



## **EU-Japan- EPA**

### **Fourth meeting of the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures**

Brussels, 7-8 December 2022

On 7 and 8 December 2022, the Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, established under the provisions of the EU- Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, held its fourth meeting co-chaired by DG Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), European Commission, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and with the attendance from DG SANTE, DG TRADE, the EU Delegation to Japan, the Czech Presidency, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare of Japan and the Japanese Mission to the EU.

Both sides welcomed the benefits of conducting the meeting in person and their willingness to improve the understanding of each other systems.

Both sides stated that since the third SPS Committee, some of the actions have been progressing but some more efforts are needed to deliver concrete outcomes and stressed the importance of recording some progress on the outstanding issues.

With regards to the competent authorities, the EU presented the changes on DG SANTE organigramme followed by an update by DG TRADE, whilst Japan recalled the major restructuring of the MAFF during last year and informed that there were no further changes since then.

Under the agenda item “general concerns” on SPS measures, Japan highlighted the importance of considering measures under different environmental and climate conditions when the EU considers its health and environmental standards applicable to imports into the EU.

On the EU general concerns, the Commission recalled the limited progress on the measures related to the simplification and speeding up of market access approval procedures and proposed to discuss those issues in a regular, dedicated working group with sufficient time and regularity devoted to these matters. Japan recalled the importance of working on the basis of scientific grounds between both sides’ experts. Japan will follow up on the EU proposals.

With reference to the food additive cooperation, both sides will have an exchange on the matters raised by the EU during the meeting and if need to be, a videoconference with due considerations to the applicable confidentiality provisions. The EU will follow it up.

Under the agenda item, “specific SPS trade issues”, Japan requested further information on the new EU Regulation related to the Veterinary medicinal products which would have an impact on trade. The EU provided detailed explanations on the Regulation, indicating that a

virtual meeting to be held with trade partners on 12 January 2023 and it will be a good opportunity to clarify further details of it.

Japan raised concerns encountered on listing of establishments in the TRACES NT System, which have been solved by now. The EU offered further assistance on this point to Japan.

Concerning the certificate for live bivalve molluscs, Japan asked for further cooperation by ensuring smoother border control clearance procedures. The EU indicated to be ready to investigate the possibility to use TRACES NT for the electronic signature of certificates. Regarding the EU's import measures on Japanese food products (radionuclides), Japan reiterated its request on the lifting of the EU import measures, asking for an assessment based on scientific grounds. Japan asked to be timely informed on the coming legislative procedures. The EU explained the planned process for the review of the measures.

Japan reiterated the need for more extensive consultation in relation to the Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs) for clothianidin and thiamethoxam and the need to ensure an acceptable transitional period. The EU explained the content and entry into force of the Regulation and informed about the ongoing MRLs review.

In relation to composite products, the EU informed Japan about the launching of the procedure for the inclusion of the custom code related to miso with soup stock amongst the exemption of control at the EU borders.

Japan raised the issue of re-listing of the country for exporting of poultry meat and poultry meat products upon recovery of its Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) free status. The EU indicated that the re-listing process was interrupted by the recurrence of HPAI in Japan and highlighted that this issue would be easily solved once the mutual recognition of animal health project is finalised. Japan sought clarification on the issue of heat treatment of processed meat products and the EU provided the state of play.

The EU requested an update of the situation on the EU MS market access application related to products of animal origin. The EU highlighted the need to simplify the procedures by avoiding duplication, using the already available information for streamlining the relevant assessment and final determination. While providing the state of play on some EU MS applications, Japan reiterated additional questions were required to be fully prepared for the risk assessment by the third party panel.

The EU requested an update situation on the EU MS market access application related to plant products, highlighting the long-time period needed for the relevant assessments and emphasising the need for simplification and speeding them up. Japan provided an updated state of play for some EU MS applications and provided some reasons for the long approval process.

Both sides welcomed the ongoing work on the mutual recognition of zoning decisions in the area of animal health, beneficial to both, and the need for timely progress in the first step on HPAI.

Japan indicated to be ready to send the draft risk assessment to the third party panel by the end of 2022. The EU asked for finalising the project on HPAI before next EU-Japan Summit and Japan replied that it would depend on the deliberation by the third party panel. The EU indicated to be ready to send the questionnaire related to Japan regionalisation on HPAI assessment by the end of 2022. Japan indicated that they need some more experience on the African Swine Fever and will work actively towards this end during the coming period.

Both sides informed the Committee of the Animal Health Technical Working Group (AHTWG) discussion held in Tokyo in October 2022 recalling the importance of the cooperation on animal health. The discussion was mainly focused on the mutual recognition (MR) of zoning decisions, the application of regionalisation principles to other diseases covered by the MR project and the experience gained with other trade partners; discussion on vaccine strategy and HPAI control. Both sides confirmed to hold the meeting of the AHTWG on a yearly basis.

The EU presented the outcome of the workshop on Sustainable Food System held in Tokyo in October 2022 indicating the similarities between the EU and Japanese initiatives. Both sides shared the importance of strengthening cooperation on Sustainable Food System and the EU will send some proposals for next activities in the coming weeks.

Both sides shared the wish to have the next SPS Committee in 2023 in person in Japan.