July 2002

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

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Agenda Item 9

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

Thirteenth Session, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 17-20 September 2002

INFORMATION AND REPORTS ON FOODS CONTROL AND FOOD SAFETY ISSUES INCLUDING CODEXSTANDARDS [1]

-REPORTS BY MEMBER COUNTRIES -

JAPAN

A. Japanese BSE Precautionary Measures for Public Health

1. BSE testing in cattle slaughtered for human consumption

1. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) started BSE test program including BSE screening tests in local meat inspection centers and BSE confirmatory tests (Histopathology, Immunohistochemistry and Western blotting) in national reference laboratories for all age of cattle slaughtered from October 18, 2001. Until June 8, 2002, 774,733 samples were tested, and three cases of BSE were confirmed.

2. Removal of Specified Risk Materials

2. The obligatory removal and incineration for SRMs (brain, eyes, spinal cord and distal ileum of all age of cattle) was implemented under the Abattoir Law Enforcement Regulation in October 18, 2001.

3. The Products Containing Specified Risk Materials

3. The MHLW recommended domestic food industries to use the materials not containing SRMs originated from countries where a BSE case was reported and to recall all products which might contain those SRMs or were inactivated by a effective treatment.

B. Overview of Japanese Policy for Genetically Modified Foods

1. Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant DNA Techniques

4. To prevent the distribution of foods derived from recombinant DNA techniques whose safety for human consumption has not been assessed, the Government of Japan has ordered a safety assessment to be carried out by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) under the Food Sanitation Law since April 1, 2001. Thereafter it has been prohibited to sell and import Genetically Modified (GM) foods whose safety has

[1] This paper compiled the information sent by member countries in response to CL 2002/12-ASIA.

not been assessed for human consumption. The food sanitation inspectors of the MHLW have monitored them at Quarantine stations in order to ensure the safety of imported GM foods for human consumption, when they are imported.

2. Labeling System on Genetically Modified Foods

5. Regarding GM foods for which safety has been confirmed, the Japanese government has established new labeling standards and made labeling mandatory since April 2001 in order to provide consumers with necessary information for their choices (under JAS Law and Food Sanitation Law). Regarding GM agricultural products and processed foods of them, Labelling Standard for Genetically Modified Foods (Notification No. 517 of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of March 31, 2000) based on the Law Concerning Standardization and Proper Labelling of Agricultural and Forestry Products (the JAS Law; No. 175 of 1950) has been applied since April 1, 2001.

6. The reason for requiring labelling of GM foods in Japan is coming from consumer choice, and this policy will be carried out as far as its credibility and feasibility are satisfied. The list of designated agricultural products and processed foods shall be updated every year taking into considerations new findings about progress in detection method, etc.

3. Labelling method

7. Agricultural products and processed foods made from these products in which recombinant DNA or resulting protein still exists even after processing

Foods made from genetically modified agricultural products that has been treated under a IP handling

? Labelling required (“soybean [genetically modified]”, etc.)

Foods made from designated agricultural products that has been produced, distributed, or processed without segregation between GM agricultural products and non-GM agricultural product

? Labelling required (“soybean [genetically modified soybean not segregated]”, etc.)

Foods made from non-GM agricultural products that is confirmed that it has been treated under a IP handling

? No labelling required (voluntary labelling is possible (“soybean [not genetically modified]”, etc.)

8. Agricultural products and processed foods made from these products in which recombinant DNA or resulting protein does not exist as a result of removal or decomposition during the manufacturing process

