

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Japan Opens Public Comment Period on GI Designation for the First Domestic Dairy Product

Country: Japan

Post: Tokyo

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Dairy and Products

Prepared By: Daisuke Sasatani

Approved By: Mariya Rakhovskaya

Report Highlights:

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) has proposed geographical indication (GI) protection for Tokachi Raclette cheese from Hokkaido Prefecture. MAFF will accept comments on the proposal until March 27, 2023. If approved, Tokachi Raclette cheese will become the first domestic dairy product in Japan's GI system.

Background

On December 27, 2022, Japan's Ministry Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) opened public comment period for Geographical Indication (GI) protection for Tokachi Raclette from Hokkaido Prefecture. MAFF will accept public comments until March 27, 2023. Comments must be submitted in Japanese using the form available on the [MAFF's website](#). MAFF will accept comments brought directly to MAFF, posted¹ or [emailed](mailto:gi-info@maff.go.jp) to gi-info@maff.go.jp.

Tokachi Raclette is a semi-hard natural cheese made from raw milk produced in the Tokachi Region of Hokkaido. Tokachi first introduced its raclette cheese in 1992. On July 24, 2018, Tokachi Quality Association applied to MAFF for GI protection for the Tokachi Raclette. In 2018, eight Tokachi producers produced 72,000 wheels of Tokachi Raclette cheese (described in Japanese on the [MAFF website](#)). If MAFF approves the GI status for Tokachi Raclette cheese, it will be the first Japanese dairy product with GI protection.

Japan implemented a GI system for agricultural and food products in 2015 (see [JA5008](#)). As of January 2023, [MAFF](#) has protected 120 domestic GIs for agricultural, forestry, and fishery products (e.g., Tsuruta Steuben ([JA9031](#)) and Yamagata La France ([JA2020-0100](#))). Separately, under the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement and the Japan-UK Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, [Japan](#) has agreed to protect an additional 109 GIs for agricultural and fishery products from the EU and United Kingdom. These GI-protected products include 33 EU and UK natural cheeses (e.g., [JA7151](#), [JA2021-0020](#)).

Attachments:

No Attachments.

¹ To: Intellectual Property Division, Export and International Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, 1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8950, Japan