USDA Foreign Agricultural Service
GAIN Report
Global Agricultural Information Network

Voluntary _ Public

Date: 5/22/2017
GAIN Report Number: JA7067

Japan

Post: Tokyo

Japan Initiates Review of GE Food Labeling Requirements

Report Categories:
FAIRS Subject Report

Approved By:
Christopher Riker
Prepared By:
Suguru Sato

Report Highlights:
On Wednesday, April 26, 2017, the Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) of the Government of Japan (GOJ) held its first review committee meeting for the labeling of food containing genetically engineered (GE) food and ingredients. The CAA plans to hold multiple committee meetings throughout Japanese fiscal year 2017 (April 1, 2017 – March 31, 2018), and possibly publish a modified labeling proposal by March 2018. Two major elements of the review include: 1) the scope of items that require labeling, and 2) the threshold for food to be categorized as "not genetically engineered."

General Information:
During the review of the food labeling enactment process (see JA4043), "genetically engineered (GE) labeling" was positioned as an issue to be reviewed separately from the unification of Japan's food labeling laws. As a result, the review of GE food labeling, as well as the labeling of food for internet marketing, were earmarked as issues to be reviewed later in the "Basic Plan for {the} Consumer" (Cabinet decision on March 24, 2015, www.caa.go.jp/adjustments/pdf/150324adjustments_1.pdf).

It has now been approximately 15 years since the current labeling requirements for GE food were established. Accordingly, the CAA decided to establish a "Review Committee for GE Labeling System" to determine whether the current system provides sufficient information to satisfy a consumer's opportunity to choose. Considering the information requested by consumers, the distribution situation of GE agricultural products, and other aspects, the CAA intends to examine mechanisms for GE labeling in Japan (see http://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/food_labeling/other/genetically_modified_food.html).

Japan's CAA Initiates a Review of GE Labeling Requirements
On Tuesday, April 18, 2017, the CAA announced it would hold its first review committee meeting for labeling of GE food on Wednesday, April 26, 2017. See http://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/food_labeling/other/genetically_modified_food.html.
(Note: the announcement, published in Japanese, is also attached as a reference point to this report)

The meeting was well attended by roughly 100 interested parties, including media.

The CAA's first review committee meeting for labeling of GE food was well attended

Mr. Jun Matsumoto, the State Minister in Charge of Consumer Affairs, Food Safety and Disaster Management, provided opening comments, noting GE labeling was one of the tasks left-over from the previous review of labeling requirements conducted during the unification of food labeling laws. He noted that the expansion of food items for labeling and the threshold for labeling are of high interest to consumers, and pointed out that these were raised during a diet session at the end of last year (CY2016). He also noted that he hoped the discussion will cover all aspects such as consumer understanding and feasibility for the industry.

After the opening remarks of Minister Matsumoto, the CAA also briefed those in attendance on the

current state of the GE food labeling system, which included an overview of:

1. the global commercial cultivation of GE crops;
2. Japanese imports of GE crops and those countries which are exporting them to Japan;
3. the use of imported corn and soybeans in Japan;
4. the Japanese GE crop safety review system;
5. current Japanese labeling regulations in comparison to those in South Korea, Australia/New Zealand, and the European Union (EU); and,
6. the CAA's investigation results:
    a. Verification of DNA detection methods for GE foods;
    b. Investigation of current Identity Preserved (IP) handling systems;
    c. The CAA's consumer survey; and,
    d. GE labeling regulations and the inspection system in the EU.

The CAA's Overview of the Results of its Investigations

6.a. Verification of DNA Detection Methods for GE Food

The National Institute of Health Science and Food Research Institute (a part of National Agriculture Food Research Organization) tested a variety of processed products, as outlined below, for the presence of GE traits. Note: the number in parenthesis is the number of samples subjected to tests.

Soybeans:	soy sauce (20), soybean oil (2)
Corn:	corn oil (2), HFCS (4), corn syrup (7) , dextrin and processed food containing dextrin (6), corn flake (5), cereal vinegar (3)
Canola:	canola oil (7)
Cotton seeds:	cotton seed oil (3)
Sugar beet:	sugar from sugar beet (8)
Soybean and canola:	mixed food oil (2)

The CAA reported that DNA was detectable in all five samples taken of corn flakes. The CAA also noted that DNA was detectable in only one of six samples of processed foods containing dextrin.

6.b. Investigation of Japan's Current IP Handling System

The CAA noted that the current Japanese IP handling system requires documents indicating the product is segregated from GE products, and allows for unintentional mixing of GE products up to but not exceeding five percent. The CAA reported that various groups, including some consumer groups and legislators during diet sessions, indicated that they believe the regulation is too "loose," compared with South Korea and the EU, which allow for unintentional mixing of three percent and 0.9 percent, respectively.

