

Press Release (This is provisional translation. Please refer to the original text written in Japanese.)

29 July 2011

Inspection and Safety Division,
Department of Food Safety

To Press and those whom may concern,

The Basic Policies on the Establishment of Planning for Testing and Shipment Plans related to Radioactive Materials found in Beef, in relation to the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO)'s Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant

In today's press conference by the Senior Vice-Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare Mr Kohei Otsuka, overview of "the basic policies on the establishment of planning for testing and shipment plans related to radioactive materials found in beef" has been announced.

This is the announcement that attached "The basic policies on the establishment of planning for testing and shipment plans related to radioactive materials found in beef" has been set, in consultation with ministry of agriculture, forestry and fisheries.

The Basic Policies on the Establishment of Planning for Testing and Shipment Plans related to Radioactive Materials found in Beef

1. Purpose

The meat of beef cattle fed rice straw contaminated with high concentrations of radioactive cesium has been found in various locations.

Prefectures producing these cattle have been considering testing all cattle and livestock farms related to beef shipped for human consumption (including tests that targets only parts of prefectures). As a response, the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare has compiled the basic policies on these tests.

In order to ensure the safety of food, appropriate measures need to be taken at each stage of the food chain--from production to consumption. For instance, when it can be verified that an appropriate feeding system is placed (such as using uncontaminated feed), the testing system for all cattle can be reviewed.

Note: With regard to BSE tests for all cattle slaughtered for human consumption began in October 2002, the European Union (EU) had already tested all cattle over 30 months of age at that time. The BSE tests for all cattle differed from the above-mentioned testing on the following points:

1. The cattle fed meat-and-bone meals could not be identified.
2. Test kits capable of testing about 90 specimens in 5 hours were provided.
3. Many items of inspection equipment were general-purpose equipment and, therefore, could be procured in large quantity within a short period.

2. The scope of prefectures subject to testing

- (1) Prefectures instructed to restrict the shipment of cattle, based on the Act on Special Measures concerning Nuclear Emergency Preparedness (Prefectural governors later include this information in the management plans that they submit when they apply for the cancellation of shipment restrictions.)

Note: In these prefectures, contamination of rice straw left outside in their prefectures and geographical spread of the distribution of beef exceeding the provisional regulation values must be recognized.

- (2) Prefectures that voluntarily conduct testing for all cattle

3. Preparation for the testing system

- (1) Prefectures shall secure the testing system, taking into consideration of the availability of germanium semiconductor detectors and the monitoring plans for foods other than beef.
- (2) When a simplified measuring device is used, it shall match requirements, as notified separately. In addition, data shall be obtained to verify that such a device can accurately measure in places where it is actually set up.
- (3) In regard to securing devices, the government shall provide assistance in the light of their availability in each prefecture.

4. The establishment of the planned shipment system

- (1) Prefectures shall manage the shipment of cattle from livestock farmers as well as the receiving of them at slaughterhouses, in accordance with the status of the establishment of the testing system for radioactive materials at the slaughterhouses where the cattle are shipped.
- (2) For the testing of cattle shipped outside prefectures, the prefectures shall fully discuss the contents of cooperation in advance with the local governments that receive the cattle and other relevant people.
- (3) Prefectures, in implementing (1) and (2), shall coordinate in advance with relevant people and establish shipment plans according to their testing capabilities.
- (4) In order to prevent the shipment plans from becoming restrictive to the extent possible, prefectures and the local governments receiving cattle shall take measures to enhance their testing capabilities. The government shall provide maximal assistance and cooperation for that.

Note: When blanket testing is conducted for cattle shipped from parts of prefectures, these cattle shall be segregated from other cattle at each stage, namely from shipment from livestock farms to completion of the test after the cattle are slaughtered for human consumption. In addition, the carcasses shall be marked by individual identification numbers so that they can be identified.

5. Other

The measures for producers and distributors affected by delayed shipment of cattle to slaughterhouses and the slow sales of beef given tainted feed, and measures to secure uncontaminated feed are separately considered by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries.