

International Harmonization on Legislation of Food Additives

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Summary

The international food trade is increasing and the proportion of imported foods among the total food of Japan exceeds 60%, while there can be found certain discrepancies between the food additive list of Japan and those of foreign countries.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) intends to newly designate certain additives that are not authorized in Japan based on an interim report titled the handling of unauthorized food additives whose safety is globally confirmed and that are widely used outside Japan.

The Codex Alimentarius had begun to establish a Codex General Standards on Food Additives (GSFA) in 1992. The GSFA covers not only food additive standards of standardized foods, but that of non-standardized foods, when a food category system is employed in the GSFA. It can accommodate only food additives which have numbers from the International Numbering System and have been evaluated by JECFA. At present, the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) has been working on revision of maximum use levels of food additives in each food category and incorporation of provisions of food additives in Commodity Standards into the GSFA.

In cooperation with the MHLW, Japan Food Additives Association has been working to introduce Japanese food additive use standards into global standards.