

Overview of proposed Partial Revision to the Food Labelling Standards

1. The subject of the revisions

The Food Labelling Standards (Ordinance of the Cabinet Office No.10 of 2015) is subject to revisions.

2. Products covered

genetically modified (GM) canola, walnuts

(1) Labelling for genetically modified (GM) products

“Specific GM products” is one of the labelling system for genetically modified products. They are defined as genetically modified farm products with specific natures that differ from same farm products produced with conventional breeding techniques in content, nutrition etc. in the Food Labelling Standards. The farm products subject to “specific GM products” shall be labelled as such.

The safety assessment by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare over GM canola which is genetically modified to produce Docosahexaenoic and Eicosapentaenoic acid is expected to be completed. After that, the food products derived from that GM canola producing Docosahexaenoic and Eicosapentaenoic acid will be allowed to be distributed in Japan.

Therefore, that GM canola producing Docosahexaenoic and Eicosapentaenoic acid shall be added to “specific GM products”.

(2) Allergen labelling

Among the food ingredients that are known to cause food allergies, those with high number of patients, seriousness and so on are selected as

“specified ingredients”. For the following seven items, labelling is mandatory.

- shrimps
- crabs
- wheat
- buckwheat
- eggs
- milk
- peanuts

In addition to them, following twenty-one items are defined as “equivalent to specified ingredients” in Japan. If food contains them, labelling as such is recommended.

- almonds
- abalones
- squids
- salmon roe
- orange
- cashew nuts
- kiwi fruits
- beef
- walnuts
- sesames
- salmons
- mackerels
- soybeans
- chicken
- bananas
- pork
- matsutake mushrooms
- peaches
- wild yams

- apples
- gelatin

Currently, walnuts are defined as “equivalent to specified ingredients”. However, based on the nationwide investigation for health damage caused by acute food allergies and other data, new policy is decided that food containing walnuts shall have the mandatory labelling need.

Therefore, the Food Labelling Standards will be partially amended to add walnuts to “specified ingredients”.