

Japan Food

GENERAL

Population: 126.93 million (2016)

Households: 53.33 million (2015)

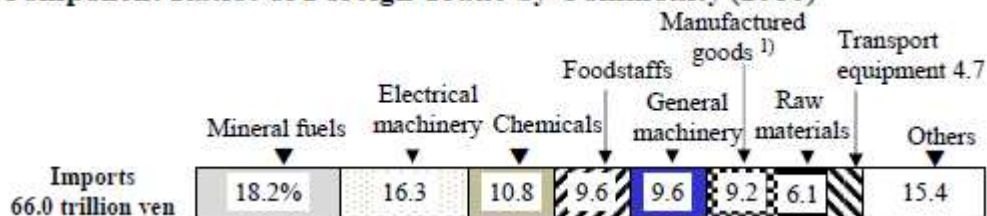
Food self-sufficiency: In FY 2015, the self-sufficiency rate was 100 % for rice, 15 % for wheat, nine percent for beans, 80 % for vegetables, 40 % for fruits, 54 % for meats, and 59 % for seafood. Japan relied almost entirely on imports for the supply of wheat and beans.

Value of manufactured food shipments:
25'936 billion yen¹

Food services and drinking places:
620,000 establishments in operation (2014)

Food import:

Component Ratios of Foreign Trade by Commodity (2016)



Item	(Billion yen)				Annual growth (%)
	2013	2014	2015	2016	
Imports, total	81,243	85,909	78,406	66,042	-15.8
Foodstuffs	6,473	6,732	7,002	6,363	-9.1

Source: Statistical Handbook of Japan²

¹ 1 CHF = 114 JPY as of Dec. 1, 2017

² Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication, <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/handbook/pdf/2017all.pdf>

REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT

NON-LIBERALIZED ITEMS

In general, any type of food can be exported to Japan as long as it is verified to be safe for human health. From Switzerland and Liechtenstein, beef had been banned because of BSE since 2001, but Japan lifted the ban on imports of beef (raw meat) in 2016.³ Some fresh fruits are still banned due to Mediterranean fruit fly⁴. Import quotas are imposed on certain fish products. Wild plants, animals protected by the Washington convention including products made of them cannot be exported to Japan.

JAPANESE IMPORTER

There is no license for food import; anyone can therefore import foods except for alcoholic beverages. Those who import and wholesale/retail beverages containing 1 % or more alcohol require a liquor vendors' license.

STEP 1: PRODUCT ANALYSIS

First, the Swiss exporter should check if the product complies with the Japanese regulations.

To verify this, the following information will be useful to Swiss exporters:

- General information on Japanese food safety administration:
<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/>
- Information on the Positive List System for Agricultural Chemical Residues in Food, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/positivelist060228/index.html>
- Food additives permitted for use in food
<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/foodadditives/index.html>

Inspection result statements provided by Swiss official laboratories are also valid. The list of laboratories is available on <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/importedfoods/1-10.html>

STEP 2: MARKET ANALYSIS

In order to be successful, the Swiss exporter must understand the Japanese market and create clear competitive advantages. This involves understanding the customers, competitors and the distribution channels. S-GE will help the Swiss exporter get necessary information and provide suggested next steps.

STEP 3: BUSINESS PARTNER SEARCH

Based upon the findings from the Step 2, establish a profile of the qualified business partner (importer/distributor) approach the identified potential partners, meet them and enter into a partnership with the chosen one to start business.

Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE) will gladly help through every step the Swiss exporter to succeed.

³ <http://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/news/eligible-bse-country.html>

⁴ List of the import prohibited plants: <http://www.pps.go.jp/english/law/list2.html>

