



Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan
Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau
1-2-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 100-8950, Japan

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Mark A. Bradley
Chief
National Organic Program
Audit, Accreditation, and Training Branch
Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS)
United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Room 4008-South Building
Washington, DC 20250
United States

Dear Mr. Bradley,

I appreciate that the Government of the United States and the Government of Japan have been able to have a good discussion on organic products.

In February, 2002, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in Japan recognized that the grading system of organic agricultural products and processed foods in the U.S., which was stipulated in National Organic Program was equivalent to the grading system of organic products under the Japanese Agricultural Standard based on Article 15-2 of the Law Concerning Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products. As a condition to approve the equivalent to the Japanese Agricultural Standard, Japan requested the U.S. to take necessary action to prevent the use of three substances (Potassium bicarbonate, Lignin Sulfonate and Alkali Extracted Humic Acid) in organic products which will be exported to Japan.

Japan has been examined whether to remove the prohibition on using three substances, as requested by the U.S. government. Having reviewed scientific data provided by the Government of the United States, we held an explanatory meeting with consumers and sought public comments to receive views on the possible removal of these substances.

As a result, we inform you our decision.

1 Potassium bicarbonate: The use of Potassium bicarbonate is allowed.

2 Lignin Sulfonate: The use of Lignin Sulfonate is allowed only as binder or anticaking agent.

3 Alkali Extracted Humic Acid: The banning the use of Alkali Extracted Humic Acid for products to be exported to Japan should be continued.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me or Ms. Chie Shindo at chie_shindo@nm.maff.go.jp.

We look forward to our continued cooperation on organic trade issues.

Yours sincerely,

Yutaka Arai

Yutaka Arai (Ms.)
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CC: Mr. Stephen Wixom, Agricultural attaché, Embassy of the United States of America in Tokyo