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Report Name: Japan to Mandate Allergy Labeling on Cashew Nuts and to Recommend Allergy Labeling on Pistachios

Country: Japan

Post: Tokyo

Report Category: Tree Nuts, Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) intends to mandate allergy labeling on cashew nuts from the current recommended status. The CAA also intends to add pistachios to the recommended allergy labeling category. The CAA discussed these changes at the Food Labeling Working Group Meeting held on January 21, 2025. The CAA stated it will continue to discuss these changes and proposed revisions to the Food Labeling Standards with experts and issue a public comment period before finalizing changes by the end of Japanese fiscal year 2025 (April 2025-March 2026).

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

General Information:

On January 21, 2025, during the 7th Food Allergy Labeling Advisory Meeting, the Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) announced that Japan intends to mandate allergy labeling (*i.e.*, specific ingredients) on cashew nuts by the end of the Japanese fiscal year 2025.[1] The CAA also intends to add pistachios to the list of recommended allergy labeling ingredients (*i.e.*, quasi-specific ingredients).

The CAA has been the competent authority for allergy labeling under the Food Labeling standard since 2009, when it took over from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW). As of February 2025, the CAA requires allergy labeling for eight "Specific Ingredient" items (Table 1). In addition, the CAA highly recommends allergy labeling for 21 "Quasi-Specific Ingredient" items. Table 1 shows both Specific and Quasi-Specific Ingredients (Table 1).

The CAA periodically revises ingredients in the allergy labeling list. To make revisions, it relies on the "Reports on Food Labeling Related to Food Allergies Investigation Project," which it publishes approximately every three years. This series of longitudinal surveys is a compilation of food allergy case reports. See more details in the CAA's document.

Table 1: Required and Recommended Allergy Labeling Ingredients as of February 2025

Categorizations	Items	Reason
Specific Ingredients (Mandatory Allergy Labeling)	shrimp, crab, walnut, wheat, buckwheat (*soba*), egg, milk, peanut	Frequent and/or severe cases
Quasi-Specific Ingredients (Recommended Allergy Labeling)	almond, abalone, squid, salmon roe (*ikura*), orange, **cashew nut,** kiwi fruit, beef, sesame, salmon, mackerel (*saba*), soybean, chicken, banana, pork, macadamia nut, peach, mountain yam (*yamaimo*), apple, and gelatin	Less frequent cases

History of Additions and Deletions of Ingredients:

2004 (Dec): Banana was added to quasi-specific ingredients.
2008 (Jun.): Crab and shrimp were added to specific ingredients.
2013 (Sep.): Cashew nut and sesame are added to quasi-specific ingredients.
2018 (Sep.): Almond was added to quasi-specific ingredients.
2023 (Mar.): Walnut was elevated to specific ingredients from quasi-specific ingredients (JA2022-0087).
2024 (Mar.): Macadamia nut was added to quasi-specific ingredients and pine mushroom (*matsutake*) was deleted from quasi-specific ingredients.
2025 (Jan.): CAA intends to elevate cashew nut from quasi-specific to specific ingredients and add pistachio to quasi-specific ingredients.

