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Japan Begins Monitoring for Unapproved GE Salmon

Report Categories:

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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Report Highlights:

On August 31, 2017, the Government of Japan (GOJ) announced the details of a monitoring plan and detection method for genetically engineered (GE) salmon which is currently not approved for commercial sale in Japan. Japan plans to conduct 59 monitoring tests during this Japanese Fiscal Year (i.e., April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018), covering salmon and its processed products exported from Canada, Panama, and the United States.

General Information:

On August 31, 2017, the GOJ's Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) announced the details of a monitoring plan and detection method for genetically engineered (GE) salmon, developed by AquAdvantage, which is currently not approved for commercial sale in Japan.

The scope of the monitoring tests includes salmon (whether wild caught or farmed) and its processed products, such as, but not limited to, smoked salmon, canned salmon, salmon flakes, dried salmon products (e.g., with rice seasoning and topping(s)), salmon eggs, and processed salmon eggs. The method specifies the sequences of primers and probes for a real-time PCR test as follows:

The primers and probe for the detection of AquAdvantage GE salmon:

- AquAd-F: 5'-TGCTGATGCCTCTGATACCAC-3'
- AquAd-R: 5'-ATGCCTCTAGTGCAAGTTCAGTC-3'
- AquAd-P: 5'-FAM- CAGTAGTACAACGTTGGCAGATGTATGAGAACT-BHQ1-3'

The primers and probe for the positive control of real-time (PCR) (18S rRNA gene in salmon):

- 18S F: 5'- TGT GCC GCT AGA GGT GAA ATT -3'
- 18S R: 5'-GCA AAT GCT TTC GCT TTC G -3'
- 18S P: 5'-FAM- TTG GAC CGG CGC AAG ACG G-TAMRA-3'

Japan plans to conduct 59 monitoring tests during this Japanese Fiscal Year (April 1, 2017 to March 31, 2018). During the monitoring test, the shipment from which the sample is taken will not be held at the port, but will be allowed to move through quarantine and customs towards commercial distribution.

The testing method provided by MHLW contains the details such as, but not limited to, sample processing, DNA extraction and purification for different types of processed foods, PCR settings, etc. For more details, please refer to original document provided by MHLW (in Japanese, at http://www.mhlw.go.jp/file/06-Seisakujouhou-11130500-Shokuhinzenbu/0831_1.pdf, pages 88 to 97 for GE salmon).

Reference Cite:

Regarding the implementation of "Import Food Monitoring for JFY2017" (AquAdvantage Salmon) (MHLW Document # Yaku-sho-shoku 0831-2) in Japanese at <http://www.mhlw.go.jp/file/06-Seisakujouhou-11130500-Shokuhinzenbu/20170831.pdf>.