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# JAPAN RESOURCES

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*COMPILED NEWS FROM*  
**CONSUMERS UNION OF JAPAN**  
**No. 141**  
**July-October 2007**

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## **Food Irradiation Opposition Letter**

July 3, 2007

To:

Division of Dockets Management (HFA-305)  
Food and Drug Administration  
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061  
Rockville, MD 20852

Re: Docket # 2005N-0272

Dear Commissioner von Eschenbach,

We represent consumer, food safety, farm, environmental, and animal welfare groups. Our organizations believe that consumers have a right to know if their food has been irradiated and **we oppose the changes to current rules for labeling irradiated food** being considered by your agency.

Irradiation is a technology that has been surrounded by controversy since it was first legalized more than 40 years ago. American consumers have developed a deep, fundamental suspicion of eating food that has been exposed to high doses of ionizing radiation. But for years, the food irradiation industry has been trying to lure consumers into buying their product by co-opting the word “pasteurization” to describe their process.

Irradiation and pasteurization are two separate and unique processes, and consumers deserve accurate labeling that allows them to distinguish between them. Consumer data has repeatedly shown that consumers prefer the current labeling requirements of irradiated food. In 2001, your agency conducted focus groups of consumers on this issue. Consumers participating unanimously rejected replacing the term irradiation with pasteurization and reacted with phrases such as “sneaky”, “deceptive”, and “trying to fool us.”

We strongly oppose the proposed rule to allow the use of the word “pasteurization” or other alternate terms on irradiated food or waive the labeling requirement for some types of irradiated food altogether. The current rules for irradiation labeling should be preserved so that consumers receive accurate information about how their food is produced.

Sincerely,

**Masae Wada, Shufurengokai  
Yoko Tomiyama, Consumers Union of Japan  
Eriko Hida, Zenkoku Chiiki Fujin Dantai Renrakukai  
Dr. Hiroshi Satomi, Food Irradiation Network-Japan (since 1988)**

**and Co-President, No-Irradiated Food Alliance Japan\***

**\*Organized in June of 2006 by Consumer, Environment,  
Organic Agriculture, Women and other citizen groups in Japan**

**Regarding the Japanese government's comments  
for the Codex biotechnology meeting**

July 17, 2007

To:

Hakuo Yanagisawa, Minister of Health, Welfare and Labour  
Chieko Ikeda, Director of the Office of International Food Safety, MHWL

On September 24-28, 2007, the TFFBT will be held at Makuhari, Chiba in Japan. The following items regarding the provisional Agenda Item 6 will be discussed. Each country is asked to submit comments before the July 20 deadline. Consumers and citizens organizations, hoping that the Codex standard will truly protect consumers, are asking the Japanese government to take the following points into account.

**Demands:**

- 1) We think that it is basically impossible to make a safety evaluation of foods derived from GM animals using substantial equivalence. There are many difficulties when basing the discussion regarding health and enhanced nutritional properties of GMOs on conventional plants. For example, the safety assessment of pigs with inserted genes from spinach, or the salmon with additional growth hormone effect, will not be substantially equivalent to food from ordinary pigs or salmon. These are new living organisms that have never previously existed on Earth and such species should undergo a completely new safety evaluation. Specifically, genes from bacteria and virus are often used as vectors. We are concerned about the risks associated with using such methods for GM animals. When the nutritional aspects of the GM food are altered, unexpected effects and genetic instability may occur. Consequently, the Japanese government should base its comments on the concerns of consumers and citizens, and consider the following facts:
- 2) Regarding the TFFBT discussion of the Guideline for the conduct of food safety assessment of foods derived from GM animals (provisional Agenda Item 4): As long as there is a risk related to marker genes that are resistant to antibiotics, in order to guarantee the safety of consumers, no matter whether other alternative technologies exist or not, the precautionary principle should be adhered to, and antibiotic resistant marker genes or reporter genes should be banned. In paragraph 64 of the same draft Guideline, regarding the case when alternative technologies exist, we do not think it is sufficient to limit the use of antibiotic marker genes to the case when they have been removed from the final product. We feel that the current view of food safety is based on making industry profit possible, which is contrary to the basic purpose of Codex, which is to "protect the health of consumers".
- 3) The report of the FAO/WHO Joint Expert Consultation (CX/FBT 07/7/3 Add. 1 June 2007) notes that many non-antibiotic resistant marker genes exist. However, when we apply antibiotic resistant marker genes to foods, we must perform animal experiments to prove its safety. In the case of non-hereditary applications, virus vectors are often used. In such cases the virus are causing mutations, and there is a risk that harmful substances will be produced.

