceutical
(ampoules and hard capsules are generally judged to be a pharmaceutical)
- (4) Whether usage method or amount is judged to be a pharmaceutical

Some items sold as health foods in the exporting country are determined to constitute pharmaceuticals as defined by the Pharmaceutical Affairs Law. Ingredients and product concepts have to be looked into before importing the product into Japan.

Health food labeling is subject to the same requirements as ordinary foods. Thus, if the item is a confection, it is subject to confection labeling requirements. If the item is a soft drink, it is subject to soft drink labeling requirements. Retail stores may choose to set aside a special section for health foods, but Japanese law and regulations treat them simply as foods, and because of this the law prohibits health food labeling from making any claims of medical effect and benefit. Therefore, health foods may not claim to restore energy, control incontinence, or perform any other medical function.

Products that conform to requirements of the Food Sanitation Law and the Nutrition Improvement Law are considered "foods with health claims" that are eligible for a special labeling program. Please consult Q79 herein for more complete information.

4. Essential Information for the Import Business

Q99

What costs other than the food itself should be taken into account in importing food products?

A : It is critical in the import business to carefully calculate the cost of doing business. Importers should take into account the following cost items in addition to the cost of the food itself.

1. Freight and insurance charges

2. Costs associated with payment

Costs for transfers, L/C (letters of credit) and account settlement

3. Costs associated with customs clearance

It is common to use the services of a customs broker to handle procedures required at Customs. This involves the following cost items.

(1) Procedural proxy services

- Food sanitation inspection procedures (filling out and filing the “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.”)
- Import declaration procedures
- Animal or plant quarantine procedures (required for some items)

(2) Port cargo handling operations (ship unloading, landing, etc.)

(3) Storage facility costs, etc.

4. Import taxes (tariffs, consumption tax, etc.)

In general, the tariff rate is determined by the product category and the identity of the exporting country. For almost all products, the tariff is assessed based on the customs value of the product. Consumption tax is assessed at the rate of 5% based on the customs value plus any tariffs.

Alcoholic beverages are also subject to liquor taxes, and consumption tax is assessed based on the customs value plus tariffs plus liquor taxes.

5. Transportation costs within Japan

Sometimes the importer personally removes the cargo, while other times a shipping company or other business is hired to do the work. Your calculation of the cost of doing business needs to include a calculation of the cost of hauling the cargo from the port of entry to your company location or elsewhere.

- * Contacts:
1. Shipping companies, airline companies, insurance companies, etc.
 2. Banks
 3. Customs Brokers Association (Q102)
 4. Customs Counselors Offices (Q 62)
 5. Customs Brokers Association (Q102)

Q100

By what method are fresh vegetables and fruits imported into Japan?

A : Fresh vegetables and fruits that are very soft, such as strawberries, *matsutake* mushrooms and green asparagus, need to be shipped quickly and handled very carefully in shipping to prevent damage. Most of these items are shipped in by air freight, where they are carefully temperature-controlled and, in some cases, covered with cooling compounds.

Vegetables and fruits that are hard and can withstand lengthy shipping times, such as pumpkin, onions, lemons and grapefruit, are generally brought in by ship.

With vegetables, in particular, it is important to keep the surface dry to prevent mold growth and decay. Shippers take a variety of measures to keep vegetables dry, including leaving the cargo hold hatches partially open, putting the cargo over wooden drain board strips, filling the cargo container only 60-70% full, keeping individual pieces of vegetables apart as much as possible, and improving aeration to keep the container from getting stuffy during transit.

Fruits are shipped in refrigerator or freezer containers that provide the temperature control needed for each variety. Nowadays shippers offer so-called CA containers that can even control the composition of the atmosphere to help prevent damage (by filling the container with nitrogen or carbon dioxide in place of oxygen). These containers are used to ship high-priced leafy vegetables.

To protect citrus fruits and bananas from mold growth, shippers sometimes apply anti-molding agents that are approved for use under Japanese law.

