

Guideline on Food Security in a State of Emergency  
(Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan, October,  
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Ms. Mari IZUMI  
Visiting Researcher  
JC General Research Institute, Japan

*Explanatory note by the translator :*

*This document is the first of three chapters of the latest Guideline on Food Security under the State of Emergency, revised in October 2015. The guideline was originally developed in March 2002, and has been revised for several times.*

*Japan relies 60% on food to import (the calculation is based on the intake calories). Japan's food supply may be threatened by natural disasters, and accidents and conflicts often come up in both domestic and overseas fronts. The guideline shows the criteria of the different levels of emergency states and the possible government measures taken to secure the food supply during these emergency states.*

*The first three chapters of the guideline show the purpose of the guideline and the summary of the measures taken by the government.*

Foreword<sup>1</sup>

Food is essential in life and therefore it is the government's responsibility to make sure that there is a stable supply of food even under the emergency state when supply of food is threatened (Article 2 of the Basic Law for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas).

In this regard, the government was asked to set up a guideline which contains the measures to secure food supply and the way to operate the

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<sup>1</sup> This is copy of the foreword from the original version of the guideline published in March 2002. This has been published to remind how the guideline was set up.

measures under the state of emergency.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has been in charge of setting up the guideline. The ministry called a special committee (chaired by Prof. Hironori Yagi from the University of Tokyo) to discuss the necessary measures for the different levels of emergencies states and the way they are operationalized. The Ministry has also consulted with the other ministries to develop the guideline.

This guideline was authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries with the support of the special committee. The guideline will be revised from time to time.

## Chapter 1: Purpose to set up the guideline

### 1 General views on Japan's food supply and demand

Food is not only essential in life but also an important part to assure the healthy and productive living of people. However, Japan's food self-sufficiency rate has decreased from 73% in 1965 to 40% according to the latest figure (in calorie supply context). Japan's food self-sufficiency rate is the lowest among developed countries. Food self-sufficiency rate based on output value has also decreased from 86% to less than 70% in the same period.

Japan's food import is characterized to rely on limited number of food supplying countries/areas.

### 2 Prospects of world food supply/demand

World demands on food, feed, energy and materials for fertilizers are expected to increase due to the increase of world population and the improvement of economy and income level of the newly industrialized countries. On the other hand, world food supply would be influenced by climate change such as global warming, change of land possible to grow farming products, and more frequent wide-scale famines based on the abnormal weather. World food balance might be tightened in the medium/long-term future.

Agricultural production has its own features such as production fluctuates easily according to natural conditions and the production periods tend to be long. These features make agriculture difficult to cope with quickly with the fluctuation of food supply/demand.

In addition, agricultural products are generally for domestic use. Only the surplus of it will go for export. Therefore, the ratio of export to the total production tends to be small. Small number of countries/areas occupy the large share of export of the major agricultural products.

This feature may cause the instability of world food balance. Production fluctuation in major exporting/importing countries may cause a large blow on the world food balance. And there is more frequent abnormal weather in recent years while world economy is getting more unpredictable. All of these indicate that the world food balance in the short-term would be more unstable in the future.

### 3 Purpose of the Guideline on Food Security in a State of Emergency

Guideline on Food Security in a State of Emergency was developed on the cognition that stable supply of food in Japan may be prevented by various possible factors. The Guideline shows the basic measures taken by the government, related legal frameworks and the way to implement the measures to cope with the possible influence on food supply which stemmed from some emergent states. This guideline will be revised from time to time.

### 4 Factors of the possible emergent states which will affect food supply

The followings are factors for the possible emergent states which will affect food supply in Japan<sup>2</sup>.

#### (1) Domestic factors/risks

- a. Major natural disasters and abnormal weather
- b. Infectious diseases for animals and aquatic products and agricultural

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<sup>2</sup> Measures to secure food safety is not included in this guideline.

