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Voluntary - Public

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Japan

Post: Tokyo

Japan Restores Partial Market Access for U.S. Romaine Lettuce

Report Categories:

Vegetables

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

Approved By:

Jess K. Paulson

Prepared By:

Tomohiro Kurai

Report Highlights:

On December 17, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) modified its import restrictions imposed on U.S. romaine lettuce based on an announcement by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regarding an *E.coli* outbreak. The restriction, which had halted all U.S. romaine lettuce exports to Japan, has been limited to romaine lettuce produced in three counties in California (Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Barbara). Romaine lettuce produced before November 23, 2018, in the California counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, and Ventura remains prohibited. Consistent with the current FDA guidance, imports of U.S. lettuce must have a label that indicates its place of origin.

Keyword: JA8111

General Information:

On November 20, 2018, the Food and Drug Administration ([FDA](#)) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([CDC](#)) announced an *E.coli* outbreak in romaine lettuce. In response, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW), the regulatory agency responsible for food safety, instructed quarantine stations at ports in Japan to hold lettuce shipments from the United States effective November 22, 2018. See [JA8101](#) for details.

On December 17, 2018, as a result of their review of the December 13, 2018, FDA [statement](#), MHLW modified the restriction to apply only to U.S. romaine lettuce produced in the counties of Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Barbara in California.

Additionally, MHLW continues to prohibit romaine lettuce from the counties of San Luis Obispo, Santa Cruz, and Ventura in California that was produced before November 23, 2018. MHLW will also continue to restrict the import of romaine lettuce that does not have a label that indicates its place of origin.

FAS/Tokyo recommends that U.S. romaine lettuce exporters communicate with their importers to verify the status of Japan's restrictions prior to shipment.