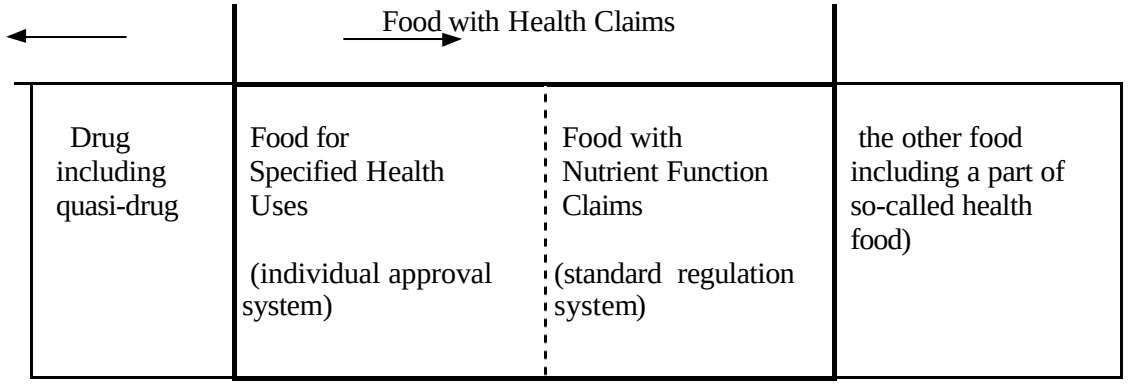
? No labelling required (voluntary labelling is possible)

C. Outline of Foods with Health Claims

9. In consideration of the recent situation that many foods are manufactured and marketed as so called dietary supplement, MHLW had started discussing at the *ad hoc* meeting on the treatment of so called dietary supplement mainly issued health claims from December 1998 to March 2000.

10. Referring the report above, MHLW set the standards and the guidelines for Food with Health Claims in March 2001. This regulation system carries out from April 1 2001.

[Classification]



Food for Specified Health Uses(FOSHU)

11. FOSHU had established in 1994 and permitted only ordinary food. By amending the requirement the criteria for approval/permission in March 2002, dietary supplements have also been able to get approval/permission. In this system Pharmaceutical Affairs and Food Sanitation Council evaluate the applied food based on the scientific data with the application documents concerning with its safety and efficacy. FOSHU can be declared the efficacy related to the health condition but is not allowed "Reduction of Disease Risk Claims" because the claims are premature on discussing about dividing the claims of drugs. 298 items have approved/permitted on the end of May 2002.

Food with Nutrient Function Claims

12. Standards of nutrient function claims are introduced in attached **Annex 1**. If a person intended to declare the nutrition function claims in a food, then it must be consisted with the standards. In this occasion, MHLW has set 14 nutrient standards, and other nutrients (vitamin K, zinc etc.) are discussing now including the possibilities of setting their standards.

MALAYSIA

A. Background

13. The Food Quality Control (FQC) Programme in Malaysia is under the Ministry of Health. The main objective of the FQC Programme is to protect the public against health hazards and fraud related to food as well as to motivate and promote the preparation, handling, distribution, sale and consumption of safe and quality food. In view of increased need for food safety in international trade, globalisation and to meet with obligations under the WTO Agreements, new initiatives are now being identified to enhance the food safety programme. This include review of laws to meet with international requirements, emphasis on import and export control, upgrading analytical capabilities, promoting good manufacturing practice (GMP) and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP), improving data management, and increased participation in international activities related to food safety.

B. New Initiatives

14. Taking cognizance of the global challenges both by virtue of its public health impact as well as its economic and political implications and recognizing that food safety can no longer be considered solely as a domestic entity nor can it be the responsibility of a single agency, Malaysia has by February 2002, established the National Food Safety and Nutrition Council. This Council is a platform for multisectoral agencies to set consensual clear policies and strategies for the continuous improvement of the food safety programme. The members of the Council are from relevant government agencies and non-governmental stakeholders such as industry and consumer representatives. The Honourable Minister of Health is the Chairman of the Council and through this Council, integration of food safety and nutrition policies from ***farm to table*** with other national policies on health, economics and trade can be envisaged.

15. Other new initiatives include the cerfitication of quality assurance programme such as HACCP, privatization of training for food handlers, outsourcing of laboratory capabilities, enhancement of consumer empowerment through increased informative labelling and consumer education, promotion of self-regulation towards industry's accountability, and incorporating Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Interactive dialogue sessions with stakeholders have improved transparency.