STEP 4: PROCEDURES TO BE TAKEN CARE OF BY THE JAPANESE PARTNER

INSPECTION PROCEDURES

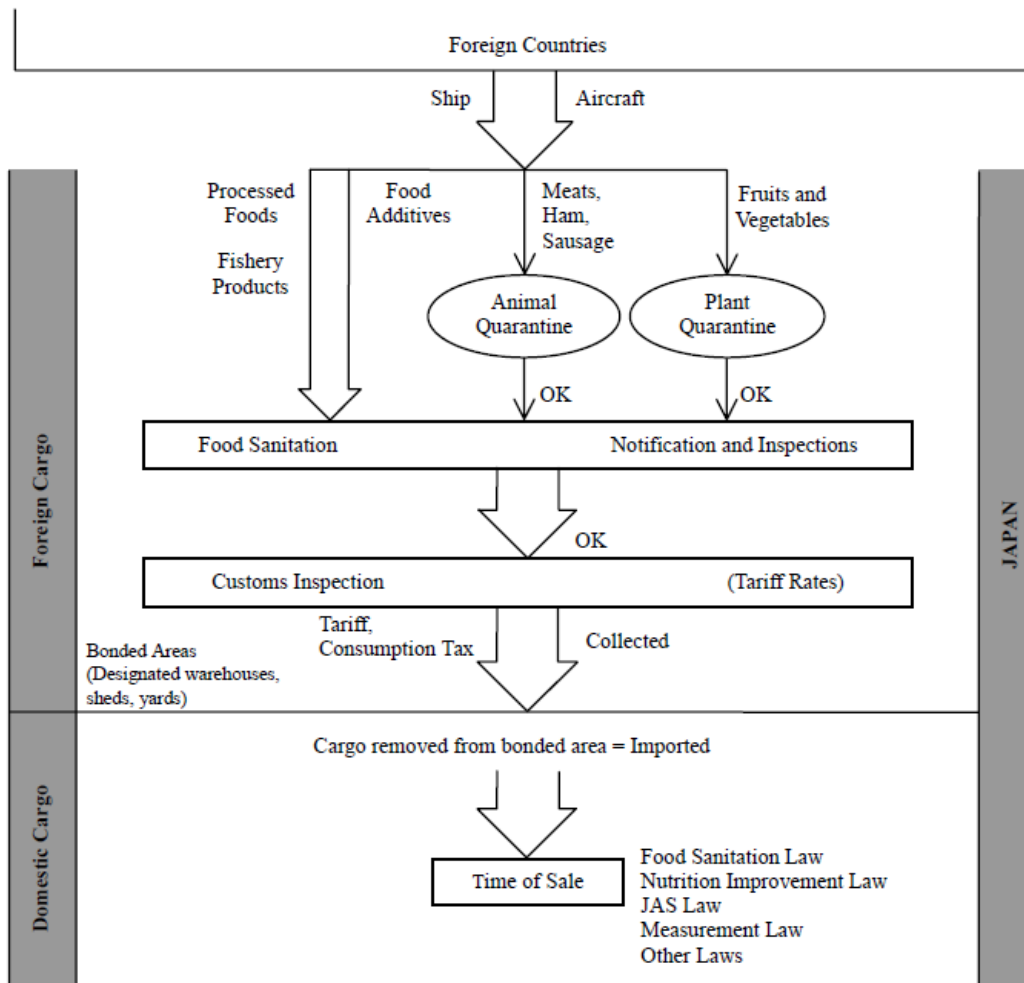
In order to ensure the food safety, every type of food product must pass a food sanitation inspection and a customs inspection. Furthermore, products such as meat, fish and fresh fruits/vegetables must be inspected in addition at each respective quarantine station as shown below:

Figure 1: Principal Quarantine and Inspection Procedures:

	FRUITS AND VEGETABLES	MEATS AND MEAT PRODUCTS	FISHERY PRODUCTS	OTHER PROCESSED FOOD
ANIMAL QUARANTINE	Required			
PLANT QUARANTINE	Required			
FOOD SANITATION INSPECTION	Required	Required	Required	Required
CUSTOMS INSPECTION	Required	Required	Required	Required

For Food Sanitation Inspection, the importer must submit a “Notification Form for Importation of Food” to the Quarantine Station at the port of entry. Having examined submitted documents, the Japanese authorities will determine whether further inspection is required or not. The food product can only be imported into Japan once it passes all the required inspections.