4) Regarding provisional Agenda Item 5, (Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants Modified for Nutritional or Health Benefits) the Japanese government should emphasize that it is impossible to evaluate the safety of such foods just by applying the GM Plant Guideline. The reason is that for such foods, there are no conventional counterparts, so it is impossible to use the principle of substantial equivalence. We consider that such nutritionally altered foods and foods intended to be healthy are close to medical products. We think the Japanese government should insist on strict long-term animal testing as part of the Codex standard for such foods.

In the discussion of provisional Agenda Item 6 (Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants on Low-level Presence of Recombinant-DNA Plant Material) the Japanese government should emphasize that for food-importing countries, contamination of GM food which has not been approved in the importing country, is considered illegal and such emergency cases should not occur. The Japanese government should also add a point in the Codex Guideline text that in the case of low-level contamination, the importing country (especially developing countries) should not be under pressure from the exporting country (such as the BSE case when the United States has applied strong pressure on countries to accept US beef products). Furthermore, we insist that the Japanese government should make sure that exporting countries and exporting companies should disclose all information, including DNA detection technology, as soon as the importing country has first approved a product, under a “Data Information Joint Ownership System”.

(Signed)

Consumers Union of Japan  
No! GMO Campaign  
Codex Study Group

Nishi-Waseda 1-9-19-207

Shinjuku-ku

Tokyo, Japan

## **Japanese Consumers Request South Australia to Continue Moratorium on GM Crops**

August 2, 2007

To:  
Premier Mike Rann

Dear Premier

Japan mostly depends on imported canola because its domestic cultivation is very limited. GM free canola is supplied by your country while GM canola is imported from Canada. Your decision to have a GM free policy has been highly appreciated by consumers around the World, which leads to the worldwide reputation of Australian canola.

GM canola from Canada has caused serious problems in Japan. It has begun to grow wild and spread as a result of spillage from imported seed and from cross pollination. Once contamination occurs, it is irreversible. Even in the country like Japan where GM canola is not commercially planted, we face the problem of GM contamination.

If GM crops will be approved and cultivated in your country, cross pollination and contamination will be inevitable. Reputation of your crops would be badly damaged. In the case of canola, your product will be no different from Canadian canola, and Japanese consumers would stop buying it. You may lose the competitiveness on the world market.

Japanese consumers do not want to eat GM crops whose safety is not proven. Safe and environmentally friendly crops are what we really want. We **sincerely** ask you to continue your moratorium on GM crops.

Keisuke Amagasa  
Chairperson  
No! GMO Campaign

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Co-signed by 57 organizations:

No! GMO Campaign,  
Consumers Union of Japan,  
Citizens' Biotechnology Information Center,  
Network Nouen,  
Shinjo Rice field Trust,  
Consumers Co-operative Union Kirari,  
Michinaga,  
Anti-GM Farmers' network Japan,  
Puuru Anfan,  
Food Policy Center Vision21,  
Japan Organic Agriculture Association,  
GMO Information Service Japan,  
Shoku to Kankyou-Mirai Net (Chubu-Yotuba-Kai),  
Zenkoku-Gathskou Kyushoku-o-kangaeru-kai,  
Teikeimai Network,  
The Association to Preserve the Earth,  
Tsukuba-Shimin-Network,  
Yonezawa Oil Co. Tokyo,  
Niigatake no kome to shizen wo mamoru renrakukai,  
Specified Nonprofit Organization Shumei Natural Agriculture Network,  
Hirata Industry Co.,Ltd.,  
Seikatu Club Consumer's Co-operative,  
Yonezawa Oil Manufacturing Co., Ltd.,  
Onodaseiyujo Corp.,  
Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative Union,  
Food Safety Citizens' Watch,  
Safety Food Network,  
Saitama-Ken Shimin Network,  
Policy Research Institute for the Civil Sector,  
A Seed Japan,  
Aichi Coop,  
Co-op Shizenha Olive,  
Hyogo Pasteurized Milk Network,  
Ishikari Gakkokyushoku wo kangaeru-kai,  
A Consumer's Cooperative Coop Shizenha-Nara,  
Have Sapporo Ichiba,  
Attac Hokkaido,  
Coop Shizenha Kochi,  
Seikathukyodo-kumiai Coop Shezenha Tokushima,

