

Honey import procedures: Japan

When importing honey, it is subject to the Food Sanitation Law. Honeycombs, propolis, etc. are subject to animal quarantine depending on the degree of processing. In addition, it is necessary to pay attention to the standard values for the use of food additives, pesticide residue standards, and the residual standard values for veterinary drugs such as antibiotics given to honeybees.

I. Customs classification number (HS code)

The tariff classification of honey differs depending on the nature of the honey. In particular, royal jelly and propolis do not have an independent tariff classification number. In addition, artificial honey is treated as a sweetened product as a mixture of natural honey. We recommend that you check with the Customs Consultant Office for details.

- Natural honey (HS0409.00)
- Artificial honey (HS1702.90.290)
- Royal jelly (extract of gland and other organ secretions) (HS3001.20)
- Royal jelly-blended beverage (HS2202.90)
- Propolis raw mass (others of animal products) (HS0511.99)
- Preparations made by adding honey to propolis (others of adjusted food products) (HS2106.90)

II. Import regulations

1. Food Sanitation Act

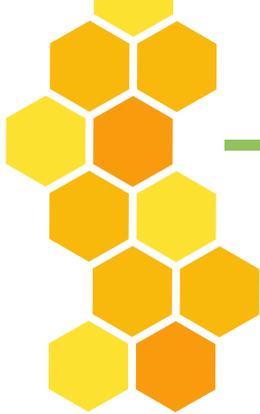
a. Food import notification form

When importing for sale (including samples for distribution), the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare Quarantine Station Food Import Notification Reception Desk should be informed of the "Food Import Notification Form" and necessary documents [Instructions regarding raw materials, ingredients, manufacturing processes, etc., Hygiene certificate (if necessary), test report (if necessary)] must be submitted.

<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/content/11130500/000788796.pdf>

Guidelines on Hygiene Control of Import Processed Foods

<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/importedfoods/guideline/01.html>



As a result of the examination, inspections will be carried out for those that are judged to require confirmation of standards and safety. As a result of the examination and inspection, if there is no problem under the law, we will submit the "Certificate of Import Notification of Food, etc." issued by the quarantine station together with the customs documents at the time of import declaration to customs. Importers will take measures such as reshipment and disposal because items that are judged to be ineligible cannot be imported.

b. Food Additives / Pesticide Residue Standards

Be careful about the inclusion of food additives that are prohibited in Japan and substances that have usage standards (antibiotics, etc.). It is also necessary to confirm the pesticide residue standards in light of the positive list regulation standards.

There are also labeling rules for processed foods that contain allergens. Honey collected from "peanut" and "soba" flowers can cause allergies.

Regarding food additives, there have been the following violations in the past.

- Cases in which oxytetracycline streptomycin was detected in honey products that should not contain antibiotics (Revised on February 20, 2015, the residual standard value was relaxed to 0.3 ppm)
- Cases of overdose of propylene glycol (manufacturing agent) in propolis
- Examples of inclusion of propyl paraoxybenzoate and methyl paraoxybenzoate (preservative)

The standard values for individual residual pesticides can be searched from the website of the Japan Food Chemistry Research Promotion Foundation, [List of limit amounts of pesticides, veterinary drugs, and feed additives remaining in foods](#) or <http://db.ffcr.or.jp/front/> (in English)

2. *Livestock Infectious Diseases Prevention Law*

Depending on the degree of processing, larvae and honey bee (designated quarantine) carcasses may be mixed in, such as commercialized honey in the state of a honeycomb (comhoney) or the original mass of propolis. Therefore, animal quarantine may be required. It is recommended that the animal quarantine procedure be confirmed with the animal quarantine station with detailed information on the goods to be imported. If animal quarantine is required, an "inspection certificate" issued by the quarantine agency of the exporting country is required.

https://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/product/pdf/certificate_eng.pdf



III. Regulations at the time of sale

Food Labeling Law

The "Food Labeling Law" was promulgated on June 28, 2013 and came into effect in April 2015. However, there is a grace period of 5 years for processed foods and food additives and 1 year and 6 months for fresh foods (although the new functional labeling system is completely permitted). There is no grace period because it is a new system.) With the enactment of the Food Labeling Law, the provisions regarding labeling based on the Food Sanitation Law, JAS Law, and Health Promotion Law have been unified. The outline of the regulations is as follows.