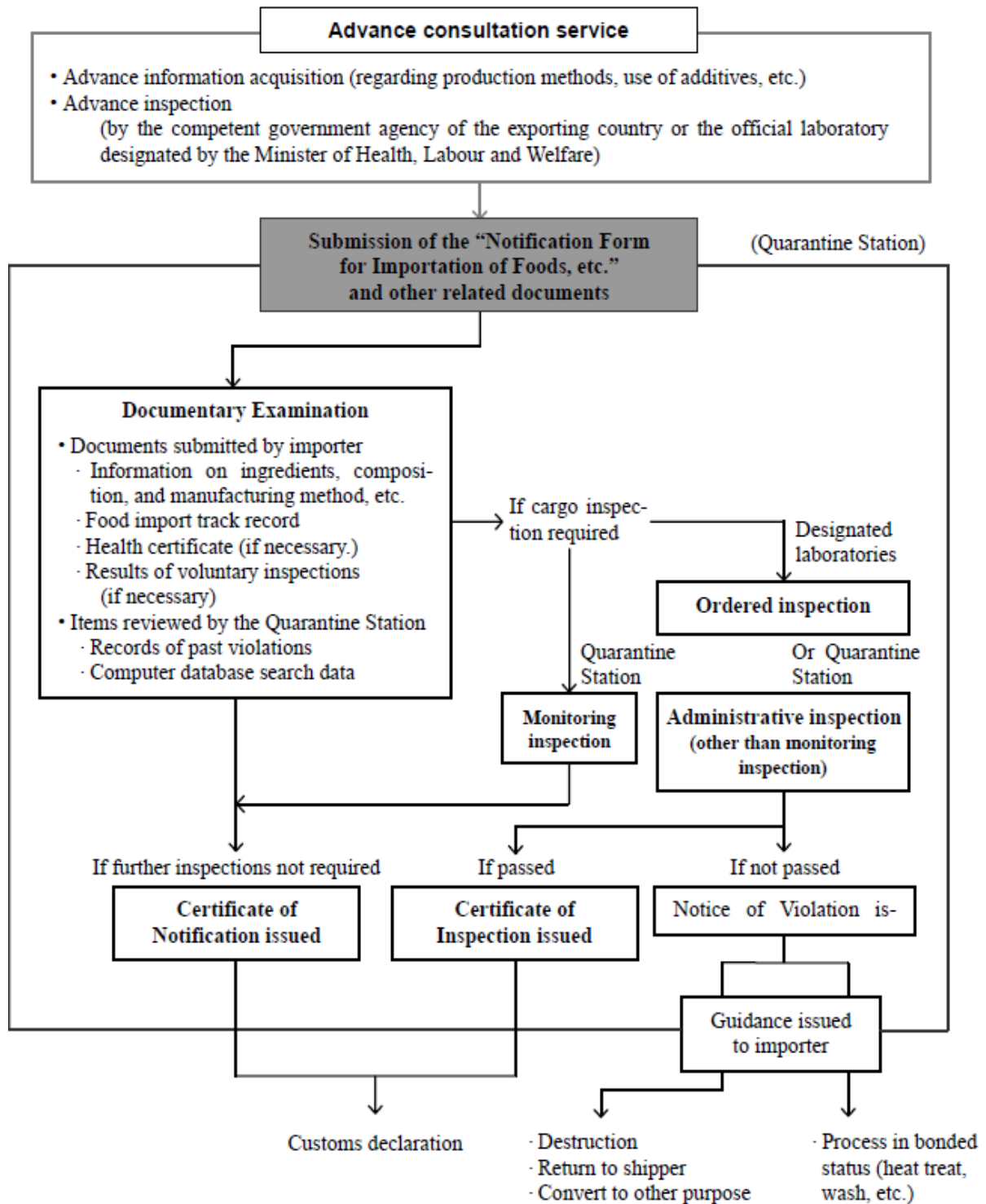
Figure 2: Flowchart of Food Import Procedures of Japan



Note: Upon request by the importer, the food sanitation inspection and the animal quarantine/plant quarantine inspection may be conducted concurrently. Importers who wish to receive such treatment must clearly write “requesting concurrent inspection” on the application for import quarantine inspection.

Source: JETRO Japan External Trade Organization, www.jetro.go.jp

Figure 3: Procedure required under the Food Sanitation Law



Source: JETRO Japan External Trade Organization, www.jetro.go.jp

An import notification is required⁵ for all foods including food additives, apparatus for food (e.g. knives), food container-packaging as well as toys for infants that are imported for commercial purposes⁶.

With regard to the import notification procedure, the importer is recommended to utilize a consultation service provided by food sanitation inspectors well in advance. For the importer to make an inquiry to the authorities, the following information and sample are required:

- Ingredients
- Country of origin
- Composition
- Names, quantity and purposes of use of additives, if any
- Manufacturing or processing method (e.g. pasteurization or extraction methods described in detail)
- Container-packages (materials, form, coloring, etc.)
- Unopened sample

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare: [Import Procedure under Food Sanitation Law:](#)

LABELING

Every kind of food products sold in Japan has to meet the legal labeling requirements. Below are two of the major laws related to food labeling:

REGULATION	COMPETENT AGENCY	SCOPE
Food Sanitation Law	Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	Protection of health (best before date, ingredients (food allergen) listing, etc.)
	Labeling for Food Additives http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/foodadditives/index.html	
	Labeling for GMO http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/dna/index.html	
	Labeling for nutrition, health claims, special dietary use http://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/foodsafety/fhc/index.html	
	Responsible for attaching the required labeling: Seller	
JAS Law (Japanese Agricultural Standards)	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery	Quality labeling to ensure a certain quality of foods and drinks made by a specific manufacturing method (e.g. organic)
	Organic JAS http://www.maff.go.jp/e/jas/specific/organic.html	
	Responsible for attaching the required labeling to imported food: Importer	

⁵ When the same product is imported repeatedly, there is no need to file an import notification every time under the Planned Import System which presupposes that the product must absolutely be identical and the importer has been importing the same product continuously, and has never violated the relevant regulations for the past three years.

⁶ This includes provision importing such products as a gift (e.g. corporate gifts, giveaways) to anonymous, unidentifiable and/or large number of recipients.