Seikathusya Network Saitamashi,  
Co-op Shizenha Consumer's Co-operative,  
Wo. Co madori,  
Food Action 21,  
Nagoya Seikatsu Club,  
Green Co-op Consumer Co-operative Association,  
Green Co-op Tottori Consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Okayama consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Hiroshima Consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Yamaguchi Consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Fukuoka Consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Saga Consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Nagasaki Consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Kumamoto Consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Oita Consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Kagoshima Consumer's Cooperation,  
Green Co-op Miyazaki Consumer's Cooperation,  
ATOPICCO Children of the Earth Network

(END)

## **International NGO Forum about Dioxin in Tokyo September 2007**

October 3, 2007

International NGO Forum about Dioxin in Tokyo  
By Kamiyama Michiko

*This was the first conference ever that brought together NGOs and scientific experts to discuss the current state of research and the actual state of health problems and damage due to dioxin. Also, the dioxin damage was discussed as a problem of endocrine disruptors, substances that are known in Japan as “environmental hormones”. The conference was held in Ichigaya, Tokyo at the JICA Institute, with about 200 participants on September 1-2, 2007.*

No end yet to dioxin suffering: Among the highlights of the conference were photographs of children in Vietnamese villages who suffer from dioxin-related birth defects and deformities as a result of Agent Orange warfare, as well as the presentations from victims who still suffer from the incident involving PCB-contaminated rice oil in Taichung, Taiwan.

In Japan, the victims of a similar PCB-related rice oil incident, known as the Kanemi Oil Poisoning Case in the late 1960s are still waiting for full recognition and compensation. 14,000 people or more reported food poisoning-related health damage, which has been cited as the World's largest food poisoning case ever. As the speakers' stories even brought tears to the eyes of the participants, it was also clear that these health issues do not have any cure, and the people who suffer from the contamination must get the full support of society.

Human rights: We cannot help but feel that the debates about PCBs, endocrine disrupting chemicals and dioxins have all but died out here in Japan, as if people assume that the problems have disappeared. What is little known is that the serious suffering is still on-going. Thus there has been a need for this type of conference to discuss these issues in depth. Here in Japan, the standards are extremely strict for decisions about who can be officially considered a victim of food poisoning. Also, the people who are officially identified as Kanemi Yusho victims will only be eligible to receive a 200,000 yen cooperation fee for participation in a special research program that the government is funding, but it is being channeled through the company.

We have pointed out that no real compensation or support is offered to the victims by the government. The problems that victims face in the case of the Kanemi Yusho rice oil incident and other food safety and environmental contamination-related problems such as the Minamata disease must be addressed from the point of view of human rights. Let us continue the battle for the rights of the victims of food poisoning in Japan and other countries.

# **Program**

## **International NGO Forum on Dioxin Pollution, in Tokyo 2007**

**September 1-2, 2007**

**Venue: JICA Institute for International Cooperation  
Ichigaya, Tokyo**

(September 1, 2007)

**Theme: The Reality of Damage by Dioxins as Endocrine Disrupter: Reports on the Cases in Vietnam, Taiwan and in Japan**

**Session 1; Damage on human health by Defoliants used in Vietnam War by US Military Force**

**Damage on human health by Dioxins found through the medical check of the victims in Vietnam (1990-2005)  
by Dr. Hiroshi Miura, Director of Hannan Chuo Hospital, Medical Exchange Center, Japan-Vietnam (MECJV)**

**The reality of damage by defoliants seen from Tu Du Maternity Hospital and Hoa Binh (Peace) Village by Dr. Nguyen Thi Phuong Tan M.D., Chief of Rehabilitation Dept., Hoa Binh Village - Tu Du Maternity Hospital**

