

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: Labeling Guidance for Genome Edited Food Products

Country: Japan

Post: Tokyo

Report Category: Agricultural Situation, Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

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Report Highlights:

On September 19, 2019, Japan’s Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) announced genome edited foods that do not contain foreign DNA are not subject to the Food Labeling Standard. The CAA also released guidance for voluntary labeling. Other regulatory authorities in the Government of Japan continue to develop genome edited product handling guidelines.

On September 19, 2019, Japan's Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA) announced foods containing ingredients derived from genome editing technology that do not contain foreign DNA are not subject to mandatory labeling. The CAA released an explanatory diagram (Figure 1) that demonstrates the decision making process. A frequently asked questions document is also available in Japanese on [CAA's website](#).

The Food Labeling Law, implemented in April 2015, mandates that genetically engineered (GE) foods are subject to mandatory labelling ([JA7138](#)). On June 20, 2019, per the request of the CAA, the Consumer Committee in the Cabinet Office of Japan held a public meeting to discuss whether or not genome edited foods should be regulated by the 2015 Food Labeling Law. Advocates for and against the mandatory labeling of genome edited food products attended and expressed their opinions on labeling ([JA9089](#)). On September 19, the CAA announced that genome edited foods are not subject to the Food Labeling Law as long as there is no foreign DNA present in the product (see Figure 1). There is no effective method to differentiate genome edited ingredients from conventionally bred ingredients.

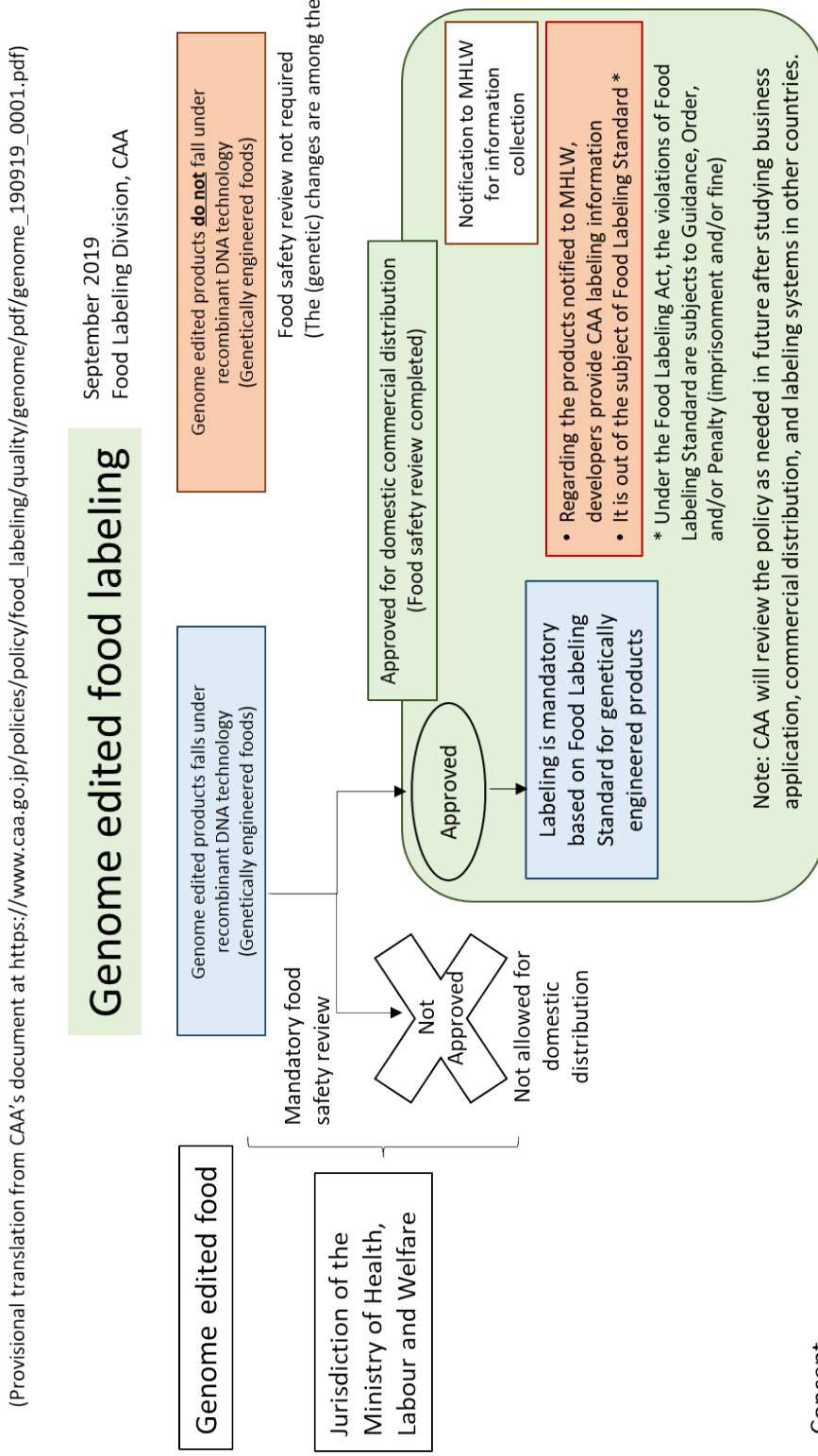
The CAA released guidance documents that encourage food manufacturers to disclose products that contain genome edited food ingredients. Similarly, food manufacturers may also disclose that their products are not derived from genome edited ingredients. The CAA encourages manufacturers to monitor their product's supply chain to identify genome edited ingredients since there is no way to distinguish between genome edited and conventionally bred products.

In February 2019, the Ministry of Environment (MOE) concluded that, according to the Cartagena Protocol, genome edited products without foreign DNA are not subject to Japan's regulations for genetically engineered products ([JA9024](#)). Based on MOE's conclusions the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), for agricultural crops and animals, and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), for foods, are developing regulatory policies and consultation systems. MHLW, keeping in line with MOE's findings, concluded that genome edited food products that do not have foreign DNA are not the subject to mandatory safety assessments. MHLW, however, requires developers of all genome edited food products, and subsequent cross bred progeny, to have "prior consultation" with MHLW even if there is no GE ingredient present ([JA2019-0011](#)). MAFF is currently developing genome edited feed product handling procedures.

Reference:

Consumer Affairs Agency: Labeling information for foods derived from genome editing technology
https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/food_labeling/quality/genome/

Figure 1: Genome Edited Food Labeling (Provisional Translation)



- Concept**
1. When the final product contains no remaining of foreign genes and/or its fragments, there is not scientific method to distinguish if the product is from genome editing or traditional breeding technologies.
 2. Currently, there is no sufficient system of information sharing by business transaction records for foods derived from genome editing technology
 3. There are opinions of right to choose and asking the labeling to the foods derived from genome editing technology

Attachments:

No Attachments.