- pests
- c. Incidents and cases related to the food safety
- d. Disruption of food supply chain
- e. Climate changes such as global warming

(2) Overseas factors/risks

- a. Major natural disasters and abnormal weather
- b. Infectious diseases for animal and aquatic products and agricultural pests
- c. Incidents and cases related to food safety
- d. Transport disruption at seaports
- e. Political uncertainty and terrorism in food exporting countries
- f. Export restrictions by food exporting countries
- g. Foreign exchange fluctuation
- h. Shortage of supply of energy (i.e. oil, natural gas)
- i. Climate change such as global warming
- j. Tightened supply of fertilizers and fertilizers for aquaculture
- k. Unavailability of genetic resources
- l. Tight water supply/demand
- m. Slow growth of farm yield
- n. Changes in fisheries resources situations
- o. Increase of food demand due to population growth
- p. Increase of food demand for biomass use
- q. Increased competition for food with newly industrialized countries

## Chapter 2: Measures taken during the normal states

To secure food supply under emergency circumstances, it is necessary to increase the self-sufficiency rate of food and to strengthen the domestic food production capacity during normal state. It is also necessary to keep appropriate emergency food stocks and to maintain stable imports of food.

At the same time, it is essential to keep collecting and analyzing the information on food supply /demand in both domestic and overseas and to

make a forecast of possible food supply.

## 1 Measures to improve the capacity of domestic food supply

Keep the good farmland area by developing necessary infrastructure and by preventing the increase of abandoned farmlands: Develop agricultural water supply: Support and cultivate farmers and fishermen with high management ability: Improve agricultural technology to increase the yield and quality of agricultural production.

As for fisheries, maintain and manage the fish resources in surrounding waters.

## 2 Measures on emergency food stocks and for stable food import

### (1) Keep appropriate and efficient food stocks for emergency states

Keep appropriate stocks for rice (Japan's main staple food) and wheat and feed grains (both Japan relies largely on import). These stocks should be managed in an efficient manner to be used properly when food supply will be tightened.

### (2) Secure stable food import

As for the food which Japan relies largely on imports, the following measures are necessary to diminish the effect upon imports under emergency states: Keep good relations with food exporting countries: Develop stable trade partnership and make regular exchange of information with major exporting countries: Diversify the supplying countries for imported foods: Develop seaport and other infrastructures for food distribution.

In particular, it is necessary to collect information on the possible substitute exporting countries about the farming situations, variety and quality of food, food safety status, state of stock, situation of export, and their seaport for food export.

Investing on foreign agriculture will contribute to stabilize and diversify Japan's food imports. In this regard, the government will promote Japan's investing abroad on agriculture by collecting and distributing the related

information based on the “Guideline for the investment on foreign agriculture for Japan’s food security”.

### 3 Analyze and distribute the information on food supply/demand

Government will collect and analyze the information on food supply /demand in both domestic and overseas in order to execute timely the measures shown in this guideline. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries has to work together with other ministries and related organizations to collect and analyze necessary information. The government will keep providing a forecast of possible domestic food supply.

In order to let the public know about the food supply/demand situations, the government will improve its information transmission capacity by working together with related organizations.

### 4 Promote the understanding on Japan’s food situation among related industries and the general public

Not only the government but also the local governments, agricultural producers, food industries and consumers are expected to play their own roles to execute the measures specified in this guideline.

In this regard, it is necessary that the public have knowledge and interests on food and agriculture. The government will distribute information on Japan’s food supply and diet situation, such as Japan’s low food self-sufficiency rate, promote dietary education, promote the communication between cities and rural areas, and set up allotment gardens to encourage the general public to have more interests on food and agriculture.

The government will convey to the related industries and the general public about the purpose of this guideline and the importance of every citizen to prepare regularly for the emergency states on food supply.

### 5 Efforts taken in the international frameworks

As Japan relies largely on food supply based on imports, Japan’s food security has strong link with the rest of the world. Japan will promote the

discussions in various international frameworks to strengthen the worldwide food security. The country will also contribute to the following items related to the world food production together with other countries:

- + Promote the co-existence of various types of agriculture,
- + Increase food production in sustainable ways,
- + Increase the productivity of agricultural production,
- + Develop frameworks to promote private investment on agriculture in a responsible and sustainable manner,
- + Create a stable agricultural marketing and trading systems,
- + Set up systems to share the timely, precise and transparent information on agricultural trade.

