

## Section 3. Promotion of Safety Measures with Food to Secure Public Health

### 1. Measures for Securing Safety of Food Required of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

The situation with dietary habits in Japan has drastically changed over recent years due to advances in production technologies and an increase in imported foods. And as a result is that people's interest in food has grown day by day.

In the mean time, due to the issues of BSE and pesticide residues as well as cases of drug poisoning through foods that took place in 2008, requests for securing the safety of food are also increasing.

Because of this the establishment of the Food Safety Basic Law in 2003 and revision of the Food Sanitation Law clarified the roles of risk evaluation institutes in evaluating the health effects of food and risk management institutions in formulating specifications and standards as well as carrying out the relevant managerial work. In consideration of new established framework the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is making the effort to promote food safety in cooperation with local governments and related ministries and agencies, and with support from the public.

### 2. Current Situation with Safety Measures for Food

Some of the key food safety measures are described below.

#### (1) Revision of Specifications and Standards

##### 1) **Actual situation with usage/distribution of existing food additives and safety verifications**

With chemically synthesized food additives only those that have had their safety verified and been designated by the Ministry of Health and Welfare (at the time) are permitted to be produced, used, and sold since the establishment of the Food Sanitation Law in 1947. Subsequently, the scope of subjects in the designation system was expanded with the revision of the Food Sanitation Law in 1995 to include natural additives, no longer limited to chemically synthesized compounds, in response to the possibility of food additives being derived from substances extracted from plants and animals that we have no experience of consuming as food.

However, 489 items of natural additives already in the market in 1995 were permitted to be used with the public announcement of then being "existing additives", because they have been used for a long time without any reports indicating any safety problems being made.

At present the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is leading efforts to confirm their safety in a systematic manner. In addition, existing additives that are not being used or distributed are being deleted from the list of existing additives. To date, one item with safety problems and 70

items not in use have been deleted. As of March 2008, 418 existing additives had been permitted for use/distribution.

## **2) Revision of Japan's specifications and standards for food additives**

“Japan's specifications and standards for food additives” was created to list specifications and standards for food additives in clarifying their regulation and promoting their appropriate use. Japan's specifications and standards for food additives has been revised approximately once every 5 years to cope with progress made in production, quality management technologies, and quality evaluation methods. On revision of Japan's specifications and standards for food additives the “Specifications and Standards for Foods, Food Additives, etc” that lists specifications and standards related to food additives is also revised in reviewing the general evaluation methods and standards of ingredients and improving the descriptions of specifications for existing additives

After public notice of the revision was amended on March 30, 2007, the 8th revision of Japan's specifications and standards for food additives was published on October 30, 2007. In this revision 62 existing additives and 64 standards for ingredients were added to the list and purification tests reviewed in order to remain consistent with international standards.

## **3) Positive list system for agricultural chemical residues in foods**

Regarding regulation of agricultural chemical residues (pesticides, feed additives, and veterinary drugs) in food, the so-called positive list system (a system to prohibit in principle the distribution of foods that contain agricultural chemicals above a certain level if maximum residue limits (MRLs) have not been established) has been enforced since May 29, 2006.

After enforcement of this system, a case arose in which unintentional pesticide residue was found in aquatic animals. Methods for establishing MRLs for such cases are being developed in Health and Labour Science Research Grants Programs with Pesticide Residue Standards being set for aquatic animals as required.

As of March 2008 the number of agricultural chemicals with MRLs was 811, including MRLs set after enforcement of the system.

As this system was being introduced the Food Safety Commission under the Cabinet Office was requested to conduct systematic evaluations of the impact of agricultural chemicals in food upon the health for MRLs had been newly set for 5 years starting in FY 2006. Based on the results of the evaluations the Pharmaceutical Affairs and Food Sanitation Council will individually review the MRLs.

Efforts will continue to be made in dissemination and enlightenment of the system and to facilitate development of analytical methods that will promote the appropriate and smooth implementation of the system.

