

Transboundary movement of GM cotton seeds for cultivation in Japan

1. Background

In Japan, 33 GM cottons are allowed to import for food and feed, but none of them is allowed for cultivation under the Act on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity through Regulations on the Use of Living Modified Organisms.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan (MAFF) confirmed in December 2015 that GM cotton seeds have been distributed for cultivation in Japan after unintentional transboundary movement.

To prevent further transboundary movement of GM cotton for cultivation, the Plant Protection Stations have inspected imported cotton seeds and nine GM cottons have been found from 16 imported seed lots since February 2015.

2. Results of GM inspection

Term	Inspected lots	Detected as GM cottons		
		GM lots	Exporter	Detected gene
Feb.2015 ~ Mar.2015	2	2	Greece (1)	<i>P35S</i> ¹ , <i>NOS-T</i> ² , MON1445 ³
			USA (1)	<i>P35S</i> , <i>NOS-T</i> , MON1445, MON531 ⁴
Apr.2015 ~ Mar.2016	6	2	India (1)	<i>P35S</i> , <i>NOS-T</i> , MON15985/531 ⁵
			USA (1) (Origin: India ⁶)	<i>P35S</i> , <i>NOS-T</i> MON1445, MON15985/531
Apr.2016 ~ Mar.2017	8	5	India (2)	<i>P35S</i> , <i>NOS-T</i> , MON15985/531
			Greece (2)	<i>P35S</i> , <i>NOS-T</i> , MON1445, MON531
			Turkey (1)	<i>P35S</i> , <i>NOS-T</i> , MON531
Total	16	9		

¹ 35S promoter region of cauliflower mosaic virus (CaMV)

² 3' untranslated region of nopaline synthase (NOS) gene derived from *Agrobacterium tumefaciens*.

³ BCH record number: 14880 (MON-Ø1445-2 - Roundup Ready™ cotton)

⁴ BCH record number: 14775 (MON-ØØ531-6 - Bollgard™ cotton)

⁵ BCH record number: 14774 (MON-15985-7 - Bollgard II™ cotton)

⁶ The exporter of USA imported the cotton seed from India and re-exported to Japan.

3. Measures taken

MAFF notified importers to dispose of the cotton seeds in which DNA sequence of GM cotton was detected and confirmed that the seeds were inactivated by importers.

MAFF shared the information on the seeds with the exporting countries and regions and requested them not to recur such incidents.