SHORT MEMO

Lowering the oxygen concentration in the atmosphere or raising the carbon dioxide concentration reduces the absorptive capacity of fruits and delays their deterioration. CA containers accomplish this by artificially altering the mix of gases in the atmosphere and storing the cargo at low temperature. For example, storing apples at a mix of 94% nitrogen, 3% carbon dioxide, and 3% oxygen at 0 degree Celsius extends their regular 4-month storage life span to 6-7 months. However, the optimal atmospheric composition differs for each variety of fruit.

Q101

How long does it take to transport cargo to Japan by ship?

A : One shipping company provided the following information as typical surface transport times to Tokyo. These times, however, represent very general estimates, and can vary considerably according to the number and location of ports of call in transit, the type of food, and the season, etc.

From ports in the United States:

Los Angeles:	Around 14 days
Oakland:	Around 12 days
New York:	Around 30 days

From ports in Europe:

Hamburg:	30 - 37 days
Rotterdam:	27 - 35 days

From ports in Australia:

Sydney:	16 - 20 days
Melbourne:	16 - 25 days

From ports in Asia:

China (Shanghai):	6 - 8 days
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When calculating the time it takes to actually procure the cargo, importers also need to figure in the number of days it takes to unload the ship, go through customs, and ship the cargo within Japan.

* Contacts: Shipping companies, etc.
<Examples>

Nippon Yusen K.K.	(TEL: 03-3284-5151)
Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd.	(TEL: 03-3587-7015)
Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha Ltd.	(TEL: 03-3595-5321)

Q102**Is it possible to hire an agent to handle the entire food import process, including import procedures, customs clearance, and overland transport?**

A : It is routine to retain a specialized provider (customs broker) to handle the procedures involved getting the cargo from the ship or aircraft to the importer, including filing all required documents.

The table below lists the Customs Brokers Associations for each regional Customs office. These associations will provide you with introductions to customs brokers.

Since base fees are set for the operations involved in getting cargo from the port to customs, there should be no major variation in charges for these services from one broker to another.

As discussed in Q99, it is critical in the import business to carefully calculate the cost of doing business. It would be well-advisable to seek detailed estimates of customs broker costs in advance, the estimates taking into account the type and volume of cargo, the country of origin, the method of importation, and the scope of agency services.

Table 28 Customs Brokers Associations

Name	Address	TEL No.
Japan Customs Brokers Association	Tokyo Sakurada Bldg. 3F, 1-1-3 Nishi-Shimbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0003	03-3508-2535/6 http://www.tsukangyo.or.jp
Tokyo Customs Brokers Association	Tokyo Harbor Government Bldg., 2-56 Aomi, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-8615	03-3529-0728/9
Yokohama Customs Brokers Association	Harada Bldg., 4-23 Kaigan-dori, Naka-ku, Yokohama 231-0002	045-201-0614 http://www.y-tsukan.gr.jp
Kobe Customs Brokers Association	14-1 Shinko-cho, Chuo-ku, Kobe 650-0041	078-331-3996
Osaka Customs Brokers Association	No. 1 Osaka Port Bldg., 2-1 Chikko, Minato-ku, Osaka 552-0021	06-6573-3896
Nagoya Customs Brokers Association	Nagoya Kowan Kaikan, 2-1-17 Irifune, Minato-ku, Nagoya 455-0032	052-661-1223
Moji Customs Brokers Association	Moji Harbor Government Bldg., 1-3-10 Nishi-Kaigan, Moji-ku, Kitakyushu 802-0841	093-321-6212
Nagasaki Customs Brokers Association	c/o Nagasaki Customs, 1-36 Dejima-machi, Nagasaki City, Nagasaki 850-0862	095-820-7228
Hakodate Customs Brokers Association	c/o Kyoei Unyu Co., Ltd., 22-5 Kaigan-machi, Hakodate City, Hokkaido 040-0061	0138-42-5010
Okinawa Customs Brokers Association	Kaiho Koun Bldg., 2-15-1 Minato-machi, Naha City, Okinawa 900-0001	098-866-3311

A : Small quantities of cargo are packed together with other small-quantity shipments to form small-lot cargo (or LCL cargo; see Note 1).