## (2) Establishment of a Supervision and Inspection System

### 1) Plan based supervision and instruction

In principle, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is in charge of supervision and instructions in relation to imported food while prefectural governments are responsible for domestically-traded food matters, in compliance with the Food Sanitation Law. In order to carry out focused, effective, and efficient implementation of them, the ministry is to formulate and announce a supervision and instruction plan every year for imported food, while prefectural governments will be in charge of making domestically-traded food plans with consideration given to the actualities of their respective regions.

### 2) Securing Safety of Imported Foods

#### (Situation with imported foods)

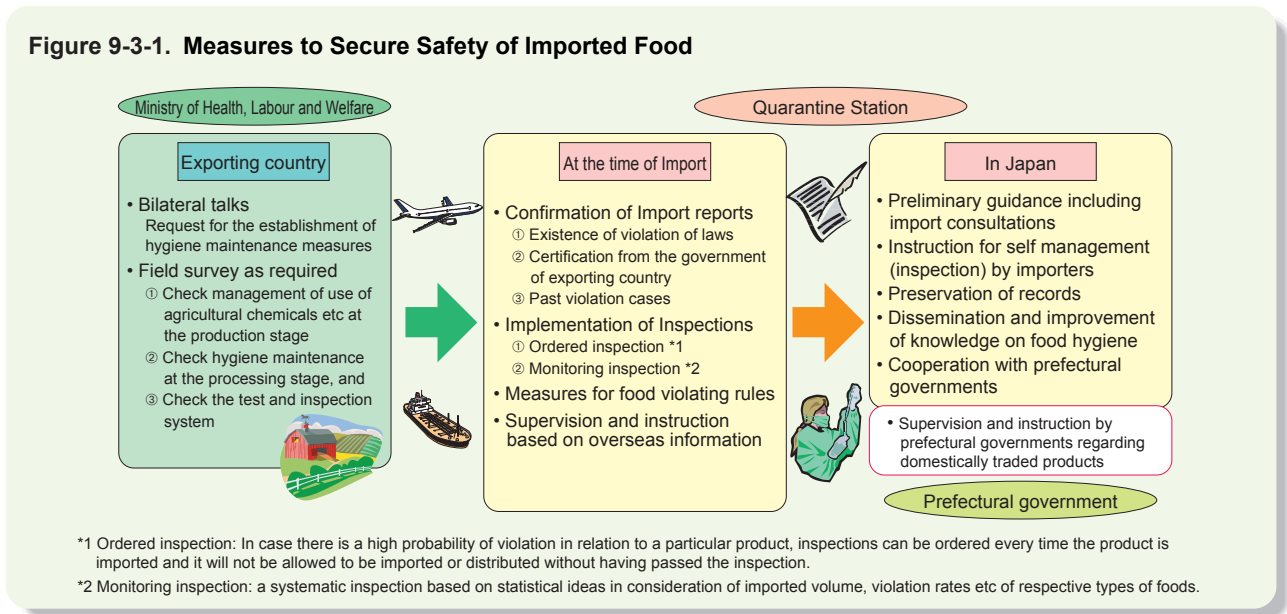
The reported number of cases and volume of imported food have been increasing every year, reflecting the decline in the Self-Sufficiency Ratio of Food and diversity of consumer needs.

#### (Efforts for securing safety of imported foods)

To secure the safety of imported foods, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare formulates a “Supervision and Inspection Plan for Imported Foods” every year in implementing focused, effective, and efficient supervision and inspections. In this plan governmental organizations take measures at three stages: in export countries, at the time of importation (shoreline), and during the process of domestic distribution (refer to Figure 9-3-1). If any violations are repeatedly detected in the system, bilateral talks or field surveys as required are conducted in consideration of prohibiting the export of the relevant food stuffs, while requesting the relevant exporting countries to take measures at the production/manufacturing stage.

According to the “Statistics on Imported Food Supervision” (2006) prepared by the Food Safety Division, Pharmaceuticals and Food bureau of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, inspections at the time of import were conducted for 200,000 cases, or 10.7% of the total reported number of import cases of 1,86 million. Violations were detected in 1,530 cases (0.1% of the reported number) of the inspected cases. Standards on the ingredients of frozen foods, standards of additives use, and standards of pesticide residues in vegetables are violated often. The food involved in violations was disposed of or returned.