In order to cope with the volatile world food price, for example, Japan will promote the Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) set up under the G20 framework. Japan will also work with the Rapid Response Forum (RRF), a part of AMIS frameworks, which aims to encourage the coordination of policies and the development of common strategies at the critical market conditions.

Japan will also continue to promote the Asia/Pacific framework on food security. This includes the support to the regional efforts to improve food security, the promotion of the APEC framework (APIP: Asia-Pacific Information Platform on Food Security), and the promotion of AFSIS (ASEAN Food Security Information System) which provides timely and reliable information necessary for food security.

When food supply is threatened by the emergency factors, domestic effort may not be enough and it may become necessary to acquire food from overseas. In this regard, Japan will continue to contribute to the humanitarian aid for the emergency states of food supply. As for rice, Japan will continue the support to manage the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve (APTERR).

## 6 Role of ministries' meetings

All related ministries have to develop their own Action Plan to execute the programs in this guideline. "Ministries' meeting for food security in the case

of emergency” will be held when it is necessary and will follow up the activities taken by each ministry.

“Ministries’ meeting for food security in the case of emergency” will also discuss about the various factors which have effect on food supply and the necessary measures to be taken under the emergency status to obviate the effect on food supply.

## Chapter 3 Criteria of emergency levels and the measures taken

### 1 Criteria of emergency levels

Measures to secure the food in the case of emergency should be taken according to the degree of difficulties. The guideline sets three emergency levels, namely Level 0, Level 1 and Level 2.

The criteria of emergency levels and examples of things which can happen for each level:

#### Level 0

Criteria: Cases with a possibility of shortage of some food items which may cause a large influence on dietary life if the situation turns worse.

(Cases with a possibility to reach to the Level 1)

Examples of things happens under the Level 0:

- + Forecast shows particularly bad year on domestic harvest
- + Forecast shows particularly bad year in major export countries/areas. There is a possibility to invoke the export restrictions by major export countries/areas
- + Food trade gets unstable by some troubles in export countries/areas.
- + Invoke sales restrictions on particular food due to the food safety reason.

#### Level 1



Criteria: Cases when it is still possible to supply enough food in energy bases but may cause a large influence on dietary life by the shortage of some food items.

(Supply of some food items are expected to be decreased by less than 80% of the standard level)

Examples of things that can happen under Level 1:

- + Particularly bad year on rice harvest (such as happened in 1993)
- + Invoked export restriction by major exporting countries (such as steep rise on soybean price in 1973)

## Level 2

Criteria: Cases when there is a possibility to fail to supply enough food to the public (based on energy intake level).

(Supply of food is expected to go below 2,000 Kcal/day/person)

Examples of things that can happen under the Level 1:

- + Large decrease in import of grain and soybean

## 2 Abstract of measures under the state of emergency on food security

(1) Set up the organizational structures/systems in the government to execute the necessary measures

- + Set up organizational structures/systems in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
- + Set up organizational structures/systems in the government to make integrated effort by the ministries.

(2) Improve the system to collect, analyze and supply the information on food supply/demand in both Japan and overseas.

(3) Measures to secure the food supply

- + Utilize existing emergency stock for rice, wheat and feedstuff.
- + Increase and diversify the import and/or secure the import of interchangeable foodstuff.

- + Cut down the amount of food wastes coming from food industries.  
Encourage food industries to sell the food which is out of grade.
- + Encourage the production of food which is possible to produce quickly. Encourage to convert agricultural production to high calorific products.
- + Secure materials for agricultural production, i.e. seeds and seedlings, fertilizers and agricultural chemicals.
- + Convert land into agricultural use.

(4) Measures to stabilize price and distribution of food

- + Monitoring the price of food.
- + Make requests/directions to industries for stabilizing the price and distribution of food.
- + Make orders on sales, transport and storage to secure the appropriate distribution of food.
- + Set the standard price and special standard price under the Act on Emergency Measures for Stabilization of National Life.
- + Allocation/ration of food under the Act on Emergency Measures for Stabilization of National Life or the Law for Stabilization of Supply, Demand and Prices of Staple Food.
- + Price control under the Price Control Act.

(5) Other possible measures (Examples)

- + Give the priority access to oil to farmers and fishery people when there is a severe shortage in oil supply.
- + Convert farming methods to cope with the obtainable agricultural materials.

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