However, many foods absorb smells from other cargo nearby, even when packaged, and conversely, many foods are apt to give off a distinctive smell of their own. Some foods require special temperature control that is unique to the particular item, and many of these products cannot be imported as small-lot cargo as a result. Importers need to be aware of these considerations.

Fresh vegetables and fruits in particular require temperature control that is appropriate to the item, and different items also differ in their aeration requirements. As a result, shippers generally fill a container with one kind of fresh vegetable or fruit and ship it as big-lot cargo (or FCL cargo; see Note 1).

In addition, foods subject to animal or plant quarantine requirements are almost never shipped as small-lot cargo, because until those inspections are complete neither the foods nor the other article mixed in the shipment can be removed from the bonded warehouse.

If you want to import a food in smaller than a container-size lot, you should consult with a shipping company before signing an import contract. A 20-foot container is about the size of an 8-mat room according to the Japanese method of figuring floor area (see Note 2).

Note 1: Any shipment that is not large enough to fill an entire container and thereby become a big-lot cargo shipment (FCL: Full Container Load) is mixed with other small-quantity shipments to form a small-lot cargo shipment. (LCL: Less than Container Load).

Note 2: Width x length x height = roughly 2.3 x 6 x 2.3 meters

* Contacts: Shipping companies, etc.

<Examples>

Nippon Yusen K.K. (TEL: 03-3284-5151)

Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd. (TEL: 03-3587-7015)

Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha Ltd. (TEL: 03-3595-5321)

Q104**How much are the freight charges to import foods into Japan?**

A : The following table gives estimated freight charges for shipping wine in a dry 20-foot container and for shipping meat in a 20-foot freezer container from the ports of New York, Los Angeles, Hamburg, and Sydney. But, container charges are not fixed, and can differ according to the food product category and the type of packing. Since this only represents a very general estimate, you would be well-advised to check with shipping companies about their charges for your circumstances.

Typically the sea shipping charges for a refrigerator or freezer container run 2.5-3 times the charges for a dry container. This can also vary by region, so it is always better to inquire about your particular circumstances.

Table 29 Estimated 20-Foot Container Freight Charges

Point of Origin	Freezer Container (for meat)	Dry Container (for wine)
New York	US\$3,500	US\$2,250
Los Angeles	US\$2,500	US\$1,750
Hamburg	US\$2,500	US\$1,250
Sydney	AU\$2,500	AU\$1,250

Also, specialized vehicles are generally used to transport refrigerator or freezer containers from port to the destination warehouse. As a general rule, this costs about 20% more than transportation costs for dry containers.

* Contacts: Shipping companies, etc.

<Examples>

Nippon Yusen K.K.

(TEL: 03-3284-5151)

Mitsui O.S.K. Lines, Ltd.

(TEL: 03-3587-7015)

Kawasaki Kisen Kaisha Ltd.

(TEL: 03-3595-5321)

Q105

Are there foods other than fresh foods that require temperature control?

A : Some examples of products other than fresh foods that require temperature control include wine and dairy products.

Wine is highly vulnerable to changes in temperature. If it is not maintained at a fairly constant temperature (14-18 degrees Celsius), the flavor worsens and the quality starts to deteriorate. As a result, it is common to ship wine in a reefer container where the temperature can be controlled.

Butter and cheese are dairy products that require temperature control. Natural cheese, for instance, has an ongoing fermentation process that makes it somewhat similar to fresh food even though it is a type of processed food. Each variety of cheeses has its own unique temperature and humidity control requirements at every stage of handling in the shipping process. Importers have to figure backward when ordering the cheese will be at its optimal ripeness when it is on the store shelves. To accomplish this, one needs considerable knowledge and expertise in temperature control and ripening management. (see Q90)

SHORT MEMO

Cheese is divided into the two categories of natural cheese (see Q90) and processed cheese. Natural cheese is made by introducing lactic acid bacteria and curdling enzymes into fresh milk to precipitate the curdling process. Melting down, mixing, and emulsifying one or more varieties of natural cheeses makes processed cheese.

