

SAFEGUARDS

SGS CONSUMER TESTING SERVICES

FOOD

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JAPAN UPDATE PART 2: JAPAN POSITIVE LIST - 2009 UPDATE

On April 1st, the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) will launch the Imported Foods Monitoring and Guidance Plan (Monitoring Plan) for 2009. The MHLW has been monitoring imported foods since 2004 to ensure they meet the stringent conditions of the Food Sanitation Law. The Food Sanitation Law was amended in November 2005 and the "Positive List" system came into force in May 2006 to provide stricter guidelines to minimum allowable pesticide and vet drug residues.

Since the arrival and enforcement of the Positive List system, which applies uniform limit of 0.01ppm to chemicals for which MRLs are not established, it become necessary to assure food safety to a greater extent.

In FY2005, under the previous, negative list system, 260 pesticides and vet drugs were monitored by quarantines. In FY2006, with the implementation of the positive list system, the number of agricultural chemicals to be monitored increased to 447. Since then, MHLW has been revising the list of test items and increasing the number of chemicals to be tested every year, considering the imported quantity, the number of import notifications submitted, and the violation ratio in the previous year, etc. for each type of food. The list for FY2009 will be released at the end of March, 2009.

In December 2007 and January 2008, several Japanese consumers suffered from serious organophosphorus intoxication caused by poisoned frozen dumplings imported from China¹. After that incident, MHLW widen the scope of products monitored under JPL to include. Under the FY09 Monitoring Plan, 7,100 processed live stock foods, 12,100 processed seafood products, and 18,900 processed agricultural foods are going to be tested.



¹ [Safeguards_04308_Unsolved Dumplings Poisoning_Ministry to Issue New Guidelines](#), June, 2008.

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Food type	Category of items inspected	No. of tests planned	Total No. of tests planned
Livestock foods Beef, pork, chicken, horse meat, poultry meat, and other meats	Antibiotics	2,150	4,750
	Residual agricultural chemicals	1,900	
	Standards for constituents	700	
Processed livestock foods Natural cheeses, processed meat products, ice cream, frozen products (meat products), and other products	Antibiotics	2,700	7,100
	Residual agricultural chemicals	1,050	
	Additives	1,300	
	Standards for constituents	2,050	
Seafood products Bivalves, fish, shellfish (shrimps and prawns, crabs) and other products	Antibiotics	2,300	5,250
	Residual agricultural chemicals	2,100	
	Additives	250	
	Standards for constituents	600	
Processed seafood Processed fish products (fillet, dried or minced fish, etc.), frozen products (aquatic animals and fish), processed fish roe products, and other products	Antibiotics	4,350	12,100
	Residual agricultural chemicals	2,250	
	Additives	1,850	
	Standards for constituents	3,650	
Agricultural foods Vegetables, fruit, wheat and barley, corn beans, peanuts, nuts, seeds, and other products	Antibiotics	700	20,700
	Residual agricultural chemicals	14,500	
	Additives	850	
	Standards for constituents	1,000	
	Mycotoxins	2,950	
	GMO	700	
Processed agricultural foods Frozen products (processed vegetables), processed vegetable products, processed fruit products, spices, instant noodles, and other products	Antibiotics	100	18,900
	Residual agricultural chemicals	9,150	
	Additives	4,300	
	Standards for constituents	2,650	
	Mycotoxins	1,800	
	GMO	300	
	Irradiation	600	
Other foods Health foods, soups, flavorings and seasonings, sweets, edible oils and fat, frozen products, and other products	Antibiotics	0	4,450
	Residual agricultural chemicals	200	
	Additives	2,850	
	Standards for constituents	700	
	Mycotoxins	700	
Drinks and beverages Mineral water, soft drinks, alcoholic beverages, and other products	Residual agricultural chemicals	400	2,350
	Additives	850	
	Standards for constituents	1,000	
	Mycotoxins	100	
Additives Equipment, containers and packages Toys	Standards for constituents	2,800	2,800
Food subject to enhanced inspection	Antibiotics, residual agricultural chemicals, additives, standards for constituents, mycotoxins, and GMO	5,000	5,000
Overall total			83,400



To secure safety of imported processed food, MHLW not only implements the Monitoring Plan but also encourages importers to check the hygienic conditions of the factories in the exporting countries. MHLW issued guidelines in June 2008, which can be accessed at: <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/importedfoods/guideline/01.html>. The Guidelines show what importers need to check for each stage of food handling procedure including acceptance of raw material, product manufacturing, storage, distribution, recall, disposal, referring relevant laws.

Under the Monitoring Plan for FY2006, 79,665 samples were tested and 360 were rejected. The violation ratio accounted for 0.45%. In FY2007, 81,519 tested and 225 rejected, rejection ratio 0.28%. For FY2008, 79,800 samples are going to be tested by the end of March, 2009, and the rejection ratio in the middle of FY2008 was 0.24%. As the positive list system was successfully implemented, the rejection ratio declined and became stable at lower level.

² [Safeguards_017_09 Japan Updates Part1: Lean in Metal Materials and Articles Intended to come into contact with food., February 2009.](#)

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To enforce further food security, MHLW is planning to test 83,400 in FY2009. Please refer to the attached table for details of the Monitoring Plan for FY2009.

The Food Sanitation Law regulates toys and food contact materials² as well as food products. During FY2008, standards for toys and food contact materials were revised. To ensure the implementation of the revision, MHLW is going to test 2,800 samples of “Additives Equipment, containers and packages, Toys” in FY2009, compared with 1,800 samples in FY2008.

Within our SGS Food network a lot of labs are registered by the MHLW and can offer the necessary testing services. More information on the Japanese Monitoring Plan can be obtained through the offices of SGS Japan. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you need any additional information.



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