



Japan-EU EPA
1st meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures
Tokyo, 28-30 October 2019

From 28 to 30 October 2019, the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, established under the provisions of the Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, held its first meeting in Tokyo, co-chaired by, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and DG Health and Food Safety, European Commission, with attendance from MAFF, MHLW and DG SANTE-TRADE, the EU Delegation to Japan, and a representative from the Finnish Embassy.

The Committee confirmed that the rules of procedure of the Joint Committee apply *mutatis mutandis*.

Both parties decided to continue to promote their dialogue, including the establishment of a technical group dealing with animal health issues whose progress and results will be referred to the EPA SPS Committee.

Both parties reconfirmed their joint commitment to implementing the SPS Chapter and their will to continue to cooperate in effectively implementing the provisions of the SPS Chapter.

For the purpose of promoting mutual understanding regarding both parties' SPS measures and their application, Japan explained the respective roles of Japan's competent authorities in charge of food safety as well as Japan's risk assessment procedures on plant health, animal health and food safety, followed by the EU side's explanation on the same points with a focus on the single market, harmonised legislation and import requirements. The EU gave a presentation on the SPS Market Access Data Base (MADB) and the new features of the collaborative space; a common platform (SPSCS) for sharing information between the EU Commission, EU Member States and the Competent Authority of trading partners. Japan expressed its interest in the MADB.

The EU, in line with the SPS chapter provisions, requested Japan to simplify the procedures for import and the risk assessment for EU Member States and requested Japan to use the experience gained from assessment results of already approved EU Member States in view of the EU harmonised legislation in place. Japan explained that it had expedited the procedures by utilising its knowledge and information gained through risk assessment for other countries, and that Japan would continue to take appropriate SPS measures based on scientific grounds. Parties will continue to work on the simplification, expediting and completing of procedures, as agreed in the EPA. Japan emphasized the need to continue to work on scientific grounds.

The EU and Japan reviewed the EU Member States' prioritised market access applications on beef, regionalisation on ASF, cherry, pear and kiwi fruits and Japan's prioritised market access applications on poultry meat, change of classification on poultry and porcine meat products and black pine bonsai plant. Japan and the EU will continue to work on the approval procedure without undue delay. Both parties confirmed continuation of regular contacts as regards the state of play and progress on the prioritised market access applications.

The EU requested to evaluate EU Member States in groups when Japan conducts the risk assessment and to simplify the procedures of the risk assessment on plant quarantine. Japan replied that it would consider the request if the concrete proposal was presented. Japan requested priorities among the EU Member States' requests for consultations on animal and plant quarantine be identified. The EU confirmed that it would consider the request.

The EU side welcomed the application of the pre-listing approach to beef import authorisations, and welcomed the implementation of the pre-listing approach also for other products of animal origin i.e. poultry and pork- under Japan's new amended food sanitation act.

The EU requested to extend the deadline of the questionnaire related to Japan's revision of the Food Sanitation Act, and Japan encouraged the EU to reply within the deadline to the extent possible. It was confirmed that the European Commission will provide common replies for all matters regarding SPS issues harmonised at EU level.

Both parties discussed next steps regarding the project for the mutual recognition in the area of animal health, and confirmed that the parties would continue to proceed with the examination through video conferences and other means of communication in order to move forward the discussion on tangible deliverables within the deadlines mutually agreed in advance. The results will be reported to the next EPA Joint Committee meeting.

Japan requested the EU to establish a support system for planning of safety tests before Japanese companies apply for the EU's approval of food additives. The EU referred to guidelines on DG SANTE's website, which in the EU's view provide detailed information to support applicants. In line with Annex 6 in the EPA and the exchange of letters, both parties decided to continue to discuss between relevant authorities about the timing and frequency of an enhanced cooperation on food additives. The EU proposed to have further discussion in early 2020.

Japan is considering the EU replies and concerns on the WTO SPS notification (G/SPS/N/JPN/681) on Food Contact Materials and will provide an answer on EU's reply.

Both Parties confirmed to explore possible use of e-certification in relation to phytosanitary commodities. The EU suggested a meeting involving IT experts.

Regarding the EU's import measures on Japanese food products following the accident at the Fukushima nuclear power station, Japan welcomed the amended Implementing Regulation alleviating restrictions on some products and prefectures, which had been published on 25 October in the EU Official Journal and would enter into force in November.

Both parties confirmed that the co-chairs of the Committee would communicate closely with each other as appropriate for monitoring the follow-up work on SPS matters.

Both parties confirmed that they would hold the next Committee meeting in 2020 in Brussels.

Both parties confirmed that the outcome of the Committee meeting should be reported to the next EPA Joint Committee, and concluded their discussions.