Demand for cheese in Japan is split between natural cheese and processed cheese. Natural cheese is imported not only for direct consumption as food but also for use as an ingredient in making processed cheese. In 2001 Japan imported about 194,000 tons of natural cheese but only about 7,000 tons of processed cheese.

There are more than 1,000 different kinds of cheese in the world. Europe has an especially great variety of cheeses, so much so that people say that each village has its own variety of cheese. European people eat many different types of cheese both as an entree and as a dessert item.

Contact List

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare Quarantine Station, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english http://www.forth.go.jp
Ministry of Finance Taxation Office, National Tax Agency Tokyo Customs	http://www.mof.go.jp/english http://www.nta.go.jp http://www.tokyo-customs.go.jp
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Animal Quarantine Service Plant Protection Station Tokyo Food Agency Office Fisheries Agency	http://www.maff.go.jp/eindex.html http://www.maff-aqs.go.jp/english http://www.pps.go.jp/english http://www.kanto.fo.maff.go.jp http://www.jfa.maff.go.jp
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry	http://www.meti.go.jp/english
Secretariat of OTO (Cabinet Office)	http://www5.cao.go.jp/access/english/oto_main_e.html
Fair Trade Commission of Japan Fair Competition Councils	http://www.jftc.go.jp/e-page/f_home.htm http://www.jfftc.org
Japan Customs Brokers Association Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services	http://www.tsukangyo.or.jp http://www.cfqlcs.go.jp/information/english_edition
Association for the Safety of Imported Food, Japan Japan Food Additives Association	http://www.asif.or.jp http://www.jafa.gr.jp
The Japan Containers and Packaging Recycling Association	http://www.jcptra.or.jp/eng
Japan Steel Can Recycling Association	http://tomcat.rits.or.jp/steelcan/e
Japan Aluminum Can Recycling Association	http://www.alumi-can.or.jp
The Council for PET Bottle Recycling	http://www.petbottle-rec.gr.jp/english
Paper Packaging Recycling Council	http://www.kami-suisinkyo.org
Plastic Packaging Recycling Council	http://www.pprc.gr.jp
Beverage Paper Carton Recycling Council	http://www.yokankyo.jp/outline/explain.html

List of Organizations Involved in Food Importing

1. Food Import Associations and Industry Contacts

(1) General

The Grain Importers Association Mizuho Kaikan, 2-1-16 Nihonbashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-0027	03-3274-0171
National Federation of Foods Importers Association c/o Japan Fruit Produce Import Facilitation Association Suehiro Bldg. 6F, 1-12-16 Kanda Izumi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0024	03-5833-5141
Association for the Safety of Imported food, Japan Earnest Bldg. 8F, 9-8 Nihonbashi Hisamatsu-cho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-0005	03-5695-0819 http://www.asif.or.jp

(2) Fruits/Vegetables

Japan Fruit Produce Import Facilitation Association (Nisseikyō) Suehiro Bldg. 6F, 1-12-16 Kanda Izumi-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0024	03-5833-5141
The Japan Banana Importers Association Zenkoyoren Bldg. 5F, 2-7-9 Hirakawa-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0093	03-3263-0461 http://www.banana.co.jp
Taiwan Fresh Banana Importers Association Nozawa Nitto Bldg. #707, 6-15-11 Soto-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0021	03-3834-0653
Japan Citrus Fruits Importers Association Imperial Bldg. 1F, 2-12-5 Kyobashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0031	03-3567-8613
Japan Canned Pineapple Association Tsuchihashi Bldg., 1-11-1 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0001	03-3501-6957 http://www.pine.or.jp
The Japan Sprouting Beans Importers Association No. 1 Suzumaru Bldg. 5F, 2-39-8 Nishi-Shinbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0003	03-3431-3895
Japan Pea & Bean Importers Association No. 1 Suzumaru Bldg. 5F, 2-39-8 Nishi-Shinbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0003	03-3431-3895
Japan Dried Fruit Importers Association Toyotatsusho Bldg., 2-14-9 Nihonbashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-0027	03-3242-8319