16. Capacity building has been greatly emphasized. Currently Malaysia is collaborating with Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) specifically in the areas of data management, electronic networking, laboratory capability and technical exchange programmes.

1. Food Legislations

17. Reviews of the food laws, regulations and standards are on going so as to be in line with current needs, domestically and internationally. A Technical Advisory Drafting Committee, supported by technical sub-

committees and expert task forces is responsible to undertake such reviews. Reference is made to Codex standards, guidelines and recommendations where available.

18. Regulations forthcoming include the Food Analyst Act, Genetically Modified Food (GMF) Regulations, Nutrition Labelling Regulations, Food Irradiation Regulations and Food Hygiene Regulations. The Food Irradiation Regulations is based on the ASEAN Harmonised Regulations on Food Irradiation whilst the Food Hygiene Regulations and the Food Import Regulations pertaining to recall, compoundable offences, and food advertisements are also being formulated. In line with WTO requirements, these new acts and regulations will be notified to WTO prior to implementation.

2. Food Industry

19. The small and medium scale industries (SMIs) in this country is undergoing rapid development. In this regard, a systematic and efficient monitoring and surveillance programme on SMIs is necessary to ensure that SMIs produce safe and quality food.

20. Various agencies including Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI) under the Ministry of Agriculture and Small and Medium Industries Development Cooperation (SMIDEC) under the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) together with the Ministry of Health are prime movers in promoting GMP and the application of HACCP.

21. The Ministry of Health is the competent authority in Malaysia for HACCP certification of seafood exports to the European Union and USA. HACCP certification through third party auditing on a fee basis is voluntary. Good Animal Husbandry Practice (GAHP) is certified by the Veterinary Services Department whilst Good Agriculture Practice (GAP) is certified by the Department of Agriculture. Both are under the Ministry of Agriculture.

3. Training Of Food Handlers

22. The training of food handlers is central to the issue of hygiene and sanitation. This activity was privatised in 1996.

4. Enforcement

23. Enforcement activities such as sampling, premises inspection, import and export control have been intensified through strengthening of infrastructure, effective monitoring programme and training of enforcement personnel.

5. Laboratory Services

24. Food laboratories under the Ministry of Health will be classified into 3 levels based on complexity and scope of analysis. It is envisaged that this proposal will provide a more structured laboratory set-up that will facilitate systematic capacity building including training of analysts over a certain timeframe. In the interim, laboratory services are being optimized through outsourcing of certain services to other institutions such as universities and recognized private agencies.

6. Research And Monitoring

25. In view that risk analysis is given due importance, Malaysia has also embarked on science-based approaches to food safety through research and monitoring activities.

7. Consumer Education

26. Consumer participation in the food safety programme is enhanced through dialogues, seminars as well as direct involvement in technical committees. Activities are being carried out to disseminate information aimed at increasing consumer awareness and knowledge on food safety. The use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has tremendously facilitated this activity.

8. Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

27. Information and Communication technology (ICT) is one of the key elements in enhancing food safety activities. This includes data compilation, networking, on-line management and interactive communication with all stakeholders.

9. Codex and Other International Affairs

28. At the international front including Codex and ASEAN, Malaysia is expected to play a more dynamic role in activities related to food safety.

29. The Codex Contact Point at the Ministry of Health has since 1996, served as the National Codex Secretariat as well as the Codex Contact Point for other international food safety activities. In parallel with Codex, Malaysia is continuously formulating national positions on Codex issues of interest through her National Codex Committee, 21 National Codex Sub-Committees and 3 Codex Task Forces. In an effort to enhance participation in Codex meetings, the Cabinet had recently endorsed the mandate for the National Codex Committee to identify and send delegation from government agencies to ensure that Malaysia is well represented at these meetings.

30. In the Asian region, Malaysia as the current Regional Coordinator For Asia will be hosting the 13th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee For Asia in Kuala Lumpur from 17-20 September 2002. Whilst at the ASEAN level, the ASEAN Task Force on Codex and ASEAN Expert Group on Food Safety, initiated by Malaysia had their first meetings in Kuala Lumpur in 2001. Malaysia will chair the 2nd Meeting of the ASEAN Expert Group on Food Safety in 2003.

