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From the Editors:

Celebrating our 200th Issue

This issue of Japan Resources is our 200th English newsletter. It started as a photo-copied initiative in the 1980s to tell people around the world about events and news from Japan.

From around 2006 or 2007 we moved to our current location on the Internet.

Back issues can be found online here:

https://www.nishoren.org/en/?page_id=56

The issues remain more or less the same, and we carry on with the usual optimism and enthusiasm. How do we do it? With solidarity and encouragement from all of our readers...

We hope you will take advantage of our new online feature to contribute to Consumers Union of Japan, which makes it possible to make a financial donation online, and support our work.
- Editors

Protest Statement: We Condemn the United States' War of Aggression

3 March 2026

The United States and Israel launched an aggressive surprise attack on Iran, resulting in numerous casualties, including civilians. This act of aggression by the Trump administration follows that against Venezuela in January. The disregard for international rules, extending beyond trade policies such as tariffs to direct military aggression, constitutes a violation of the principle enshrined in Article 2(4) of the United Nation's Charter prohibiting the use of force in international relations. It represents a grave threat to the world.

The Japanese government, without criticising the US's aggressive actions, has instead focused solely on condemning Iran's nuclear development, effectively supporting the aggression. This stance is diametrically opposed to its position on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and is nothing short of a double standard.

We, Consumers Union of Japan, strongly urge the Japanese government to demand that the US cease its aggressive actions and comply with international rules, including resolving international disputes peacefully through negotiation.

Nuclear Issues Again, and Again

CUJ has a long history of opposing nuclear power and nuclear weapons; The two issues are related.

Official approval for restarting nuclear power plants continues. In January 2026, Tokyo Electric Power Company, responsible for the 2011 Fukushima nuclear accident, restarted the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Power Plant in Niigata Prefecture. The governor of Hokkaido has also expressed consent for restarting the Tomari Nuclear Power Plant.

Why must nuclear plants be restarted at all?

Fifteen years ago, the Fukushima Dai-ichi accident that caused widespread radiation exposure led many citizens to desire an end to nuclear power. Back then, all political parties, including the Liberal Democratic Party, had at one point pledged policies to at least reduce dependence on nuclear power.

Contrary to the wishes of citizens, a national policy is now advancing that seeks to prolong the life of old nuclear plants, even at the cost of the natural environment and human lives.

Refrain from Increasing the Use of Artificial Turf

To: Aeon Group Co., Ltd.

2 March 2026

We wish to express our gratitude for your ongoing efforts in creating a shopping environment where local residents can shop with peace of mind. We also commend your "Plastic Usage Policy".

However, our concern extends beyond single-use plastics to encompass all plastics. We are particularly vigilant regarding the safety of materials used in spaces frequented by children.

In recent years, we have frequently observed artificial turf being used in your store's and mall's children's play areas and event spaces. Whilst artificial turf is not a disposable product, it has been noted that it releases significant quantities of microplastics into the atmosphere as it wears and degrades. These microplastics contain harmful chemicals such as plasticisers, flame retardants, and PFAS, which we then inhale. Children, in particular, are of concern as the amount entering their bodies per unit of weight is greater than for adults, raising worries about health impacts.

Conversely, recent studies indicate that introducing forest-derived soil or natural grass into conventional playgrounds can bring about beneficial changes in children's gut

bacteria and immune systems*. This means that the materials used in play areas are crucial environmental resources for supporting children's health. Could we not consider adopting such natural, living materials wherever possible, both indoors and outdoors?

We would also like to enquire about the paper-based artificial turf used in some of your facilities. Even if the base material is paper, might it contain plastic to enhance strength, or be laminated? We would appreciate details on the material composition, including the backing fabric, and its safety profile.

Precisely because children spend extended periods in these spaces, selecting materials with thorough consideration for safety significantly enhances users' peace of mind.

We kindly request your views on this matter. Please reply by email, fax, post, or other means by 23 March 2026.

We look forward to your continued efforts in developing safer and more sustainable facility environments.

* Roslund et. al., 2020

<https://www.science.org/doi/pdf/10.1126/sciadv.aba2578>

20th Anniversary of GMO-Free Zone Movement

The GMO-Free Zone movement, which is committed to neither produce nor consume genetically modified foods, has marked its 20th anniversary since its inception in Japan. Recently, Japan has taken the lead globally in producing and selling genome-edited foods, while the Philippines appears poised to cultivate genetically modified rice.

