

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Number: JA2020-0094

Report Name: Japan To Implement a Positive List System for Food Packaging and Container Substances

Country: Japan

Post: Tokyo

Report Category: Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

On April 28, 2020, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) of Japan publicly announced the list of substances to be included in Japan's new positive list system for food container and packaging materials. Japan will begin to implement the system on June 1, 2020 with a five-year transition period.

General Description

In January 2018, Japan notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) that an amendment of the Food Sanitation Act included “improvement of sanitary regulations for utensils, containers and packaging for food and food additives considering international consistency” ([G/SPS/N/JPN/552](#)). To this end, Japan’s Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) decided to establish a positive list (PL) system for food packaging and container materials ([JA8045](#)). Over the next two years, MHLW consulted with the expert review committee and industry stakeholders to develop the PL framework, the review process for materials, the list of approved materials, and standards for substances on the PL ([JA9070](#), [JA2019-2544](#) and [JA2019-0194](#)).

On April 28, 2020, MHLW published the official [notification](#) that the PL for food container and packaging materials will be enforced from June 1, 2020. To facilitate transition to the new system, MHLW established a five-year grace period to begin also on June 1, 2020.

The [announcement](#) (available only in Japanese, for provisional translation see Appendix 1) has also been published in Kanpo, Japan’s Official Gazette. The [list of approved substances](#) referenced in the announcement is currently available only in Japanese.

Interested parties are encouraged to contact MHLW with questions about the new PL system for food packaging materials.

MHLW Point of Contact:

Food Safety Standards and Evaluation Division

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MHLW References

[Overview](#) of the PL system for food packaging and container substances (in English)

[General information](#) on the PL System for food packaging and container substances (in Japanese)

[Japan's Specifications and Standards](#)* for utensils, containers and packaging (in English)

*Please note the site is not updated as frequently as the Japanese site and currently does not contain specific information on the PL system that will be implemented in June 2020.

Appendix 1. Provisional Translation of the April 28, 2020, Japan's Official Gazette No. 240. MHLW Official Notification No. 196.

“Due to the enforcement of the Act on the Partial Revision of the Food Sanitation Act, etc. (Act No. 46 of 1955; hereinafter referred to as the "Revised Act"), as well as the pursuant to the provisions of Article 18, paragraph (1) of the Food Sanitation Act (Act No. 233 of 1947), a part of the standards for food and food additives, etc. (Public Notification No. 370 of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, 1948) shall be revised “as follows”, and shall apply as of the date of enforcement of the Revised Act (June 1, 1948).

However, where an instrument or container or package similar to one sold before the date of application of this Public Notice, manufactured or imported for the purpose of sale today, or used in business, is manufactured or imported for the purpose of sale during a period of five years from that date until the expiration of five years from that date, the substances contained in raw materials prescribed in Article 1 of the Order for Enforcement of the Food Sanitation Act (Cabinet Order No. 229 of 1953), which are used as raw materials, may be deemed to be listed in appended Table 1 of the standards and standards for food, additives, etc. after the revision by this Public Notice.

April 28, 2020, the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare, Katsunobu Kato

(The term "as follows" shall be omitted, and the relevant documents shall be kept at the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, Pharmaceutical Safety and Environmental Health Bureau, Food Safety Standards and Evaluation Division and also made available on the website of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare for public inspection.)”

Attachments:

No Attachments.