

What is the situation in Japan regarding GM papaya

Consumers Union of Japan
NO! GMO Campaign
September, 2012

About Us

- * **Consumers Union of Japan (CUJ)** was founded in 1969 as Japan's first nationwide grassroots consumer organization
- * CUJ is a politically and financially independent non-governmental organization (NGO)
- * CUJ is funded by membership fees, sales of its publications and donations
- * **NO! GMO Campaign** was started in 1996, actively cooperating with Consumers Union of Japan and other groups in Japan



Why are we opposed to GMOs

- * There is a possibility of irreversible adverse impacts on the environment
- * There are doubts about the safety of GMOs
- * Seeds will be controlled by a few multinational companies, robbing farmers of the freedom to farm

Our policy is:

- We don't need GMOs
- We don't eat GMOs
- We don't farm GMOs



Campaign against GMO in Japan

- * As of 2012, there is no commercial farming of GMOs in Japan
- * The Campaign has identified many risks with GMOs
- * Our main activities include efforts for better GMO labeling, testing foods, creating GMO Free Zones, etc.



Our pioneer work on GMOs

Wild-growing GM canola (rapeseed) investigation

- * Imported GM canola has been found growing wild in Japan
- * The seeds fall off trucks near harbors, along roads, and at food oil companies
- * Wild-growing GM crops are seen as pollution that can contaminate other related plants
- * Wild-growing GM is a very real example of how GM crops can be a threat to biological diversity

More information is on our English website

www.nishoren.org/en/

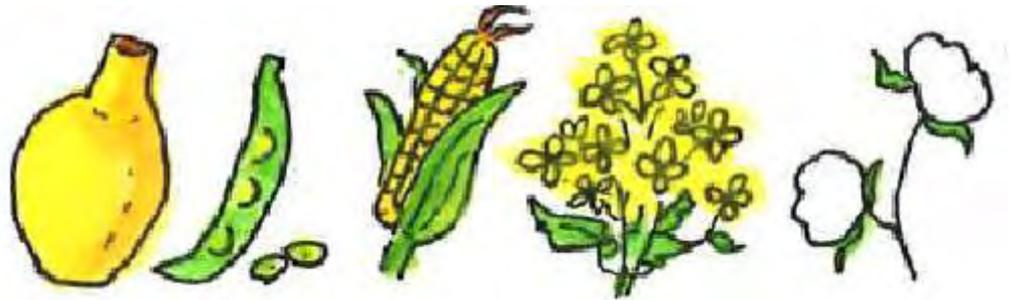
GM papaya from Hawaii

- * In December 2011, Japan approved imports of GM papaya from Hawaii, the United States
- * In Hawaii, about 80% of annual papaya production is GM
- * The GM papaya “Rainbow” may have a potential for causing allergy
- * It took a long time to get approval



The GM labeling legislation in Japan

- * Only a few foods are labeled
- * Only the top three ingredients need to be labeled
- * The rest of the ingredients are not covered by the GM labeling legislation



GM papaya labeling

- * The manufacturer should attach a print label on each fruit
- * The text “Genetically Modified” should also be added to the ingredient list on papaya jam, papaya juice and other processed foods, together with the country of origin

We are concerned what will happen if the seal (sticker) is accidentally removed or falls off



Market research of GM papaya

Shortly after the approval, one supermarket called Costco Japan (US retail chain) started selling GM papaya.

We launched market research of GM papaya:

- * Surveillance period: from January to June 2012
- * The way of survey: the members of NO! GMO Campaign went to shops and supermarkets and checked fruit section of them
- * The number of stores: 210 around Japan
- * Survey result: no store sold GM papaya!



Our works

- * We sent a letter to the head office of all stores to express our appreciation that they do not sell GM papaya
- * We are strongly urging them not to sell GM papaya in the future
- * We will continue monitoring to make sure that no stores will sell GM papaya in Japan
- * We are still concerned that GM papaya from Hawaii will be imported to Japan, sold as juice or other processed products, without proper GM labeling

Non-approved GM papaya incident

- * In 2011, non-approved GM papaya was found in Okinawa Prefecture which is located in southern Japan
- * Non- approved GM papaya seeds had been mixed with non-GM papaya seed imported from Taiwan



Farmers damages

- * 35 farmers were forced to cut down their papaya trees under the Cartagena domestic law, whether the trees were GM or not
- * The amount of damage totaled more than 730,000 Euros



Farmers damages

- * All of the papaya farmers only received substitute papaya seeds, but they have not received financial compensation for their damages
- * While the farmers made a claim for damages against the nursery company, Japan's Agriculture Ministry denies responsibility for the illegal GM papaya incident

The lack of a legal system

- * Japan has ratified the Cartagena Protocol which is supposed to protect biological diversity, especially from GMOs
- * The problem is that the domestic Cartagena law does not cover agricultural crops
- * That is why Japanese papaya farmers have no chance to receive financial compensation

The solution

- * This particular issue is now covered by a new international agreement
- * The Nagoya - Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol on Liability and Redress to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety was adopted at the MOP5 (the fifth meeting of the Conference of the Parties) in 2010 in Nagoya, Japan
- * Governments must identify the manufacture and exporters
- * It will be possible to seek restoration or compensation if there is damage due to imported GMOs



Our works

- * We are working aggressively to get the government to ratify the Nagoya - Kuala Lumpur Supplementary Protocol as soon as possible
- * We have repeatedly urged the government to revise the Cartagena domestic law to also cover agricultural crops
- * We will continue to lobby the Japanese government, and make every effort to co-operate with others around the world to stop GMOs

Thank you!

Michiyo Koketsu
Consumers Union of Japan

Chiaki Nishibun
NO! GMO Campaign

Website: www.nishoren.org/en/

Email: koketsu@nishoren.org