

Japanese officials request restraint over Taiwan government's decision on food imports

The Interchange Association, Japan's de facto embassy in Taiwan, has called on the Taiwan government to cancel its plans to tighten regulations on Japanese food imports right after the Executive Yuan recently declared that it will launch the measure on schedule.

According to Joseph Yeh of the China Post, the Interchange Association does not understand why Taiwan decided to strengthen its regulations on Japanese food imports. It further criticized as lacking in scientific basis Taiwan government's decision to require all Japanese food products to provide more detailed certificates of origin to enter the country effective May 15.

The newspaper report further revealed that Taiwan has imposed a ban on the import of food produced in the five nuclear-affected prefectures of Japan—Gunma, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi and Chiba, which bore the brunt of the nuclear disaster of March 2011. As a result, local governments have decided to tighten restrictions when products from those prefectures were discovered on the shelves of several stores in Taiwan last March.

At the request of the Legislature, the Ministry of Health and Welfare responded by requiring all imported Japanese food products to provide more detailed certificates of origin before they enter Taiwan. This decision was met with strong protest from the Japanese government. In fact, Japan has recently sent a legislative delegation, headed by Liberal Democratic party lawmaker Nobuo Kishi, the brother of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, to meet with local authorities to express Tokyo's grave concern over the latest policy.

Source: The China Post