**Figure 9-3-1. Measures to Secure Safety of Imported Food**



### 3) Measures against food poisoning

As a result of the development of a distribution system in recent years there is a growing concern that food poisoning outbreaks could spread throughout wide areas. In 2006 prefectural governments reported 1,491 cases of food poisoning, with the number of patients being 39,026 and with 6 having died<sup>(Note)</sup>. Although the number of case has been declining since 1998, when it reached a peak, the number of patients did increase from that in 2005 (27,019 patients).

Although the major cause of food poisoning has traditionally been bacteria such as *Campylobacter* and *Salmonella*, increases in viruses such as the Norovirus have also been reported in recent years. Food poisoning cases caused by the Norovirus, in particular, resulted in more than 20,000 patients being reported in 2006, a large increase from 2005 and earlier in which the number of patients was around 10,000 annually. As there are many genetic types of Norovirus it is impossible to increase their number for use in cultivating cells or in animal experiments, and it is often difficult to clear up the cause or identify the route of infection because patients have been infected through contact with other people in many cases, and hence problems remain unsolved for taking measures against it.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is promoting basic research that will contribute to measures against bacterial food poisoning and viral food poisoning. In addition, a Q&A on *Campylobacter* and Norovirus is being disclosed through the website of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare so that people can extend their understanding of the correct knowledge on food poisoning and thus take preventive measures.

<sup>(Note)</sup> Cause of death (including estimates): *Salmonella enterica* (1 person), *Clostridium perfringens* (1 person), animal natural poison (1 person from fugu poison), vegetative natural poison (1 person from *Russula subnigrans*, 1 person from *Amanita subjunquillea* Imai, 1 person from a bulb of *Gloriosa rothschildiana*)

Discussions will continue to be made on risk management methods and the resulting information then provided.

#### **4) BSE measures**

##### **(Measures against outbreak of BSE in Japan<sup>(Note)</sup>)**

In response to the increase in European nations where BSE (Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy) has broken out, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare have been promoting the establishment of an inspection system for BSE. The first BSE case in Japan was detected in September 2001. And in response elimination and incineration of specified parts (heads excluding tongues and cheeks, the spinal cord, and the distal ileum) were made compulsory on October 18, 2001, covering all cattle processed and used for food. At the same time BSE inspections were introduced at all slaughterhouses in Japan. And hence a system to stop the distribution of beef etc from BSE-infected cattle has been established.

On September 9, 2004, domestic measures against BSE (interim summary) were summarized by the Food Safety Commission. The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, questioned the Food Safety Commission on revision of domestic BSE measures (so-called risk management measures) on October 15, 2004 and the commission submitted a report on May 6, 2005. In response to this report, the system was amended so that only cattle 21 months old or older will have to undergo BSE inspections.

As of March 2008, and as a result of BSE inspections conducted at slaughterhouses, 21 BSE infected cattle had been identified.

In Japan, 35 cattle have been confirmed as infected with BSE, including the 21 cattle mentioned above, the first cow being discovered in 2001, and then in 13 dead cattle. Efforts will continue to be made in domestic BSE measures to provide the appropriate information to consumers using the latest scientific knowledge.

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##### **(Note) Division of Roles between Related Offices and Ministries with BSE Measures**

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare promotes measures to secure the safety of meat in compliance with the Law on Slaughterhouses and Food Sanitation Law. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries promotes measures to prevent infectious livestock diseases and secure the safety of livestock feed at the production stage in compliance with the Act on Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control and the Law on Securing the Safety of Livestock Feed and Improving Quality. These two ministries are in charge of managing the risk (the probability of emergence and degree of adverse impacts harmful substances in foods could cause on health as a result of being eaten).

On the other hand, a Food Safety commission within the Cabinet Office, which was organized in 2003, evaluates risks (evaluations on the impact of food on health) independently of other related administrative organizations managing risk. These related office and ministries closely cooperate in taking measures.

