

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Japanese Companies Exploring Alternative Meat Products

Country: Japan

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Report Highlights:

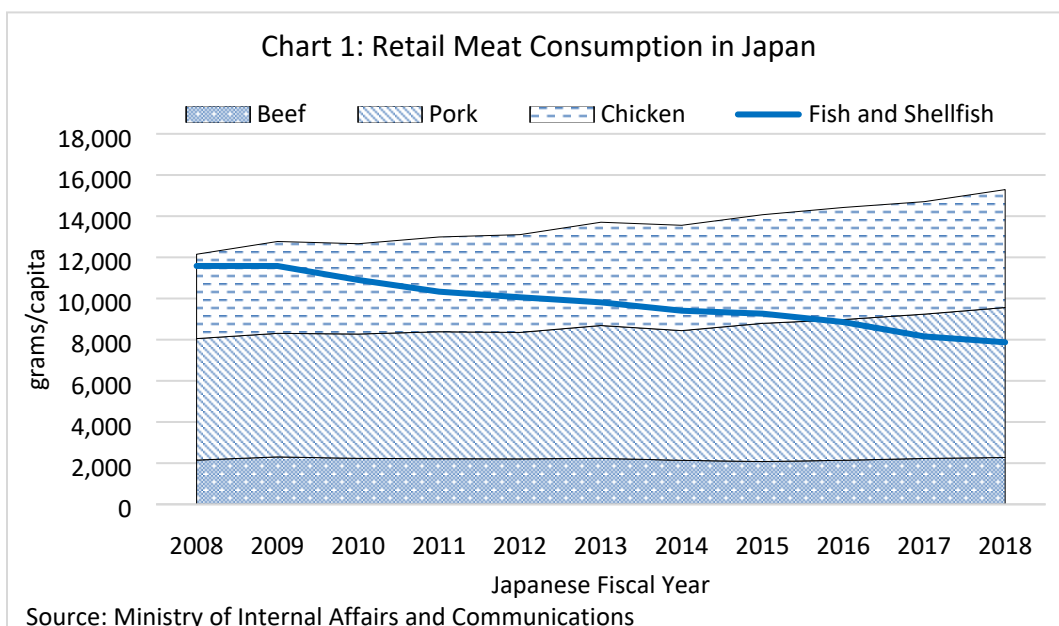
Over the past few months, several of Japan’s largest meat processing companies have announced plans to develop plant-based alternative meat products for retail. Other companies, including tofu manufacturers and pharmaceutical companies, are also looking to enter this sector. However, the market for alternative meat in Japan is projected to remain small compared to overall meat consumption.

General Information:

In response to growing global interest in meat alternatives, several Japanese food companies are planning to develop alternative meat products for the Japanese retail market. Although vegetarian and vegan diets remain relatively unpopular in Japan, the country does have a long history of consuming soy-based products such as tofu, miso, and natto (fermented soybeans). Over the past few years, manufacturers of these products have ventured into the alternative meat market selling soy-based hamburgers and sausages. Some pharmaceutical companies have also developed alternative meat products, though overall sales have remained sluggish.

The alternative meat market gained greater attention in 2019 when Japan's two largest meat processing companies announced plans to develop their own lineups of alternative meat products for sale beginning in the spring of 2020. Planned items include plant-based hams, sausages, and gyoza (fried dumplings). As a result, industry sources report that sales of alternative meat products in Japan could double to reach \$312 million annually by 2023. However, even under that scenario alternative meat would account for just over one percent of total meat consumption. FAS/Tokyo estimates the value of the Japan's meat market (domestic production and imports) to be around \$28.4 billion. In 2018, Japan ranked as the number one overseas market for U.S. beef and U.S. pork valued at a combined \$3.7 billion.

Consumption of animal protein in Japan continues to trend upward. Per capita consumption of chicken and pork has risen year over year (see Chart 1) as consumption of traditional protein sources like fish and shellfish falls due to lower supplies and high prices. Following Japan's implementation of trade agreements with major meat suppliers such as the United States, Australia, Canada, and the European Union, imported meat is likely to become even more accessible to Japanese consumers.



For more information on Japan's meat market, see the USDA Japan Livestock and Products Annual Report (JA9105) and Poultry and Products Annual Report (JA9107).

Attachments:

No Attachments.