

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Japan Invites Public Comment for La France Pear GI
Protection

Country: Japan

Post: Tokyo

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Fresh Fruit

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Report Highlights:

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) approved the geographical indication (GI) application for the Yamagata La France pear on April 15, 2020. MAFF is holding a public comment period regarding the application and comments are due by July 15, 2020. U.S. fresh pears do not have market access to Japan.

Background

On April 15, 2020, Japan's Ministry Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) announced on its [website](#) the approved Geographical Indication (GI) protection application for Yamagata La France, a pear variety grown in Yamagata Prefecture. The Yamagata Prefecture La France Promotion Council filed for GI approval on November 16, 2018.

MAFF¹ introduced the Claude Blanchet pear to Japan as a pollination variety in 1903. Since renamed the La France in Japan, it has become a popular western pear variety. Unlike Asian pears, the pear does not fully ripen on the tree and needs time to ripen and soften after harvesting. In 2017, the La France accounted for 63.8 percent of the total production area of western pears in Japan, or 882 hectares. Four-fifths of La France pears are grown in Yamagata Prefecture, but Nagano and other northern regions also grow the variety. The La France is not a protected variety under the [Plant Variety Protection and Seed Act](#). Japan has not imported fresh pears since 2016 and U.S. fresh pears (*Pyrus spp.*) do not have market access to Japan due to codling moth and fire blight. For additional information on Japan's fresh fruit market, please see [JA8706](#).

Japan implemented a GI system for agricultural and food products in 2015 (see [JA5008](#)). In March 2019, MAFF added the "Tsuruta Steuben" to the list of registered GI products and it was the first foreign variety produced in Japan to be protected under the GI system (see [JA9031](#)). The Tsuruta Steuben is a black-skinned, hybrid grape variety developed by the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, now known as Cornell AgriTech, in Geneva, New York ([JA8097](#)). As of May 2020, Japan has designated 94 domestic GIs for agricultural, forestry, and fishery products, excluding Nishio Matcha whose GI protection was withdrawn on February 3, 2020 ([JA2020-0046](#)). In addition, Japan agreed to protect an additional 71 EU agricultural and fishery GIs under the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement which went into effect February 1, 2019 (see [JA7151](#)).

How to Submit Comments to MAFF

MAFF will accept public comments on the application for the La France pear for until July 15, 2020. Interested parties are invited to comment using the comment form available on [MAFF's website](#). Comments must be submitted in Japanese.

Attachments:

No Attachments.

¹ Named the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce at that time.