The Japan Food Industry Association reportedly conducted a survey of 31 export locations in the United States and Canada which included country elevators, river elevators, and export elevators, as well as seed companies, and eight import elevators in japan. The results indicated that non-GE IP soybean contained 0 – 0.3 percent of GE elements (with a 0.1 percent average), and non-GE IP corn contained 0 – 4.1 percent of GE elements (with a 1.0 percent average).

6.c. Consumer Survey

The CAA outsourced a survey on GE food to 10,648 consumers at the end of CY2016. The results indicated:

- Approximately 60 percent "knew" or "heard of" a safety review system for GE crops;
- Approximately 40 percent responded they had "concern" with GE food;
- Approximately 30 percent "knew" or "knew some" about food items with mandatory labeling;
- Approximately 30 percent "knew" or "heard" that foods from which DNA cannot be detected are exempted from labeling requirements;
- Approximately 30 percent responded the scope of mandatory labeling should be expanded;
- Approximately 60 percent "knew" about "non-GE" labeling;
- Approximately 20 percent thought "non-GE" labeling should be mandatory;
- Less than 30 percent knew about the 5 percent threshold; and,
- Less than 20 percent believed the unintentional mixing threshold for non-GE labeling should be lower than the current 5 percent.

6.d. GE labeling Regulation and Inspection System in the EU

The CAA reported on a study tour that two CAA officers took where they studied labeling systems in the EU, Germany, France and Italy. Regarding the EU's regulation, the CAA briefed on the background and practices of EU Regulation Nos. 1829/2003 and 1830/2003, including the decision to label at a 0.9 percent threshold instead of the 1 percent threshold proposed by the European Commission. With regard to specific EU Member States, the labeling regulation of Germany was explained. It was noted that in Germany, the ingredient used for processed products is subjected to a PCR test to verify that it is non-GE. If product is highly processed and DNA cannot be extracted, the authority will inspect documentation proving the ingredient is identity preserved as non-GE. Based on the readout, under the German labeling and IP requirement systems, 0.3 percent of 20 test cases exceeded the non-GE 0.9 percent threshold.

Committee Members

- Tomoaki Imamura, Professor, Department of Public Health, Health Management and Policy, Nara Medical University;
- Norio Eguchi, Executive Director, Japan Supermarket Association ;
- Hiroyuki Kanbayashi, Director, Department of Food Quality and Compliance, Zennoh (Japan Agriculture);
- Kazunari Kondo, Director, Department of Biochemistry, National Institute of Health Sciences;
- Saeko Sawaki, Representative, Food Research Group, Japan Association of Consumer Affairs Specialists;
- Toru Takeishi, Director, Planning and Research Department, Japan Food Industry Association;
- Satoko Natsume, Executive Secretary, National Federation of Regional Women's Organization;
- Marino Matsuoka, Executive Director, Japan Consumer's Association; and
- Goichiro Yukawa, Professor, Food Science and Technology Department, Tokyo University of Marine

Science and Technology - Chairman for the Committee.

The material provided during the first committee meeting can be found online (in Japanese) at http://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/food_labeling/other/genetically_modified_food.html as well as attached below.

The CAA reportedly plans to hold hearings for stakeholders to present during the next three committee meetings (which are expected to be held on a monthly basis). Consumer groups are expected to present at the next committee meeting. Additionally, the CAA plans to invite industry to present at subsequent committee meetings.

Attachment 1
The CAA's Press Release for the Establishment of a GE Labeling Review Committee (including a list of committee members (Page 2))

消費者庁
Consumer Affairs Agency, Government of Japan

News Release

平成 29 年４月 18 日

遺伝子組換え表示制度に関する検討会の設置について

１．趣旨

遺伝子組換え表示の在り方については、食品表示法の制定過程における「食品表示一元化検討会」において、一元化の機会に検討すべき事項とは別に検討すべき事項と位置付けられ、消費者基本計画（平成 27 年３月 24 日閣議決定）においては、インターネット販売等における食品表示や加工食品の原料原産地表示等と共に、個別課題として実態を踏まえた検討を行う事項と整理されている。

遺伝子組換え表示制度は、その導入から約 15 年が経過しており、この間、遺伝子組換え食品のＤＮＡ等に関する分析技術が向上している可能性や、遺伝子組換え農産物の作付面積の増加により流通の実態が変化している可能性がある。