(3) Livestock and Dairy Products

Japan Meat Traders Association No. 2 Watanabe Bldg. 6F, 1-7-3 Higashi-Azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0044	03-3588-1665
Japan Livestock Traders Association Osakaya Bldg. 6F, 3-1-9 Mita, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108-0073	03-3454-1435 http://www.jlta.or.jp
Japan Sheep Casing Importers Association Yoshinoya Bldg. 4F, 1-32-6 Nishi-Gotanda, Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo 141-0031	03-3493-6301 http://www.jnsca.or.jp
The Japan Imported Cheese Promotion Association Nyugyo Kaikan, 1-14-19 Kudan-Kita, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0073	03-3288-7258 http://www.jic.gr.jp
Agriculture & Livestock Industries Corporation Azabudai Bldg., 2-2-1 Azabudai, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-8635	03-3582-3381 http://alic.lin.go.jp

(4) Fishery Products

Japan Marine Products Importers Association Kamakurabashi Bldg. 1F, 1-7-1 Uchi-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0047	03-5280-2891 http://www.jfta-or.jp
Japan Eel Importers Association Tsukiji Kaikan, 4-6-5 Tsukiji, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0045	03-3248-2401

(5) Beverages

The Japan Wines and Spirits Importers' Association No. 1 Tentoku Bldg., 1-13-5 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0001	03-3503-6505
Japan Imported Beer Association c/o Nippon Beer Co., Ltd. 1-8-10 Kamimeguro, Meguro-ku, Tokyo 153-0051	03-5489-8888
Nippon Wine Importers Association 4-24-28 Takanawa, Minato-ku, Tokyo 108-0074	03-5730-2119
Japan Coffee Import Association c/o Mitsubishi Corporation, 2-3-1, Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8086	03-3210-8249

(6) Others

The Japan Oil/Fat Importers & Exporters Association Kyodo Bldg. Shinhoridome 6F, 1-10-12 Nihonbashi Horidome-cho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-0012	03-3662-9821
Japan Confectionery Importers Association c/o Meidi-ya Co., Ltd., 2-2-8 Kyobashi, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-8302	03-3271-9518
The Japan Sugar Import & Export Council Ginza Gas Hall, 7-9-15 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061	03-3571-2362
Import Molasses Conference 2-1-2-8 Uchi-Kanda, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0047	03-5256-1541
Japan Honey Importer's Association Sumisho Kurita Bldg., 3-24-1 Kanda Nishiki-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-8465	03-3219-3034

2. Foreign Trade Promotion Organizations

(1) Food Related

U. S. A.

U. S. Agricultural Trade Office, ATO Toshin Tameike Bldg. 8F, 1-1-14 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052	03-3224-5115 http://www.atojapan.org
Wheat Associates U. S. A. Toshin Tameike Bldg. 5F, 1-1-14 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052	03-3582-7911
U. S. Feed Grains Council Toshin Tameike Bldg. 7F, 1-1-14 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052	03-3505-0601 http://www.vegrains.org
American Soybean Association Toshin Tameike Bldg. 7F, 1-1-14 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052	03-5563-1414 http://www.asajapan.org
U. S. A. Poultry and Egg Export Council Toshin Tameike Bldg. 7F, 1-1-14 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052	03-3583-2167
U. S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF) Toshin Tameike Bldg. 7F, 1-1-14 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052	03-3584-3911 http://www.usmef-ja.org
United States Potato Board Pacific Bldg. 3F, 1-5-3 Higashiazabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0044	03-3586-2937 http://www.potatoeusa-japan.com
Florida Department of Citrus Azabudai Yuni House #404, 1-1-20 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0041	03-3584-7079 http://www.citrus-fc.com
California Raisin Advisory Board Seibunkan Bldg., 1-5-9 Idabashi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0072	03-3221-6410 http://www.raisins-jp.org
California Almond Growers Exchange Toranomon NS Bldg. 3F, 1-22-15 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0001	03-3506-8881 http://www.bdalmonds.com
California Prune Advisory Board Pacific Bldg. 3F, 1-5-3 Higashi-azabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0044	03-3584-0866
Papaya Administrative Committees c/o Koyo Printing, 11-8 Senju Sekiya-cho, Adachi-ku, Tokyo 120-0024	03-3888-4224