### **(Measures against outbreak of BSE in the United States etc)**

Beef and beef products imported from countries where BSE has broken out, including EU nations, are not allowed to be imported until having had confirmed an equivalent safety level to Japan, in making it absolutely certain that the safety of these products traded in Japan is secure.

In response to the BSE outbreak in Canada in May 2003 and in the United States in December 2003, importation of beef produced in Canada and the United States was prohibited. Since then, however, discussions have been held with the United States etc on resuming the beef trade. Taking into consideration the results of evaluations on the impact of food on health by the Food Safety Commission, importation of beef produced in the United States and Canada was then resumed on December 12, 2005. However, veal including spinal columns did arrive from the United States on January 20, 2006, and hence importation of all beef produced in the United States was then ceased.

Subsequently, taking into consideration a report from the US government that clarified the cause and recurrence preventive measures against it and the results of exchanging opinions with consumers, field surveys of qualified facilities exporting beef to Japan were conducted by Japan and the importation of US-produced beef was then resumed on July 27, 2006.

Japan is verifying the compliance status of the US import program to Japan through conducting regular field surveys that include accompanied surprise inspections in the United States and import inspections at quarantine stations. Efforts will continue to be made to ensure that the import program to Japan is being observed by the United States and that the appropriate information is being provided consumers

In addition, a request was made by the United States to review the import conditions in following standards laid down by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in June 2007. In response to this, technical discussions were held between executives in Japan and the United States. It will be handled utilizing scientific knowledge in cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries with the provision that the safety of food and consumers' trust is the major premise.

### **5) Measures for drug poisoning cases through food**

Ten cases of suspected organophosphorus poisoning from people eating frozen Chinese-style dumplings imported from China in Chiba and Hyogo prefectures have occurred since December 2007. Later, as a result of inspections by related organizations, it was reported that methamidophos, an organophosphate insecticide, had been detected, in amounts exceeding standard values from packaging of the products and Chinese-style dumplings, in vomit.

In response to this, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare made the public announcement that people should avoid eating the product and ordered an immediate recall after receiving the

information from the viewpoint of preventing any further damages. In addition, the government compiled “Preventive Measures against Recurrence of Drug Poisoning Cases through Food” (related ministers’ agreement on drug poisoning cases through food) on February 22, 2008.

In accordance with this, Article 73 of the Ordinance for Enforcement of the Food Sanitation Law was revised to expand the scope of food poisoning cases that prefectural governors are required to report to the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare immediately as part of improving the system of collecting/centralizing information. In addition, the “Guidelines for Managerial/Operating Standards to be implemented by Business Operators of Foods” for establishing a Prefectural Ordinance was revised so that rules for business operators of foods to promptly make reports to health centers were established. Regarding measures to secure the safety of imported food, efforts are being made to facilitate increasing the number of food sanitation inspectors at quarantine stations and establish inspection equipments. In addition, the “Guidelines for Self Management of Imported Processed Foods” was compiled with the aim of increasing the number of subjects of pesticide residue inspections and increasing hygiene maintenance in importing countries.

In consideration of this, measures for food safety will be examined and discussions on the necessity for new measures to prevent any recurrence will be made according to the development status of this case.

## **6) Securing safety of health foods**

Because of people’s growing interest in their health, various health foods are now being sold. Some of them are in the form of tablets or capsules, and hence rather different from ordinary food. Tablets and capsules are presumed to offer effective intake of active components through being concentrations. However, there is the concern of concentrated toxic substances being included in the ingredients in small amounts.

In consideration of this, “Guidelines for Self Inspection for Safety of Ingredients of Food in the form of Tablets and Capsules” to assist business operators in making self inspections of the safety of ingredients and the “Basic Concept of Appropriate Production of Food in the form of Tablets and Capsules” to provide procedures, including production process management, for producing products of a certain quality were compiled in February 2005. Guidance to business operators of foods will continue to be provided to prevent any health damages caused by health foods.

