

Response to the enforced positive list system regarding pesticide residues in food

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Enforcement of the positive list system since May 29, 2006, basically prohibits the marketing of foods in which more than the specified amounts of pesticides or other agricultural chemicals for which no residue standards are specified remain. Except for the 25 exempted chemicals, residual pesticides in any foods including processed foods are put under the regulation of the existing residue standard as well as the newly specified ND standard, provisional standard, or uniform standard [0.01 ppm].

For pesticides for which the ND standard is specified, analysis of residual pesticides must be performed using test methods defined in the Notification. The test methods notified include multiresidue methods using GC/MS(MS) or LC/MS(MS) and individual methods using a selective detector such as FPD·NPD(FTD)·ECD-GC or UV·FL-HPLC.

With the enforcement of this system, appropriate measures have been taken in Japan including observation of standards for pesticide use, extension of the types of registered pesticide-applicable crops, reduction of drift hazard to nearby farm products, prevention of contamination during distribution, and efficient/effective testing of residual pesticides. So far, few violation cases have been reported with domestic agricultural foods. On the other hand, relatively many violation cases for the uniform or tentative standard have been detected with imported agricultural foods. Residual pesticide cases are often attributable to pesticide use during the production stage. Provision and collection of information are particularly important with imported foods produced in foreign countries, given that pesticides used on them differ in types and usage from those used in Japan.