そのため、消費者庁において「遺伝子組換え表示制度に関する検討会」（以下「検討会」という。）を開催し、自主的かつ合理的な選択の機会の確保を実現するために消費者が求める情報及び遺伝子組換え農産物の流通状況等を踏まえ、今後の遺伝子組換え表示制度の在り方について幅広く検討を行うこととする。

２．委員

別紙のとおり。

３．検討項目

（１）今後の遺伝子組換え表示の在り方

（２）その他

４．スケジュール及び進め方

遺伝子組換え表示制度について、表示義務品目の検証結果及び諸外国の表示制度等を参考に、事業者の実行可能性を確保しつつ、消費者が求める情報提供を可能とする制度設計の検討を進め、平成 29 年度末を目途に取りまとめを行う。

第１回検討会　平成 29 年４月 26 日（水）　10：00 ～12：00
三田共用会議所大会議室

＜問合せ先＞
消費者庁食品表示企画課　蓮見、松尾、栗本
ＴＥＬ 03－3507－9136（直通）

（別　紙）

遺伝子組換え表示制度に関する検討会　委員名簿

今村　知明（いまむら　ともあき）	奈良県立医科大学　公衆衛生学講座　教授
江口　法生（えぐち　のりお）	一般社団法人　日本スーパーマーケット協会　理事　事務局長
神林　幸宏（かみばやし　ゆきひろ）	全国農業協同組合連合会　食品品質管理・コンプライアンス部　部長
近藤　一成（こんどう　かずなり）	国立医薬品・食品衛生研究所　生化学部　部長
澤木　佐重子（さわき　さえこ）	公益社団法人　全国消費生活相談員協会　食の研究会　代表
武石　徹（たけいし　とおる）	一般財団法人　食品産業センター　企画調査部　部長
立川　雅司（たちかわ　まさし）	名古屋大学大学院　環境学研究科　教授
夏目　智子（なつめ　さとこ）	全国地域婦人団体連絡協議会　幹事
松岡　萬里野（まつおか　まりの）	一般財団法人　日本消費者協会　理事長
◎湯川　剛一郎（ゆかわ　ごういちろう）	東京海洋大学　学術研究院　食品生産科学部門　教授

（◎座長、五十音順、敬称略）

Attachment 2
Outline for Organizing a GE labeling Review Committee

遺伝子組換え表示制度に関する検討会開催要領

第１　趣旨

遺伝子組換え表示の在り方については、食品表示法の制定過程における「食品表示一元化検討会」において、一元化の機会に検討すべき事項とは別に検討すべき事項と位置付けられ、消費者基本計画（平成 27 年３月 24 日閣議決定）においては、インターネット販売等における食品表示や加工食品の原料原産地表示等と共に、個別課題として実態を踏まえた検討を行う事項と整理されている。

遺伝子組換え表示制度は、その導入から約15年が経過しており、この間、遺伝子組換え食品のＤＮＡ等に関する分析技術が向上している可能性や、遺伝子組換え農産物の作付面積の増加により流通の実態が変化している可能性がある。

そのため、消費者庁において「遺伝子組換え表示制度に関する検討会」（以下「検討会」という。）を開催し、自主的かつ合理的な選択の機会の確保を実現するために消費者が求める情報及び遺伝子組換え農産物の流通状況等を踏まえ、今後の遺伝子組換え表示制度の在り方について幅広く検討を行うこととする。

第２　検討項目

（１）今後の遺伝子組換え表示の在り方

（２）その他

第３　スケジュール及び進め方

遺伝子組換え表示制度について、表示義務品目の検証結果及び諸外国の表示制度等を参考に、事業者の実行可能性を確保しつつ、消費者が求める情報提供を可能とする制度設計の検討を進め、平成 29 年度末を目途に取りまとめを行う。

第４　委員等

（１）検討会は、別紙の者で組織する。

（２）検討会に座長を置き、座長は消費者庁長官があらかじめ指名する者とする。

（３）座長は、検討会を統括する。

（４）座長に事故があるときには、あらかじめその指名する委員が、その職務を代理する。

第５　運営

（１）検討会の庶務は、消費者庁食品表示企画課において処理する。

（２）座長は、必要があると認めるときは、委員以外の関係者に検討会への出席を求め、意見を聴くことができる。

（３）検討会は原則として公開にて行う。

（４）検討会の資料は、各回終了後、消費者庁ウェブサイトにおいて公表する。ただし、座長は、公表することにより検討に著しい支障を及ぼすおそれがあると認めるとき、その他正当な理由があると認めるときは、資料を非公表とすることができる。

（５）検討会の議事録については、各回終了後、委員の了解を得た上で、消費者庁ウェブサイト等において公表する。

（６）この要領に定めるもののほか、議事の手続その他検討会の運営に関し必要な事項は、座長が別に定める。