AUTHORITIES

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Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF)	Tel: +81-3-3502-8111	Kasumigaseki 1-2-1, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8950 http://www.maff.go.jp/
Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIAC)	Tel: +81-3-5253-5111	Kasumigaseki 2-1-2, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8950 http://www.soumu.go.jp/
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI)	Tel: +81-3-3501-1511	Kasumigaseki 1-3-1, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-8901 http://www.meti.go.jp/
Consumer Affairs Agency	Tel: +81-3-3507-8800	Nagatacho 2-11-1, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 100-6178 http://www.caa.go.jp/
Food Safety Commission of Japan	Tel: +81-3-6234-1166 Fax: +81-3-3584-7390	Akasaka 5-2-20, 22F, Minato-ku Tokyo, 107-6122 http://www.fsc.go.jp/
Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)	Tel: +81-3-3582-5511	Akasaka 1-12-32, Minato-ku Tokyo, 107-6006 http://www.jetro.go.jp/

INDUSTRY ASSOCIATIONS

Chocolate and Cocoa Association of Japan

<http://www.chocolate-cocoa.com/english/index.html>

All Japan Coffee Association

<http://coffee.ajca.or.jp/english>

Japan Import Food Trading Association

<http://www.jifta.org/hp/>

JAPAN WINES AND SPIRITS IMPORTERS' ASSOCIATION

<https://youshu-yunyu.org/english/index.html>

WINE IMPORTERS ASSOCIATION OF JAPAN

<http://importers-wine.jp/>

Wine and Spirits Culture Association

<http://www.sakuraaward.com/en/supporter.html>

The Japan Imported Cheese Promotion Association

<http://www.jic.gr.jp/>

TRADESHOWS

Foodex

Tokyo (Makuhari)

<https://www.jma.or.jp/foodex/en/>

Health Ingredients Japan

Tokyo

<http://www.hijapan.info/eng/index.php>

Concurrently held with **Food ingredients for Taste Japan** and **Safety & Technology Japan 2018**

Wine and Gourmet Japan

Tokyo

<http://www.wineandgourmetjapan.com/>

Concurrently held with **Food And Beverage Great Expo and Dessert Sweets & Bakery Festival, Food and Drink OEM Matching Expo, Japan Meat Industry Fair, etc.**

Gourmet & Dining Style Show

Tokyo

<http://www.gourmetdiningstyleshow.com/22qdsen/>

		https://www.jma.or.jp/hcj/en/
Hoteles Japan	Tokyo	Concurrently held with Caterex Japan and Japan Food Service Equipment Show
Agri-food Expo	Osaka	https://www.agri-foodexpo.com/english/
Health Food Expo	Tokyo	http://www.healthfoodexpo.jp/eng/
Wellness Food Japan	Tokyo	http://www.wfjapan.com/en/
Organic Expo Japan	Tokyo	https://organic-expo.jp/en/
Drink Japan		http://www.drinkjapan.jp/en/Home/

MARKETING

The Japanese food and beverage market is extremely diversified.⁷ In the past, S-GE published market studies for Swiss exporters of food products as follows:

- *Organic Food Market* (2006)
- *The Japanese Cheese Market. Opportunities and Challenges* (2011)
- *Swiss Wine in Japan, Challenges and Solutions* (2013)
- *Health & Functional Food in Japan* (2014)

These studies were intended to be used by Swiss SMEs as a practical marketing guide and such marketing-related information is still valid today. They can be e-mailed upon request.

S-GE's Japanese counterpart, JETRO, Japan External Trade Organization, provides the following market report online for free. They are all published in 2011 and available in English and French.

- "Coffee"
- "Spices and Herbs"
- "Nuts"
- "Dried Fruits"
- "Cereals" (812KB)
- "Vegetables, Fruits, and Processed Products"
- "Alcoholic Beverages"
- "Soft Drinks"

⁷ <https://www.jma.or.jp/foodex/en/trends/today.html>

- "Seafood and Processed Products"
- "Health Foods and Dietary Supplement"

<https://www.jetro.go.jp/en/reports/market/>



Packaging is also as important in terms of functionality (e.g. easy to open), food safety and esthetics as the quality of food product itself.

<http://total-package.jp/case/200057>



<https://www.lotte.co.jp/products/column/vol3.html>

S-GE offers customized solutions to Swiss exporters doing business in Japan. As this infosheet provides only very basic information on food and beverage in general and to the best of our knowledge, Swiss exporters should consult with the S-GE Consultant for Japan for further, up-to-date and product-specific information and services tailored to your needs. We will support you through every step of the exporting process, please contact:

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Disclaimer

While this infosheet is intended to provide an overview of this specific market and its opportunities at the time of its edition, each individual company or organization may have to conduct its own analysis to get a better understanding of the opportunities and possibilities available to them. You are encouraged to explore and develop your chances and assess your risks based on in-depth research and analysis.

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