

Elaboration of Japan's Negotiating Proposal:
Consumers' concern on food safety and quality

(Proposal in December 2000[G/AG/NG/W/91])

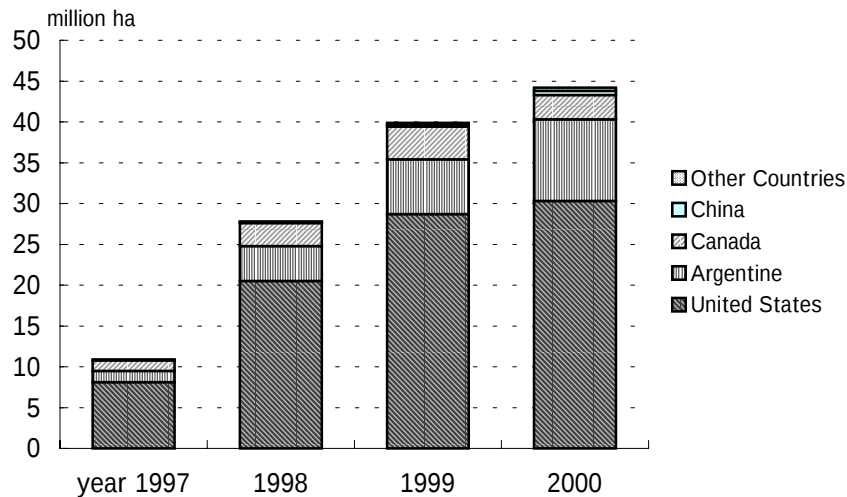
2. ...Furthermore, new issues relating consumers' daily life have emerged along with the technological progress such as genetically modified foods.

- After the conclusion of the UR agreement, the research, development and the dissemination of technology on genetically modified crops (GM crops) have been increased, and the area cultivating GM crops has expanded significantly. In the United States, for example, about 54% of soybeans and 25% of maize planted in 2000 were genetically modified. While the use of GM foods has become practical, and their distribution increased, there have been some cases where GM crops, of which safety for human consumption has not been verified, have been accidentally mixed in non-GM crops.

In the meantime, after the announcement made by the United Kingdom on the possible correlations between Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy and Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in March 1996, the European Union has prohibited beef imports from UK and disposed of more than 1 million head of cattle. The infection of BSE has also been found in various places in Europe, and the consumption of beef has dropped sharply in the EU. Furthermore, consumers' concern on newly emerging toxic substances such as dioxin and other endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) and accidents related to food contamination thereby has increased.

Considering the emergence of such new issues related to consumers' daily life, it is necessary to examine whether the existing WTO agreements are sufficient in addressing these issues from the viewpoint of ensuring food safety as a primary focal point.

○ **Annual Change of the Cultivation Area of GM Crops**



Source: International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-bio-tech Applications
 “Global Status of Commercialized Transgenic Crops: 2000”

- The safety assessment of GM foods is currently examined in various organizations such as the OECD, fully utilizing relevant scientific knowledge. Based on such examination, the safety of each GM food for human consumption is assessed in a number of countries prior to its commercialization. Also in the framework of Codex, the 23rd session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission held in June 1999 agreed to establish the Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology. This Task Force submitted a preliminary report to the Commission in 2001 and is preparing a full report for submission in 2003. The OECD Committee for Agriculture and other relevant committees will analyze national policies and the situation of each country on overall food safety including GM foods and will facilitate international policy dialogue. Therefore, the examination in the WTO on this issue should be conducted in coordination with the work under way in these organizations.

- **Terms of Reference of the Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology**
 - (a) To elaborate standards, guidelines, or other principles, as appropriate, for foods derived from biotechnology;
 - (b) To coordinate and closely collaborate, as necessary, with appropriate Codex Committees within their mandate as relates to foods derived from biotechnology; and
 - (c) To take full account of existing work carried out by national authorities, FAO, WHO, other international organizations and other relevant international fora.

- **OECD Specific Activities on Food Safety requested the Committee for Agriculture**
 - Activity 1: Trade and economic effects of SPS and TBT measures
 - Activity 2: Modern biotechnology and food security
 - Activity 3: Socio-economic concerns and public consultation
 - Activity 4: Effective inducements to food safety compliance
 - Activity 5: Costs and benefits of new approaches to food safety regulation

- Responding to the consumers' growing interest in genetically modified organism (GMO), many Members are introducing their own labeling system on GMO. Deliberations on this issue are now underway in the Codex Committee on Food Labeling, and the work should be concluded in that forum.
 - **Examples of National Labeling System on GM food**
- In the opinion of the United States and Canada, only the products with nutritional compositions significantly different from the corresponding non-GM foods should be subject to mandatory labeling.
- In the European Union, a new labeling regulation was introduced in September 1998: mandatory labeling is required for foods derived

from GM soybean or GM maize and in which DNA or protein resulting from genetic modification persists. However, this regulation has yet to come into effect, since the list of foods which are not subject to mandatory labeling has not been established.

- In Australia and New Zealand, mandatory labeling is required for foods in which DNA or protein resulting from genetic modification persists. The new standard will become effective in December 2001.
- In Japan, mandatory labeling is required for foods in which DNA or protein resulting from genetic modification persists. This labeling standard is effective since April 2001.