

The summary of the amendment to the Food Sanitation Act
(Improvement of sanitary regulations for utensils, containers and packaging
considering international consistency)

The government of Japan is planning to amend the Food Sanitation Act and introduce a positive list system that allows only substances whose safety is evaluated to be used for utensils, containers and packaging for food and food additives.

Background

In Japan, the safety of food utensils, containers and packaging has been secured mainly by regulating the use of only substances whose specifications and standards are established based on the Food Sanitation Act (=Negative list system).

In light of recent developments and the diversification of products, as well as global trends, Japan has decided that the management system of utensils, containers and packaging should be founded on the policy that basically prohibits all substances except those approved for use based on risk assessment (= Positive list system), in order to ensure the further safety of utensils, containers and packaging.

Based on these circumstances, in order to ensure food safety, the government of Japan is planning to amend the Food Sanitation Act and other relevant laws taking into consideration the opinions of concerned parties such as consumers, food business operators (FBOs), and experts.

Outline of the amendment

In order to ensure the safety of utensils, containers and packaging, and to ensure international consistency of regulations, FBOs associated with these products shall not sell those made of raw materials, such as synthetic resins, for which specifications are not established, except cases that the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare specifies as having no risk to human health. In addition, the manufacturers shall comply with the codes of good manufacturing practices.

Manufacturers and sellers of utensils, containers and packaging shall provide the business entities where the products are sold with information that the products conform to the relevant specifications. Also manufacturers and sellers of the raw materials shall endeavor to provide the manufacturers of utensils, containers and packaging with the relevant information if requested.

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