



# **NO! GMO Campaign**

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## **Statement: Japanese Consumers Request**

### **Australian State Governments to Continue GM Moratorium**

**(October 12, 2007)**

**We, Japanese consumers, believe that we are now standing at a critical crossroads in assuring our food safety, because the Australian moratorium on genetically modified crops might be lifted.**

**Australia is today the only country that can supply GM-free canola to food-importing countries like Japan, now that Canadian canola, on which Japan has been heavily dependent for cooking oil, is highly susceptible to GM contamination.**

**We believe GM crops present a world-wide threat not only to food safety and security, but also to biodiversity and environment.**

**This is why we request the Australian state governments to continue their GM-free policies. A petition with the request has been signed by 155 Japanese consumers organisations, consumer cooperatives, labour organisations and cooking oil producers. The total number of their members reaches 2.9 million. The petition will be submitted in a joint campaign with Australian organisations in October 2007.**

## The Opposition Movement to GMOs in Japan

Japanese consumers have opposed the introduction of GM food. The “No! GMO Campaign” is an organisation formed by groups and individuals in order to give concrete expression to our opposition against GM food. Japanese consumers do not accept GM food. (Table 1)

Table 1: Perception of GM Food (Source: Data from a survey conducted by the Hokkaido prefectural government, 2004)

	%
Feeling anxious	47.7
Feeling a little anxious	34.8
Not feeling very anxious	14.0
Not feeling anxious at all	2.6

We have been successful in appealing to farmers not to plant GM crops in Japan. Thus far, no GM crops have been planted and harvested in Japan. We have stopped cultivation trials of GM rice carried out by Monsanto, and have also prevented further development of GM crop varieties in Japan. As a result, all private Japanese companies and all local governments have withdrawn from GM food crop development.

Our activities have thus put a stop to all development of GM food crops inside Japan. However, we have thus far not been able to prevent the cultivation and export to Japan of GM crops from the US and Canada, and GM soybean, maize and canola have entered the Japanese market. (Table 2)

Table 2: Proportions of GMO Food on Japanese Dining Tables  
(Calculated from USDA and JMAFF statistics)

	Japanese self-sufficiency (2006)	Top supplier to Japan (2005)	Proportion of GM crops in top supplier (2005) <sup>(1)</sup>	Supposed approximate proportion of GMO food on Japanese dining tables <sup>(2)</sup>
Maize	0.0%	USA 94.1%	48% (USA)	45.2%
Soybean	5.2%	USA 74.8% Brazil 13.5%	87% (USA) Brazil unknown	61.7%~
Canola	0.0%	Canada 82.0%	82% (Canada)	66.8%

<sup>(1)</sup> Ratio of planted area of GM crop/total planted area of the crop.

<sup>(2)</sup> Calculated from the two columns on the left, supposing that non-USA and non-Canada imported crops are not GM.

## **Brief History of Anti-GMO Campaigns in Japan**

The anti-GMO campaign started in Japan in the early 1990's, driven by the Consumers Union of Japan. Japan began to import GM crops from the US and Canada at the end of 1996. That year, the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare approved GM soybean, maize, and canola for human consumption. In November 1996, the "No! GMO Campaign" was launched, organised by the CUJ together with other organizations. The movement has spread throughout Japan.

The No! GMO Campaign's message has always been "GM food; we don't need, don't eat, don't farm it". The Campaign firstly demanded labelling of such food. Since there was no obligation to indicate GM ingredients in food, consumers were not allowed the choice of avoiding GM food. Although a labelling regime was established in Japan in 2001 as a result of the Campaign's demands, the regime is not adequate enough for consumers to make an informed choice since it does not cover all food products, as the Campaign had strongly requested.

The Campaign has been actively fighting to prevent the domestic cultivation of GM crops, as well as to put a stop to the development of GM rice varieties as mentioned above. Currently, there are no GM crops commercially cultivated and harvested in Japan. Moreover, the Campaign has succeeded in halting one after another the development of GM rice conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (hereafter, JMAFF), local governments, and private companies. Especially successful was the campaign to halt Monsanto's GM rice development, which the company intended to use to promote its GM rice into the Asian market.

Additionally, the Campaign has been encouraging people to join a movement called the "Soybean Trust", in order to raise domestic soybean production. Japan's self-sufficiency in soybean is very low (2.8%, 1996), and that is major reason why GM food is coming into Japan in large quantities. The aim of the trust movement is to expand soybean production with direct consumer involvement. The movement has spread successfully to all prefectures in Japan, and domestic production has risen to 5.2% in 2006.

The Campaign has been conducting surveys of spilled GM canola found growing in Japan since 2005. A total of 1,500 citizens have so far participated in this operation (cf. attached report: "GM canola findings spreading in Japan and citizen's investigative activities- A report from 3 years of citizen's survey of spilled GM canola", 2007).

The Campaign has also pressed local governments to formulate ordinances or a guideline to regulate the cultivation of GM crops. As a result, Hokkaido and Niigata Prefectures have produced ordinances, and Tokyo Metropolis and 7 prefectures have introduced or are preparing to introduce

guidelines, which made the commercial planting of GM crops impossible in these areas. The Campaign also launched a GMO-free Zone Movement in 2005.

### **Spreading International Solidarity**

The Campaign emphasises three main issues concerning GM food: 1) the food safety issue, 2) the adverse effect on the environment by GM crop farming, 3) seed domination by multinational corporations.

In March 2004, a delegation from the Campaign visited Canada and the US. By working with NGOs in those countries, the Campaign delivered a petition signed by 440 groups representing over 1,300,000 Japanese individuals, which successfully led to the withdrawal of Monsanto's Roundup Ready wheat application. In November 2004, the Campaign co-organised the "International Year of Rice NGO Action" with anti-GMO activists in Asia and started to work with Asian people in the struggle against GMOs.

The links of international solidarity are now being strengthened and widened. International solidarity is what we need now to prevent the approval of GM crops developed and marketed by multinational companies, to reduce the areas planted to GM crops, and finally to lead to the complete cessation of GM crop cultivation worldwide.

### **Our Appeals to Australian Authorities**

In May 2005, echoing to the calls from Western Australian NGOs, Consumers Union of Japan asked the Minister of Agriculture of Western Australian government to continue producing GM-free agricultural products.

In September of the year, worried about the discovery of GM contamination of Australian canola, we requested Australian Government through the Australian embassy to conduct inquiry.

In September 2006, we revisited embassy of Australia in Tokyo and, based on the results of our survey of spilt GM canola, renewed our request for continued GM-free canola production in Australia.

In August 2007, we submitted our request signed by 63 Japanese organisations to the premiers of New South Wales, South Australia, Victoria and Tasmania, to extend their moratoria on GM crops.

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