- As a quality item, labeling related to food quality such as raw material name, content, country of origin, etc. specified by the JAS Law.
- As hygiene matters, additives stipulated by the Food Sanitation Law, expiration date, storage method, allergens, labeling to protect the health of factories, etc.
- Labels for promoting health, such as nutrition labeling, which was stipulated in the Health Promotion Law as a health matter.
- Labeling on genetic modification stipulated in the JAS Law and the Food Sanitation Law.

It is a very extensive regulation and it is recommended to check with the Consumer Affairs Agency before importing.

For details on the "Food Labeling Law," please refer to the relevant organizations at the end of the sentence, the Consumer Affairs Agency, "Food Labeling Law, etc. (Law and Centralized Information)".

2. *Law Concerning Standardization of Agricultural and Forestry Materials and Appropriate Quality Labeling (JAS Law)*

When selling in Japan, it is necessary to perform batch labeling in accordance with the quality labeling standards based on the JAS Law. Imported goods are required to indicate the place of origin (country). Since honeybees are not subject to organic livestock products, honey is not subject to the organic JAS rating.

3. *Health Promotion Law (Nutrition Facts Labeling that Affects Health such as Energy and Carbohydrates).*

When labeling nutritional components or calories, it is obligatory to comply with the "Nutrition Labeling Standards" of the law.



4. *Freebie Labeling Law (Unfair Gifts and Unfair Labeling Prevention Law) / Fair Competition Regulations*

Excessive sales with premiums and exaggerated/false labeling that may be misunderstood by consumers are prohibited. In addition, as an industry standard, there is a display rule established by the National Honey Fair Trade Council. The requirement to distinguish between natural and artificial honey is a fructose and glucose content of 60% or higher. Royal jelly has labeling rules established by the National Royal Jelly Fair Trade Council. In addition, propolis also has voluntary standards set by the Japan Propolis Council.

5. *"Act on Securing Quality, Effectiveness, and Safety of Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices" (Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Act)*

Since ancient times, honey was used not only for the treatment of stomatitis but also for pills that knead powder with Chinese herbs, so the Japanese Pharmacopoeia It is listed as a drug in the Japanese Pharmacopoeia. On the other hand, since royal jelly and propolis are health foods and not pharmaceutical products, labeling regarding efficacy and effect is prohibited unless individual item approval is obtained based on the law.

Therefore, when importing and selling new bee-derived products as pharmaceuticals or cosmetics (quasi-drugs or cosmetics), it is necessary to confirm whether or not they are regulated by the Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Act. Even when importing bee-derived products as health foods, you may be required to submit a food classification confirmation (confirmation documents that are not subject to laws and regulations such as pharmaceuticals and medical devices), so check with the prefectural pharmaceutical affairs department in advance. It is recommended to do so (in the case of Tokyo, the Bureau of Social Welfare, Tokyo).

6. *Effective use of resources / Containers and packaging recycling method*

Glass bottles, PET bottles, paper containers, plastic containers, steel cans, aluminum cans, etc. are obliged to display material identification to promote separate collection. (Including) is obliged to recycle container waste.

Related organizations:

Customs:

[Inquiries regarding customs procedures, tax numbers, and tax rates](#)



Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare:

[Import procedure based on the Food Sanitation Law](#)

[Writing method and entry example of import notification form for foods \(597KB\)](#)

[Food additive](#)

[residual pesticide standard](#)

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries:

[Livestock Infectious Diseases Control Law](#)

[Food Labeling and JAS Standards](#)

Consumer Affairs Agency:

[List of Quality Labeling Standards](#)

[Food Labeling System \(923KB\)](#)

[Food Labeling Law, etc. \(Law and Centralized Information\)](#)

[Health Promotion Law Allergens \(634KB\)](#)

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry:

[Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources](#)

Reference materials / information

[Bureau of Social Welfare, Tokyo](#)

[General Incorporated Association National Honey Fair Trade Council](#)

[General Incorporated Association National Royal Jelly Fair Trade Council](#)

[General Incorporated Association Japan Propolis Council](#)

At the time of survey: January

2017 Last updated: October 2017

Reference materials / information

https://www.jetro.go.jp/ext_images/mexico/mercadeo/ImportProcedures_EN.pdf

Specifications and Standards for Foods, Food Additives, etc. Under the Food Sanitation Act (Abstract) 2010

https://www.jetro.go.jp/ext_images/en/reports/regulations/pdf/foodext2010e.pdf
