

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

Date: April 23,2020

Report Number: JA2020-0084

Report Name: Food Additive Labeling Public Comment Period Announced

Country: Japan

Post: Tokyo

Report Category: Agricultural Situation

Prepared By: Daisuke Sasatani

Approved By: Zeke Spears

Report Highlights:

Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) plans to remove the terms "artificial" and "synthetic" for sweeteners, colorings, preservatives, and flavors from the Food Labeling Standards. CAA invites public comments until May 16, 2020. Japanese importers bear the sole responsibility for complying with Japan's Food Labeling Standards for imported products.

General Information

On April 17, 2020 Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) initiated a public comment period for proposed revisions to the Food Labeling Standards (2015 Cabinet Office Ordinance No. 10). Currently, the Food Labeling Standards differentiate between 1) (natural) sweeteners, artificial sweeteners, and synthetic sweeteners, 2) (natural) colorings and synthetic colorings, 3) (natural) preservatives and synthetic preservatives, and 4) (natural) flavors and synthetic flavors. CAA has proposed to remove the words "artificial" and "synthetic" from the labeling requirements to avoid misleading consumers that one alternative is safer than the other. After the revision, all food labels will only use "sweeteners," "colorings," "preservatives," and "flavors" on food labels, even if they are synthetic or artificial additives.

The new Food Labeling Standard ([JA7078](#)) was enacted on April 1, 2020, but this decision on food additives was delayed to allow CAA to complete a series of expert committee meetings about the proposed change ([JA9053](#)). During the committee meetings, members expressed concerns with labels that advertise "no added [additive type]" because they could potentially mislead consumers ([JA9100](#)). For example, a company could use a label that claims their food has "no added synthetic preservatives," but still use natural preservatives in the product. Committee members also noted that many food processors use natural food additives instead of synthetic or artificial food additives to avoid having to label their products as such. On March 31, 2020, CAA published the [Final Report](#).

Japanese importers bear sole responsibility for complying with Japanese Food Labeling Standards for imported products. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare regulates food additives, either natural or synthetic, to ensure food safety.

Submitting comments

Comments should be submitted in Japanese no later than May 16, 2020 by e-mail, fax, email, or through the e-Gov website.

- e-Gov websites: Go to [e-Gov](#). Click "意見提出フォームへ" to submit your comments.
- e-Mail comments to: i.shokuhin6@caa.go.jp Include "Regarding the Proposed Revisions of Food Labeling Standards" in the subject line.
- FAX comments to: +81-(0)3-3507-9292 (Use "Regarding the Proposed Revisions of Food Labeling Standards" as the title.)
- Mail comments to: 〒100-8958 3-1-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo To: Consumer Affairs Agency Food Labeling Planning Division Attn.: Public Comments Team Write "Regarding the Proposed Revisions of Food Labeling Standards" in red ink on the back side of your envelop.

Attachments:

No Attachments.