**Session 2; Effects on human health by “Yusho” rice oil poisoning**

**Long-term health effects associated with PCB/PCDF exposure in Taiwan Yusho patients**

**by Dr. Yueliang Leon Guo, Department of Environmental and Occupational Medicine, College of Medicine, National Taiwan University (NTU) and NTU Hospital, Taipei, Taiwan**

**Session 3; Patients of Dioxins/Yusho now: What we can do to save the victims?**

**Progress and Task of Research on Kanemi Yusho at Present, Dr. Shimoda Mamoru, Shimonoseki University Presentations by Yusho Patients in Japan**

**Report on the Activities of Kanemi Yusho Support Center, Ms. Reiko Sato**

(September 2, 2007)

**Theme: Research and Countermeasures on Dioxins from the View Point of Endocrine Disrupter Issue Today.**

**Session 1; The present situation of Dioxin pollution in Japan**

**The real situation of Dioxin contamination in foods in Japan, today by Dr. Hideaki Miyata, Professor of Setsunan University**

**The workers exposed to Dioxins at Toyono-Gun Cleaning Center; Twenty years later by Mr. Osamu Yagi, Secretary General of Worker's Compensation Insurance Fund, Nose Town Council Member**

**Session 2; Toxicity of Dioxins and their Adverse Effects on Human Health as Endocrine Disruptors**

**Experience with Agent Orange in Vietnam including dioxin contamination and health effects: 1970-2007 by Dr. Arnold Schecter, MD, MPH, Professor of Environmental Sciences, Univ. of Texas, School of Public Health, Dallas University of Texas**

**31 years after the Seveso accident: effects of dioxin on human health by Prof. Paolo Mocarelli, Professor, University of Milano – Bicocca, Director Specialty School of Clinical Biochemistry, Univ. Dept. Laboratory Medicine, Hospital of Desio, Italy**

**Toxicity and health effects of Dioxins; From the view point of experimental researcher” by Dr. Chiharu Tohyama, Prof. of Graduate School of Medicine, The University of Tokyo**

**Session 3; The strategic policy for the reduction of Dioxins**

**Identification and quantification of dioxin sources and current risk reduction activities in Sweden by Dr. Niklas Johansson, Swedish EPA**

**Our Proposal for the Reduction/Elimination of Dioxins by Mr. Toshikazu Fujiwara, General Secretary, Stop Dioxin Pollution! Kanto Network, Executive Board Member of People's Association on Countermeasures of Dioxin & Endocrine Disruptors (PACDED)**

(END)

## **Codex Task Force Report and Comments**

October 3, 2007

By Yasuaki Yamaura, Consumers Union of Japan

The Codex Task Force meeting on Biotechnology has ended and the current round of the discussions is over. Japanese consumers are concerned about the issues under discussion regarding food from GMO animals as well as the GM contamination problem.

During the Codex TF meeting held here in Japan, Consumers International stated its position that CI is against the use of antibiotic resistant marker genes in animals, and that they should not be allowed. In fact, the current Codex language on the controversial marker genes is already five years old, based on science that is even older. Japanese consumer delegates feel strongly that all antibiotic resistant marker genes should be banned totally.

The current text for animals is similar to the guideline for plants. We feel even more strongly that in the case of animals, there are ethical considerations that must be taken into account. The fact that “Other Legitimate Factors” (OLF), such as ethical concerns, environmental issues and animal welfare problems are not clearly mentioned in the text is a very big problem. Any attempts to refer OLFs to be dealt with by other international organizations are also insufficient as we have no idea about their willingness or capability in this field.

Another topic was a text about foods modified for “nutritional and health benefits”. We were especially watching how Codex would deal with foods engineered for a health concern, in case the food is also lower in other nutrients. In case a GM food is promoted as having health benefits, consumers may be misled to eat a less healthy diet based on false and misleading claims. In addition, it is likely that unintended or unexpected effects will occur. Terms such as “nutritional disadvantage” or “nutritional risk” were suggested, but finally, the term “adverse nutritional effects” was agreed upon by the delegates, and the Codex language is as follows:

*When evaluating the exposure, it is appropriate to consider information on whether the composition of the modified food could lead to adverse nutritional effects as compared to consumption of the food that it is intended to replace.*

Finally, the biggest issue of the entire Codex TF meeting: How should countries deal with normal foods that have been contaminated with GM traits? We feel that this issue should not be covered by Codex at all. Each importing country should be able to make its own rules without fear of a WTO challenge.