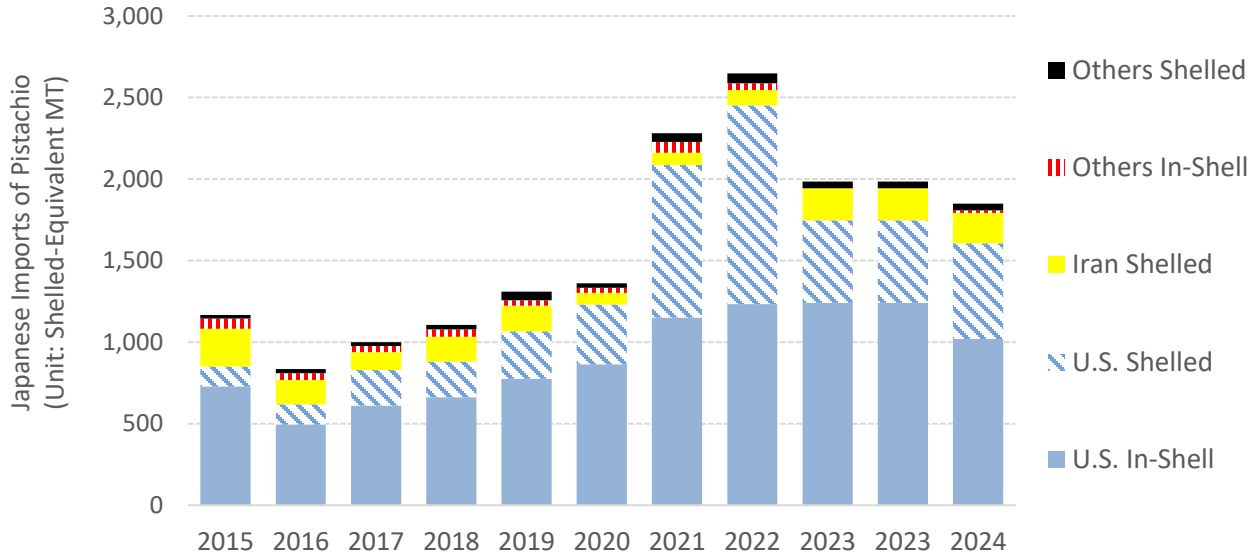
For additional details about Japanese food allergy labeling, please see JA2022-0043. In addition, the Japan FAIRS Country Report Annual explains Japanese food labeling requirements. However, Japanese importers and manufacturers bear sole responsibility for the development of food labels in Japanese language, compliant with Japanese Food Labeling Standards.

[1] Japanese fiscal year 2025 is from April 2025 to March 2026.

Tree Nut Imports:

Japanese tree nut imports have been on the rise in recent years in response to growing demand from Japanese food manufactures for use in snacks, granola, confectionary goods, and others processed items. However, inflation and the weak Japanese yen have hindered tree nut imports since 2023. In 2024, Japan imported approximately 1,850 MT of pistachios (shelled equivalent), of which 87 percent were from the United States (valued at $25.7 million).

Figure 1. Japan's Pistachio Imports (shelled equivalent)

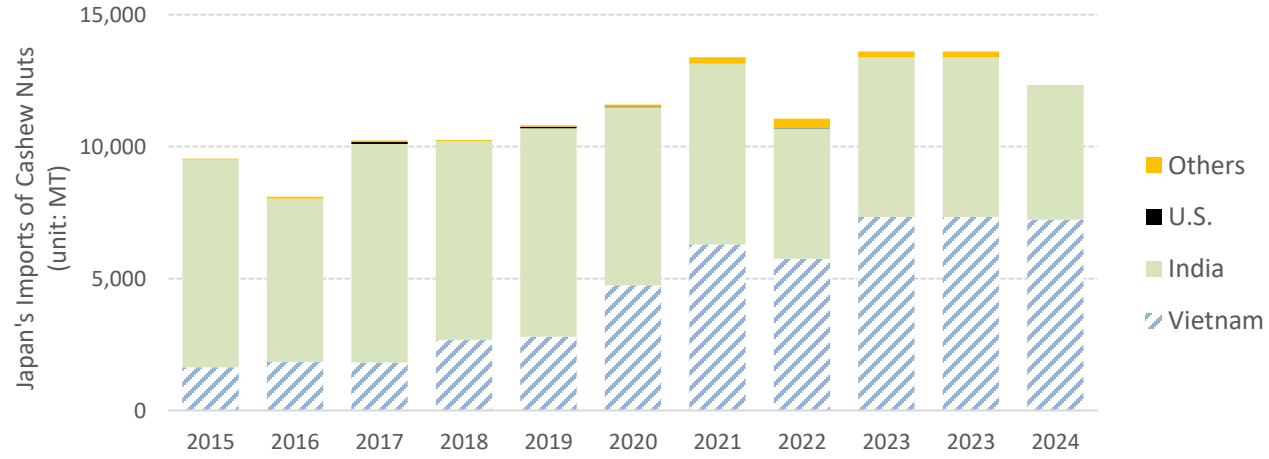


Note: FAS/Tokyo assumes 48 percent of in-shell pistachio is shell.

(Source: Japan Customs)

Also in 2024, Japan imported 12,332 MT of shelled cashew nuts, of which 59 percent came from Vietnam and 41 percent came from India. U.S. cashew nut exports to Japan are minimal, amounting to between 16-80 MT annually, between 2017 and 2022. For additional details about the Japanese tree nuts market, see JA2022-0036.

Figure 2. Japan's Cashew Nut Imports



(Source: Japan Customs)

Attachments:

No Attachments.