## **3. Providing Accurate and Clear Information**

### **(1) Promotion of Risk Communication**

## **1) Risk communication**

Provision for risk communication (exchanging information and opinions on risk) was included in the Food Safety Basic Law of 2003 as an important factor in risk analysis. More concrete provisions for listening to citizens and residents (so-called risk communication provision) were also included in the Food Sanitation Law that provides measures for securing individual food safety (risk management measures).

## **2) Current situation with measures and future plans**

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare is taking measures on risk communication in cooperation with the Food Safety commission within the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and local governments.

Taking into consideration the results of discussions made at the “Study Group on Risk Communication on Food Safety”, operating plans for programs were formulated at the beginning of FY 2005 and opinion exchange meetings on safety measures for imported foods, a positive list system of pesticide residues, the BSE issue, health foods, and food additives have been regularly held since FY 2005.

In addition, efforts are being made that include the distribution of various pamphlets, improving the content of websites, and promoting cooperation between related organizations and consumer organizations.

Opinion exchange meetings with related entities, including consumers, will be continued to be actively held. In addition, improvements will be repeatedly made to make the system better by taking into consideration the “Improvement of Risk Communication on Food Safety” compiled by the Food Safety Commission in 2006.

## **(2) Food Labelling**

### **1) Revision of food labelling**

The food labelling system was established to secure the safety of food and offer information that helps consumers to select food products. It has been pointed out, however, that the system is difficult for both consumers and business operators of food to understand, because there are different regulations based on multiple laws such as the “Food Sanitation Law” and the “Law Concerning Standardization and Proper Labelling of Agricultural and Forestry Products” known as the “Japanese Agricultural Standards (JAS) Law”).

this, since December 2002, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries have jointly held “Study Group on Food Labelling” meetings with the aim of establishing a more easily understandable food labelling system.



Based on discussions held in the joint meetings it was agreed that the expiration date of food which quality deteriorates rapidly, within about five days including the production date, shall be labelled uniformly as “use-by dates” while the expiration dates of foods whose quality does not deteriorate for a relatively long time shall be labelled as “best-before” dates.

In addition, discussions on the system of allergy labelling introduced in 2001 have been made. And as a result bananas were added to the list of materials whose labelling is recommended in 2004. In 2005 and 2006, additions to the subjects of labelling of genetically modified foods were also made.

In order to strengthen the supervision of inappropriate food labelling in cooperation with the Cabinet Office, Fair Trade Commission, National Police Agency, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry in response to the “Safety Life Project - Emergency Concrete Measures” (related cabinet members meeting agreement on “Safety Life Project” on December 27, 2007) of the government, “Food Labelling Supervision Councils” have been established at related prefectural governments and local agencies of the government to share and exchange information on food labelling. In addition, a “Food Labelling Conference” was established for the above related ministries and agencies to share related information so that required measures, including disposition of violating business operators, in accordance with the laws related to food labelling can be taken promptly and smoothly.

Food labelling will be reviewed in its entirety as required in the future taking into consideration the opinions of related entities.

## **2) Prohibition of false/exaggerated advertisements**

With the recent growth in health consciousness in a health boom, food is being advertised on various media, including the internet, as healthy to promote sales.

Some of the advertisements make people expect certain health maintenance/promoting effects, although they have not always been proved. Without sufficient controls on such advertisements, they can seriously harm the appropriate health maintenance/promotion of people who have believed them, who may lose then opportunity for proper treatment. Because of this advertisements that “remarkably differ from the facts” or are “particularly misleading” (false/exaggerated advertisements) about the health maintenance/promotion effects of substances sold as food are being prohibited under the Health Promotion Law.

## **(3) Information Collection and Research for Securing Food Safety**

As dietary habits have diversified, the risks to health caused by eating/drinking are also becoming more diverse. Hence it is necessary to collect variety of information both domestically

and from abroad, have related institutions share it, and then implement risk management measures based on science in securing food safety.