Furthermore, the likelihood of importing genetically modified wheat from the United States is increasing. Cultivation methods suited to genetically engineered rice varieties are also being promoted.

Against this backdrop, we have decided to hold an Asian Conference, featuring guest participation and messages from overseas. We will share challenges with other regions and raise our voices against genetically modified foods from across Asia.

Day 1 will involve sharing the domestic and international situation and movements. Day 2 will deepen discussions and explore how best to advance the movement. Let us expand the movement to protect our staple foods, rice and wheat, and our food security.

Venue: Japan Education Hall, 9F
Tokyo

Asia Conference

Date: Saturday, 7 March 2026,
13:00–16:45

Asia Forum

Date: Sunday, 8 March 2026, 10:00–
11:45

Organised by: GMO-Free Zone
Movement 20th Anniversary Asia
Conference Executive Committee

Programme:

10:00–10:15 Opening Remarks

10:15–11:35 Discussion: 'How to
Counter the GM-ification of Staple
Foods such as Genetically Modified
Rice and Wheat'

- MASIPAG (Philippines)
- National Action Against GMOs
(South Korea)
- Taiwan Non-GMO Promotion
Alliance (Taiwan)
- Consumers Union of Japan (Japan)

Source: No! GMO Campaign

<https://gmo-iranai.org/?p=5212>



36 Municipalities have Adopted Resolutions Requiring Genome-edited Food Labeling

More local assemblies have adopted opinion statements calling for the labeling of genome-edited foods. Six municipal assemblies, including that of Fuchu City in Tokyo, adopted the proposals by December 2025. This has been followed by the Higashi-Matsuyama City Council, the Namegawa Town Council, and the Yorii Town Council, all in Saitama Prefecture. As a result, a total of six prefectural assemblies, including Aichi Prefecture, and 30 municipal assemblies, including Sapporo in Hokkaido, have adopted the opinion statements.

IFOAM: Heavy Ion Beam Breeding is Incompatible with Organic Farming

Asking for the withdrawal of Akita Komachi R to be subject to organic JAS certification

8 December 2025

On 25 November 2025, the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Organizations (IFOAM), a federation of organic farming organizations around the world, sent an open letter from Bonn, Germany, to the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan and the Governor of Akita Prefecture.

IFOAM strongly recommends that this breeding technology can not be accepted in organic agriculture, since it is a kind of new genome technology (NGT), which uses heavy ion beams, a type of radiation, in the process of breeding.

MAFF has indicated that it is possible to certify Akita Komachi R as organic.

In response to the view of MAFF, the Akita Prefectural Organic Agriculture Promotion Council has issued a statement at a press conference at the Akita Prefectural Government Press Club, saying, "We do not recognize rice bred as Akita Komachi R as organic agricultural products." many others, including, the private Rice Farming Research Institute and OK Seed Project issued a statement and opinion against it.

This letter from IFOAM supports these domestic voices. The letter is an official document signed by the heads of all 14 of IFOAM's constituent organizations and is a particularly strong recommendation for MAFF, which promotes agricultural exports from Japan.

The contents of the letter point out the problems of Akita Komachi R as follows:

- Akita Komachi R is bred to produce rice with the property of reducing cadmium, but as a result, it has the negative effect of reducing the absorption rate

of manganese, which is an essential mineral.

- The characteristic of Akita Komachi R is genetically inferior and may cause other weakness and make it difficult to maintain the variety.
- The vulnerability may not be able to meet the expectations of farmers or consumers.
- A more in-depth investigation should have been done before approving large-scale environmental releases.
- In addition, please apply IFOAM's New Genome Technology (NGT) Global Common Safety and Risk Assessment Guidelines.
- There is no labelling to indicate that Akita Komachi R is a genetically engineered variety. This deprives consumers of the fundamental right to choose non-genetically engineered foods.

(IFOAM is an international organization that promotes organic agriculture, which brings together more than 700 organic farming organizations in more than 100 countries around the world.)

Source: OK Seed Project:

<https://v3.okseed.jp/news/7344>

Consumers Union of Japan

CUJ is a politically and financially independent non-governmental organization (NGO). We are funded by membership fees, sales of publications and donations.

CUJ was founded in April 1969 as Japan's first nationwide grassroots consumer organization.

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