

Voluntary Report – Voluntary - Public Distribution

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Report Name: US-Japan Organic Equivalency Arrangement Expanded to Include Animal Products

Country: Japan

Post: Tokyo

Report Category: Special Certification - Organic/Kosher/Halal, Trade Policy Incident Report, Livestock and Products, Dairy and Products

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Report Highlights:

The U.S.-Japan Organic Equivalency Arrangement will be extended to livestock products on July 16, 2020. This arrangement will allow USDA-certified organic animal and processed animal products to be sold as organic in Japan. The U.S.-Japan Organic Equivalency Arrangement has included plant and plant processed products since 2014.

General

On January 10, 2018, Japan notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) that it would begin to enforce the Japanese Agricultural Standard (JAS) for organic animal products in 2020 ([JA8025](#)). Subsequently, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF), Japan's competent authority for JAS organic standards, identified July 16, 2020 as the date when Japan would start enforcing the JAS organic standard for livestock products ([JA2020-0117](#)). On July 14, 2020, the United States and Japan agreed to expand the existing equivalency arrangement for plant products to animal products. The new arrangement goes into effect on July 16, 2020.

Under the expanded arrangement, Japan recognizes USDA organic standards for animal products as equivalent to JAS organic regulations. The United States, in turn, recognizes JAS-certified organic animal products as equivalent to USDA-certified organic animal products. This mutual recognition enables USDA-certified organic animal exports to continue to access the Japanese organic market. In order to market U.S. organic animal products as "organic" in Japan, two conditions will need to be met:

- Export certificate (TM-11): USDA-certified organic products exported to Japan under the U.S.-Japan equivalency arrangement have to be accompanied by a [TM-11](#). USDA-accredited certifiers issue this certificate to verify compliance with the terms of the U.S.-Japan organic equivalency arrangement. Interested operators are encouraged to consult with their certifiers prior to exporting products to Japan ([JA2019-0217](#)).
- JAS-certified Importer and JAS Organic Seal: To comply with Japanese organic and labeling regulations, USDA-certified organic products have to display a [JAS Organic seal](#). According to the JAS Act, only JAS-certified operators can attach the JAS seal to product packaging. Therefore, only [JAS Organic-certified operators](#)¹ can import U.S. organic products to Japan under the equivalency arrangement and attach the required JAS Organic seal prior to distribution.

Background

In 2000, MAFF established JAS regulations for organic (i) plant and processed plant products², and (ii) animal products. Since 2000, MAFF has enforced organic standards for organic plant products, but not for animal products. To be labeled and sold as organic ("yuuki" in Japanese) in Japan, USDA-certified organic plant products could receive direct JAS certification or be imported under an organic equivalence arrangement.

On January 1, 2014, the United States and Japan implemented a bilateral equivalency arrangement to facilitate the trade in organic plant products. On April 26, 2017, Japan unilaterally accepted organic standards for animal feed from trading partners with an organic equivalency arrangement with Japan, including the United States (see [JA7059](#)). Until Japan's July 16, 2020 enforcement of the JAS organic standard for livestock products, U.S. organic animal product exports could be sold as "organic" in Japan without additional import requirements.

¹ Many operators in the list operate primarily as freight forwarders. Typically, Japanese retail stores have contracted importers so U.S. organic exporters interested in the Japanese market are encouraged to partner with distributors for a subsequent introduction to a JAS-certified importer.

² MAFF established JAS for organic feed in 2005.

Attachments:

No Attachments.