With the system used to collect information, information on food safety both domestically and from abroad is collected, analyzed, and distributed to related entities by Division of Safety Information on Drug, Food and Chemicals of the National Institute of Health Sciences. Research on securing food safety is also being conducted at national research institutions. In addition, a broad range of research is being conducted through Health and Labour Science Research Grants that includes investigation/research on formulating specifications and standards, research/development on establishing official inspection methods, and research on safety.

## 4. International Efforts for Securing Food Safety

### (1) Designation of Additives which Safety Evaluations have Internationally Confirmed

Efforts have been made since 2002 to achieve international consistency with regard to widely-used food additives for which safety evaluations have been internationally established.

More concretely, with additives ① which safety has been confirmed by the Joint FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization)/WHO (World Health Organization) Expert Committee for Food Additives (JECFA) to a certain extent and ② which usage is freely permitted in countries such as the United States, EU countries and which necessity is deemed high internationally, discussions will be made on the safety and necessity of the respective aim of designating them without being petitioned to do so by enterprises.

Food additives that satisfy the above selection criteria have their order of priority fixed, with information being collected in that order of priority. By March 2008 the Food Safety Commission has been requested to conduct evaluations of the impact on health of 36 food additives and 20 flavoring agents. Of them, 7 food additives and 15 flavoring agents have already been designated after being evaluated by the Food Safety Commission and through consultations with the Pharmaceutical Affairs and Food Sanitation Council.

### (2) The Role of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Codex Alimentarius Commission is an intergovernmental organization jointly established by FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) and WHO (World Health Organization) in the beginning of the 1960's as an operating institution of the joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. The main purposes of the Commission are protecting the health of the consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade through the establishment of food standards. The Codex standards and related texts are referred to as international standards to encourage the harmonization of sanitary measures taken by each country under the multilateral trade agreement of the World

Trade Organization (WTO).

Japan joined the Codex Alimentarius Commission in 1966, which as of March 2008 had members from 177 countries (including the European Community (EC)).

As the Food standards and guidelines established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission greatly affects the risk management of food in Japan, relevant administrative organizations and research institutes, including the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, cooperatively participate in activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as well as contribute to its administration through chairing an “The Codex Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology”. In addition, the Codex Council of Japan (jointly held by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) is held to exchange opinions on the Codex Alimentarius Commission with related entities that include consumers.

## 5. Stable Supply of Safe and High Quality Water

As water is essential to people’s lives it is necessary to ensure a safe stable supply of it. The total volume of water needed is approximately 16 billion cubic meters per year and Japan has the high level of water supply coverage of 97.3% (as of March 2007). In order to supply safe water to all citizens, however, it is an urgent issue to supply it to those uncovered areas. In addition, efforts are being made to realize the “Waterworks Vision”, which was formulated in June 2004, so that safe, high quality water can be stably supplied in the future through coping with issues such as the full implementation of water quality management, measures against disasters including earthquakes, and improved managerial bases. In addition, water suppliers are being recommended to formulate a “Local Waterworks Vision”. In addition, after 3 years since the formulation of the Waterworks Vision, the achievement of goals and the progress of respective measures were reviewed in FY 2007. A revised Waterworks Vision is scheduled to be published in FY 2008.

### (1) Quality Management of Water Supply

In order to secure safe, high quality water that conforms to water quality standards, it is important to fully implement water quality management from the source of the water through to taps. Water quality standards had been set for 50 items as of the end of 2007 (51 items since April 1, 2008) and are reviewed repeatedly taking into consideration the latest scientific knowledge through collecting knowledge and conducting research as required. As there is a concern that insufficient management of water tanks in buildings and apartment houses could cause contamination to water, complete management and switching to direct connection to the water supply system are being promoted. In addition, as measures against *Cryptosporidium*, which is an infectious protozoan that

is resistant to chlorine, new treatment with ultraviolet light was approved for water treatment and a “Guidelines for Cryptosporidium Treatment in Waterworks” formulated in March 2007.

