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With regards to FSANZ plan to deregulate GM foods | P1055
To: Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)
From: Consumers Union of Japan

Japanese Consumers' Position on Genetically Modified Crops, genome editing, and other new gene technology and new breeding techniques:

We say "No!" to genetically modified foods whose safety has not been confirmed and which will lead to food domination by multinational corporations

Since 1996, when the distribution of genetically modified crops began, we, Japanese consumers, have been campaigning against genetically modified crops and foods, saying that we do not want them.

Consumers Union of Japan, which has been at the center of the movement, has three reasons for opposing GMOs and GM foods:

- (1) Their safety as food has not been confirmed
- (2) They may have a negative impact on the environment
- (3) Multinational corporations are using them to gain control of our food supply

As for (1), the results of various animal experiments have pointed out the dangers of genetically modified foods. Professor Gilles-Eric Seralini of the University of Caen, France, conducted a long-term feeding experiment on rats using genetically modified crops, and found that rats developed more cancers, had impaired detoxification organs, and lived shorter lives. Consumers Union of Japan welcomed Prof. Seralini to Japan in 2019 and held a symposium on the dangers of GMO foods and pesticides to inform Japanese consumers about these issues.

As for (2), in countries where GM crops are produced, the use of pesticides is rapidly increasing due to the expansion of genetically modified crops and the emergence of herbicide-resistant weeds and insecticide-resistant pests, causing soil contamination. In Japan, genetically modified oilseed canola imported from Australia, Canada and other countries has been spilling over and growing wild around ports and along main roads leading to oil mills, causing hybridization with native oilseed plants, related species and weeds. Since 2005, consumer cooperatives and citizens' groups have conducted annual surveys of genetically modified canola throughout Japan, informing the Japanese government of the reality of GM contamination and calling for strict regulations on GM crops.

As for (3), Monsanto (now Bayer) and other companies that develop genetically modified seeds are trying to control the seeds through patents and thereby control the food supply. The UN World Food System Summit in September 2021 is a good example of this.

Japanese consumer oppose genome editing

Consumers Union of Japan is opposed to both genetic modification and genome editing as they are technologies that manipulate genes of living organisms. 450,000 signatures were submitted at the House Study Session they held in 2020 calling for the regulation and labeling of genome edited foods were gathered in anticipation of the "unsettling situation" that there will be no labelling for these foods.

In this way, Consumers Union of Japan is opposed to genetically modified crops. Consumers Union of Japan is strongly opposed to the commercialization of genome edited food and will continue to work in solidarity with our friends in Australia.

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