



## **AVA LIFTS SUSPENSION ON IMPORT OF FOOD FROM JAPANESE PREFECTURES**

Issued on 8 April 2013

The Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore (AVA) is lifting the suspension of food imports from seven prefectures in Japan with immediate effect. This follows a review by AVA and assurances from the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) on the safety of food from Japan.

2 Import of milk and milk products, meat and meat products, table hen eggs, seafood, fruits and vegetables from Chiba, Ibaraki, Gunma, Kanagawa, Saitama, Tochigi and Tokyo prefectures is now resumed. However, every consignment of the above products from these prefectures has to be accompanied by a certificate of origin (COO) as well as a pre-export laboratory report, which certifies that the food has been tested for radioactivity and found to be free from radioactive contaminants.

3 Following the lifting of the suspension, only food from Fukushima prefecture remains suspended.

### **Background**

4 Since the incident at the Fukushima Nuclear Plant in March 2011, AVA has increased its surveillance of food imports from Japan to test for radioactive contaminants to ensure that they are safe for consumption. The import of food from several prefectures in Japan was suspended following the incident (Refer to Annex A for a chronology of events).

5 In April 2011, AVA implemented a Certificate of Origin (COO) system for food imports from Japan. Under this system, each shipment of fruits, vegetables, meat, seafood, milk and dairy products has to be accompanied by a COO issued by the Japanese authorities to identify the prefecture of origin of the food product.

# MEDIA RELEASE

**Food from Japan is safe for consumption**

6 AVA will continue to closely monitor food imports from Japan to ensure that they comply with our requirements for COO, pre-export test reports and freedom from radioactive contaminants.

7 Food imported from Japan that is available in the market is safe for consumption.

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**On 8 April 2013**

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**MEDIA RELEASE**

**Chronology of events & action taken by AVA following Japan Nuclear Crisis in March 2011**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event</b>
11 Mar 2011	<p>Japan experienced a massive earthquake and tsunami that damaged nuclear reactors in Fukushima prefecture.</p> <p>As a precautionary measure, AVA started testing samples of food exported from Japan after 11 Mar 2011, such as seafood, fruits, vegetables and meat, for radioactive contaminants.</p>
23 Mar 2011	<p>Radioactive surveys done in Japan detected high levels of radioactive contamination in raw milk and vegetables in four prefectures (Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi and Gunma).</p> <p>AVA suspended the import of all milk and milk products, fruits and vegetables, seafood and meat from Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi and Gunma prefectures.</p>
24 Mar 2011	<p>AVA detected radioactive contaminants in four samples of vegetables from Ibaraki, Tochigi, Chiba and Ehime.</p> <p>AVA extended the suspension of import of all fruits and vegetables to include Chiba and Ehime prefectures.</p>
25 Mar 2011	<p>AVA instituted hold-and-test of all imports of fruits and vegetables, meat, seafood, milk and milk products from Japan. This means that the products were released for sale when test results showed no radioactive contamination. If radioactive contaminants were detected in any sample, the affected shipments were disposed of.</p>
26 Mar 2011	<p>AVA detected radioactive contaminants in two samples of vegetables imported from the prefectures of Kanagawa and Tokyo. The Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare also detected high radioactivity levels in some vegetables from Saitama.</p> <p>AVA extended the suspension of import of all fruits and vegetables to include Kanagawa, Tokyo and Saitama prefectures.</p>
31 Mar 2011	<p>AVA detected radioactive contaminants in a sample of vegetables from Shizuoka prefecture.</p> <p>AVA extended the suspension of import of all fruits and vegetables to include Shizuoka prefecture.</p>
4 April 2011	<p>AVA detected radioactive contaminants in a sample of vegetables from Hyogo prefecture.</p> <p>AVA extended the suspension of import of all fruits and vegetables to include Hyogo prefecture.</p>

**M E D I A R E L E A S E**

- 14 April 2011 The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) of Japan carried out investigations and ascertained that the vegetable sample (Perilla Leaf) that was found positive for radioactive contaminants by AVA was actually from Ibaraki prefecture and was wrongly declared as being from Ehime prefecture.
- In addition, MAFF and the Ehime Prefectural Authority announced that Perilla Leaf sampled from Ehime prefecture was free from radioactive contaminants.
- AVA lifted the suspension of imports of fruits and vegetables from Ehime prefecture.
- 29 April 2011 AVA worked with the Japanese authorities to implement a Certificate of Origin (COO) system on 29 April 2011.
- Under this system, each shipment of fruits, vegetables, meat, seafood, milk and dairy products has to be accompanied by a COO issued by the competent authorities in Japan to identify the prefecture of origin of the food product.
- 16 May 2011 MAFF of Japan carried out investigations and ascertained that the samples of vegetables found positive for radioactive contaminants by AVA were actually imported from Saitama and Ibaraki prefectures and wrongly declared as being from Shizuoka and Hyogo prefectures respectively.
- MAFF and the prefectural authorities also conducted follow-up tests on samples of vegetables from Shizuoka and Hyogo and found them to be safe for consumption.
- As such, AVA lifted the suspension of imports of fruits and vegetables from Shizouka and Hyogo prefectures.
- 1 Jun 2011 onwards AVA gradually reviewed its sampling and testing programme on food products from Japan. AVA focused its hold-and-test regime on consignments from higher risk prefectures and products and subjected the rest to a monitoring programme.
- 8 April 2013 Following AVA's review and assurances from the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) on the safety of food from Japan, AVA lifts suspension of milk and milk products, meat and meat products, table hen eggs, seafood, fruits and vegetables from Chiba, Ibaraki, Gunma, Kanagawa, Saitama, Tochigi and Tokyo prefectures.
- This is subject to the condition that each consignment of such products from these prefectures must be accompanied by a certificate of origin (COO) as well as a pre-export laboratory report.

**M E D I A R E L E A S E**