

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Number: JA2019-0194

Report Name: Japan Proposed Amendments to the Food Sanitation Act
Concerning Utensils Containers and Packaging

Country: Japan

Post: Tokyo

Report Category: WTO Notifications, Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

On October 10, 2019, Japan notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) of proposed amendments to Japan's Food Sanitation Act regarding raw materials for utensils, containers and packaging (UCP) via G/SPS/N/JPN/685. The proposal would introduce a positive list system for UCP raw materials. As the United States already operates a positive list system for UCP, minimal trade impacts are expected from Japan's amendment. Comments on the proposal can be submitted to the U.S. enquiry point (us.spsenquiry@fas.usda.gov) by December 2, 2019.

General Information:

Japan is in the process of introducing a positive list system for packaging materials, such as utensils, containers and packaging (UCP) (see 2018 GAIN Report “Japan to Create Food Packaging Materials Positive List”). On August 29, 2019, Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) shared proposed specifications and standards for UCP intended for milk and milk products (see 2019 GAIN Report “Japan 226th Food Safety Group”).

On October 10, 2019, Japan notified the World Trade Organization of draft amendment to the Japan’s Food Sanitation Act concerning acceptable levels of food contamination with UCP raw materials via [G/SPS/N/JPN/685](#).

Under the new regulation, only UCP materials approved under the positive list system will be permitted. Still, for materials outside of the positive list, MHLW will allow UCP use under the following conditions: (i) unapproved substance is used in a part of UCP with no direct food contact, and (ii) unapproved substance does not seep from UCP into food at concentrations exceeding those defined as safe by MHLW.

Under this proposal, MHLW sets the maximum safe level of unapproved UCP material in food at 0.01 mg/kg. As introduction of the UCP material into food would result from leaking, any UCP material will be subject to a leakage test using food-simulating solvent. In this system, 0.01 mg/L of food-simulating solvent will be considered equivalent to the maximum safe level of 0.01mg/kg. Details of testing protocol can be found [here](#) (available in Japanese only). Implementation is expected to start in June 2020.

Interested parties can submit comments to the U.S. enquiry point (us.spsenquiry@fas.usda.gov) by December 2, 2019.

Attachments:

[Japan's WTO Announcement G SPS N JPN 685.pdf](#)