C. Conclusion

31. The continuous and dynamic leadership provided by the government will inevitably create better strides towards the establishment of an effective and efficient food safety programme. In view of increased food trade and challenges of globalization, it is paramount that regional member countries work towards addressing food safety issues in the light of public health and trade facilitation that will underpin the national economic development. Efforts towards increasing cooperation and collaboration in areas of food safety including capacity building should be continuously strengthened. In this light, Malaysia is ever willing to contribute and to share her experiences with other Member Government in areas of food safety.

PAKISTAN

32. Pakistan being a developing country does not have the appropriate institutions and the trained personnel to ensure food safety and control, although it has some legislation, food standards and regulation on the books. Due to urbanization and commercial requirements of the future, Pakistan is interested to devote much more efforts to ensure food safety. Food industry and PSQCA has an important part to play in food quality and safety at various stages of food path from agricultural production onward. However technical assistance and training would be needed in this regard.

33. Many of the standards and guideline have been developed by the Pakistan Standard Institute (PSI)/ Pakistan Standard and Quality Control Authority (PSQCSA) or adopted from Codex Alimentarious Commission to ensure food quality and international trade requirements. However, there is limited activity in the area of quality control, food contamination and food borne illnesses. Prevention of food contamination training programme, training programme safe food handling food labelling, equipment, are the areas to be strengthened.

34. International /ISO Food Standards are being updated for Pakistani Standards through PSQCA. WTO is assisting the WTO Wing of Ministry of Commerce to meet the WTO future requirements of Pakistan. FAO/WHO Technical assistance in the form of TCP project would be quite useful for strengthening the above noted activities in Pakistan.

Annex 1

Labelling of Food with Nutrient Function Claims in JAPAN

nutrients	nutrient function claims	Attention and Warning Labelling
Vitamin A	Vitamin A is a nutrient which helps to maintain vision in the dark. Vitamin A is a nutrient which helps to maintain skin and mucosa healthy.	Excess intake of this product neither cure your disease nor promote your health. Keep the optimum amount. Women who are pregnant or expect to be should be careful not to intake excess Vitamin A.
Vitamin D	Vitamin D is a nutrient which promotes to absorb calcium in gut intestine and aids in the development of bone.	Excess intake of this product neither cure your disease nor promote your health. Keep the optimum amount.
Vitamin E	Vitamin E is a nutrient which helps to protect fat in the body from being oxidized and to maintain the cell healthy.	
Vitamin B1	Vitamin B1 is a nutrient which helps to produce the energy from carbohydrate and to maintain skin and mucosa healthy.	
Vitamin B2	Vitamin B2 is a nutrient which helps maintain skin and mucosa healthy.	
Niacin	Niacin is a nutrient which helps maintain skin and mucosa healthy.	
Biotin	Biotin is a nutrient which helps maintain skin and mucosa healthy.	
Pantothenic acid	Pantothenic acid is a nutrient which helps maintain skin and mucosa healthy.	
Vitamin B6	Vitamin B6 is a nutrient which helps to produce the energy from protein and to maintain skin and mucosa healthy.	
Folic Acid	Folic acid is a nutrient which aids red blood cell formation. Folic acid is a nutrient which contributes the normal growth of a fetus.	Excess intake of this product neither cure your disease nor promote your health. Keep the optimum amount. Folic acid is a nutrient which contributes the normal growth of fetus but not improve the growth of fetus with the excess intake.

Vitamin B12	Vitamin B12 is a nutrient which aids red blood cell formation.	Excess intake of this product neither cure your disease nor promote your health. Keep the optimum amount.
Vitamin C	Vitamin C is a nutrient which helps to maintain skin and mucosa healthy and have anti-oxidizing effect.	
Calcium	Calcium is a nutrient which is necessary in the development of bone and teeth.	
Iron	Iron is a nutrient which is necessary for red blood cell formation.	