

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 5/20/2011

GAIN Report Number: JA1035

Japan

Post: Tokyo

Japan Food and Agriculture Situation Report - Horticulture Update

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

Approved By:

Jennifer Clever

Prepared By:

Kenzo Ito, Jennifer Clever

Report Highlights:

Over the last few weeks, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) has been lifting shipping restrictions on vegetables grown in most of the Fukushima producing areas. On May 11, the Kanagawa Prefectural government announced that radioactive cesium above the allowable limit was detected in green tea leaves grown in Minami-Ashigara City, located 250 km south-west of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant.

Horticultural Products Update

Over the last few weeks, Japan's Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) has been lifting shipping restrictions on vegetables grown in most of the Fukushima producing areas. Back in March, MHLW initially banned the shipment of spinach and "kakina" leafy vegetable from the entire area of the Fukushima Prefecture. Subsequently, MHLW expanded the ban to include other leafy vegetables, head type leafy vegetables (such as cabbage, iceberg lettuce, etc.), flower head brassicas (such as broccoli, cauliflower, etc.), and turnip grown in the entire Fukushima Prefecture. Since then, the Fukushima Prefectural government has been testing and monitoring the radiation levels in the banned vegetables. MHLW is now watchfully lifting bans for individual municipalities in the Fukushima prefecture only after three consecutive weeks of testing show radiation levels to be below the legal limits.

The following bans have been removed:

Spinach, "Kakina" and other leafy vegetables: On May 4 and 11, MHLW lifted the shipment ban on spinach and other leafy vegetables from 10 municipalities in the south of Fukushima, and on 17 municipalities in the western part, respectively.

Cabbage and iceberg lettuce: On April 27, MHLW lifted the ban on cabbage and iceberg lettuce grown in 17 municipalities in the west of Fukushima. On May 4, the same ban was lifted on 12 municipalities in Central Fukushima and the Tamura City area outside of 20-km no-go zone. On May 11, the ban was also lifted on 17 additional municipalities in the north and central Fukushima.

Broccoli and Cauliflower: On April 27, MHLW lifted the ban on broccoli and cauliflower previously imposed on 9 municipalities in the south of Fukushima. On May 4, the ban was lifted from Iwaki City. On May 11, MHLW cleared an additional 11 municipalities in Central Fukushima and the Tamura City area outside of the 20-km no-go zone. Finally on May 18, MHLW lifted the ban on 17 municipalities in western Fukushima.

Turnip: On May 4, MHLW lifted the shipment ban on turnips grown in 20 municipalities in Central Fukushima and the Tamura City area outside the 20-km no go area. On May 18, MHLW lifted a similar ban on 26 additional municipalities located in the South and West of Fukushima.

Shiitake Mushrooms: On May 16, MHLW lifted the shipment ban on shiitake mushrooms (outdoor grown) from Shinchu Town and the Tamura City area outside the 20-km no-go zone.

Radioactive cesium above the safety limit detected in green tea grown in the Kanagawa Prefecture:

On May 11, the Kanagawa Prefectural government announced that radioactive cesium was detected in green tea leaves grown in Minami-Ashigara City, located 250 km south-west of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant. “Ashigara-tea” is grown in the western part of the Kanagawa Prefecture. Harvesting of this year’s tea crop began last week. On May 13, radioactive cesium above the safety limit was also found in tea leaves grown in five neighboring municipalities. The Kanagawa Prefectural government then requested green tea growers to voluntarily stop any shipments from Minami-Ashigara City and five neighboring municipalities. As a result, tea growers in Minami-Ashigara City and neighboring municipalities are clipping new leaves for disposal. The tea industry in the Kanagawa Prefecture expects that approximately 50 to 60 tons of tea leaves (based on a dried tea weight) will need to be disposed. As of May 20, MHLW had not issued an official ban on shipments of Ashigara-tea.



Tea growers in Kanagawa clip new green tea leaves for disposal