## **(2) Measures against Disasters including Earthquakes and Risk Management Measures**

In order to secure a stable water supply for people, even in times of natural disasters including earthquakes or in emergency cases such as water quality accidents, water suppliers are expected to secure the safety of core water supply facilities and have a prompt recovery system ready.

Considering that water supply facilities were also suffered great damage in the Noto-Hanto Earthquake of March 2007 and Niigata Chuetsu-oki Earthquake of July 2007, an Ordinance of the Ministry on technical standards for water supply facilities was revised to clarify the earthquake-resistant functions that water supply facilities should provide in promoting measures against earthquakes. Efforts are being made to promote measures to systematically improve the earthquake-resistance of existing water supply facilities. In addition, in response to the great damages to people’s lives and the economy caused by the water supply being cut off for a long time because of excessive processing capacity caused by increased turbidity of raw water in Kitami City of Hokkaido in June 2007, the recurrence of such accidents was ensured not to happen through training for water service technological managers and national directors meetings at health, labour and welfare bureaus. Regarding risk management measures, guidance is being given to individual water suppliers in establishing a risk management system that includes measures against natural disasters and terrorism using a “Guidelines for Formulating Risk Management Measures Manual”. To ensure a stable water supply is in place in the case of an outbreak of novel influenza, measures to be taken by water suppliers have been compiled in the “Guideline for Pandemic Influenza Preparedness at Waterworks” and disseminated.

## **(3) Appropriate Maintenance/Management of Water Supply Facilities**

Considering that the level required of water services is getting very high including advances in water quality management, aging facilities and their renewal, environmental measures, and measures against disasters and terrorism, on-site investigations have been conducted at water suppliers to identify whether appropriate management is being implemented or not. In FY 2007 on-site investigations were conducted at 47 water suppliers and written administrative guidance made in 127 cases, according to consistency with the law, for which reports were submitted on the status with improvement.

## **(4) Improvement of Managerial Bases**

In order to improve the managerial bases of small-scale water suppliers, it is important to

integrate/expand their services. Hence in FY 2008 subsidies were created for water suppliers to establish remote monitoring systems that integrate the small-scale water supply system to promote integration.

## 6. Promotion of Environmental Health Measures

### (1) Development of Environmental Health Industries

“Environmental health industries” are industries that are closely related to people’s lives and include barber shops, beauty salons, laundries, hotels and inns, public bath houses, places of entertainment, restaurants, cafes, butchers, and ice and snow shops.

To facilitate the development of these industries and maintain/improve their health level, and thereby contributing to improved/enhanced public health and stabilization of people’s life, various measures are being taken including consideration in budget, financing, and taxation.

Programs to offer opportunities to raise the interest level of young people, including students, in environmental health industries and thus preventing shortage of successors in the future, and programs to actively promote collaborations and cooperation from the point of view of improving the management of environment health industries were included in the FY 2008 budget so as to promote environment health industries through these programs.

In addition, in order to maintain/improve the health level of environmental health industries, an Order for Enforcement of the National Life Finance Corporation Law was amended in establishing provisions for the National Life Finance Corporation to loan operating funds to anybody operating businesses in accordance with the guidance for sound management provided by Environmental Health Industry Associations and Prefectural Environmental Health Industry Guidance Centers, so that improved collaborations between management guidance by environmental health industry associations and the system of the National Life Finance Corporation can be improved. In the meantime, 4 governmental financial institutions, including the National Life Finance Corporation, will be integrated into the Japan Finance Corporation (JFC) and loans being made to environmental health business operators will be succeeded by JFC.

### (2) Promotion of Health Measures in Buildings

Buildings of a certain scale used as places of entertainment, department stores, shops, offices, and schools (specific buildings) are obligated to be maintained/managed in accordance with the building sanitation management standards in securing health in buildings.

As buildings are becoming larger in scale and used in more complicated ways, advanced level maintenance/management of buildings is being required. In addition, there are issues such as the so-called “Sick House Syndrome”, which involves various health problems being caused by

chemical substances in buildings. And hence a standard amount of formaldehyde in the air inside rooms was added in building sanitation management standards in 2003 to prevent such health damage from occurring.