The United States and other food exporting countries have tried to water down the proposals at previous meetings, but in the end, countries agreed to language that in some cases should make it possible for importing countries to control GM contamination.

For example, if a US company accidentally exports soybeans that are found to be contaminated with Roundup Ready soy, then the importing country can ban the import and make sure such foods are not sold to consumers. Since this only applies to GM traits that have been approved, countries can actually apply their own rules to crops such as Bt10 corn or LL601 rice. Since they have not been approved in any country, they are not covered by Codex standards or guidelines, which means importing countries will not face a WTO challenge if they stop the import.

Interestingly, since the United States only has a sloppy “voluntary safety consultation” system for GM crops, foods from the US can still be banned if they are found to be contaminated with low levels of GM traits. An important victory is that countries should be able to access a database with detection method protocols and DNA reference material. This is a key point when dealing with GM contamination, but we feel that the data that will be made public is probably going to be very limited. For example, biotechnology companies are already limiting access to a large amount of data on genetic modification that they claim is industrial secrets.

There will not be a fourth meeting of the Codex TF since all the documents could be completed, and they will be sent to Codex for approval (at Step 5/8). From our perspective, regardless of whether this Codex guideline is approved or not, we will not eat GM foods, and make every attempt to stop genetic modification of animals for food production.

(END)

**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 lead 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.

(END)

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2007

17

# Keep GM ban or face revolt, say Japanese

JODIE THOMSON

A big Japanese consumers' group visiting WA is urging the State Government to keep its ban on genetically modified crops or face a backlash from millions of overseas customers.

The Consumers Union of Japan, which represents 155 organisations with a total membership of almost three million people, has warned the introduction of GM crops in Australia would damage the reputation of the national crop and force some consumers to turn away from Australian grain or oilseeds.

The WA moratorium on GM crops is due for review at the end of next year, while South Australia, Victoria and NSW are now reviewing their bans.

Delegation spokeswoman Ryoko Shimizu said Japanese consumers remained worried about adverse environmental and health impacts from GM technology.

She said Japanese consumers were at a "critical crossroads" in assuring their food safety. Australia was the only country that could supply GM-free canola to Japan, since Canadian canola was highly susceptible to GM contamination.

"We have been confident about the quality of the product from the WA Wheatbelt and we hope the State

Government will continue the GM ban," she said.

WA farm lobby groups will continue calls for the moratorium to be lifted amid concerns the State's farmers are being left behind in developing biotech crops with better yields and reduced use of fuel and herbicides.

Pastoralists and Graziers Association spokesman Slade Brockman said consumers had to be better educated on the benefits of GM technology.

"It's very easy to whip up hysteria, particularly around things like food safety," he said. "There have been billions of meals consumed in the world that have involved GM produce and there is not one case that anyone is actually able to point to of harm being done."

State Agriculture Minister Kim Chance, who will meet the Japanese delegation early next week, said while there was a push towards GM technology from the scientific community and some farm groups, the overwhelming feedback he had received from the public was for the ban to remain in place.

"I think it is time that people who want to see GMs more readily adopted started approaching the consumers because ultimately government decisions will be made by analysis of what our consumers think, domestically and overseas," he said.

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**Japan Resources** is published by Consumers Union of Japan (CUJ). CUJ was founded in April 1969 and was officially certified as a non-profit organization on May 1, 2006 by the new Japanese NPO legislation. We continue to be a non-political and financially independent organization (NGO). CUJ is funded by membership fees and donations. The main concern of CUJ and its members is to realize a world of liberty and equality, a world free of economic, social and legal discrimination, and to preserve a safe and healthy environment for our children's future.

CUJ pursues the following goals on behalf of consumers: (1) To secure for ourselves and our families safe and healthy lives, (2) to establish systems/laws to protect the rights of consumers, (3) to promote peace, social justice and economic fairness, (4) to support and empower consumers who care about the environment, and (5) to cooperate with foreign consumer groups/organizations.

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