CANADA

The Canadian Wheat Board Tokyo Office Toranomon No. 11 Mori Bldg. 3F, 2-6-4 Toranomon, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-0001	03-3519-2288
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AUSTRALIA

Meat and Livestock Australian (MLA) 03-3435-5785
Sekai Boeki Center Bldg. 12F, 2-4-1 Hamamatsu-cho, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-6112
<http://www.aussiebeef.jp>

Australian Dairy Corporation Secretariat in Japan 03-3669-1786
Seifun Kaikan 6F, 15-6 Nihonbashi Kabuto-cho, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 103-0026

Australian Wheat Board 03-3432-3522
Sekai Boeki Center Bldg. 5F, 2-4-1 Hamamatsu-cho, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-6105

FRANCE

SOPEXA 03-3585-7440
Akasaka 1-chome Mori Bldg. 9F, 1-11-28 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0052
<http://www.franceshoku.com>

GERMANY

German Agricultural Marketing Board 03-3580-0169
Akasaka Tokyu Bldg. 7F, 2-14-3 Nagata-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0014 <http://www.cmajapan.com>
Deutscher Weinfonds Repräsentanzbüro, Japan 03-3511-4033
Sanban-cho KS Bldg. 5F, 2 Sanban-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0075 <http://www.dwfjp.com>

DENMARK

Danish Agricultural Council Japan Office 03-3213-4801
Denki Bldg South. 17F, 1-7-1 Yuraku-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005 <http://www.dac.or.jp>

INDIA

The Marine Products Export Development Authority 03-3545-3247
No. 1 Marutaka Bldg. 7F, 6-16-12 Ginza, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0061

(2) General

ITALY

Italian Trade Commission Tokyo 03-3475-1401
Shin-Aoyama Bldg. West 16F, 1-1-1 Minami-Aoyama, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-0062
<http://www.ice-tokyo.or.jp>
Osaka Office 06-6343-7260
Herbis Osaka Bldg. 8F, 2-5-25 Umeda, Kita-ku, Osaka 530-0001

PORTUGAL

ICEP (Investimentos, Comercio e Turismo de Portugal) 03-3511-28
Sanban-cho Annex Bldg #501, 1-4 Sanban-cho, Minato-ku, Tokyo 102-0075 <http://www.portugal.or.jp>

SINGAPORE

Singapore Trade Development Board 03-3584-6032
c/o Singapore Embassy, 5-12-3 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-8691

KOREA

KORTA (Korea Trade Center Tokyo) 03-3214-6951
New Kokusai Bldg. 2F, 3-4-1 Marunouchi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-0005 <http://www.kotra.or.jp>

HONG KONG

Hong Kong Trade Development Council Tokyo Office 03-5210-5850
Trusty Koji-machi Bldg. 6F, 3-4 Koji-machi, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 102-0083 <http://japanese.tdctrade.com>
Osaka Office 06-6344-5211
Osaka Ekimae No. 3 Bldg. 6F, 1-1-3 Umeda, Kita-ku, Osaka 530-0001
Nagoya Office 052-971-3626
c/o Bankoku-sha, Sakae-cho Bldg. 4F, 3-23-31 Nishiki, Naka-ku, Nagoya 460-0003

TAIWAN

Far East Trade Service Center Tokyo Office 03-3407-9711
Token International Bldg. 3F, 2-12-19 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-0002
<http://www.ippc.com.tw/fets/main.htm>