

Consumers Union of Japan

CUJ 日本消費者連盟

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Hon. Stephane Dion, P.C., M.P. - Minister of the Environment,

Hon. Andy Mitchell - Canadian Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food,

c/o The Canadian Embassy in Tokyo 7-3-38 Akasaka,
Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-8503, Japan

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Our concerns regarding GM canola cultivation and distribution

We appreciate your government's continuous effort in protecting the environment. We are also pleased that your country is hosting the meeting of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, and we trust that Canada will be taking a progressive approach towards the meeting to protect ecological biodiversity.

Currently in Japan, we are facing a serious environmental threat caused by genetically modified canola which is growing wild. The source of this problem is due to spillage of imported canola seed. Japan imports approximately 2 million metric tons of canola seed each year, and your country supplies 80% of total imports. Since the cultivation acreage of GM canola has been increasing in your country, we are deeply concerned that if urgent measures are not taken, biodiversity in Japan will be threatened as Japanese seed and food crops will be contaminated.

GM canola seed has been spilled in and around the ports, while unloading, and during transportation, as well as around cooking oil manufacturing factories, and they are now growing rapidly in a wide range of different environments.

According to the Japanese government's survey and citizen's groups' investigation, it has been reported that GM canola has been growing in and around Kashima port, Chiba port, Yokkaichi port, Nagoya port, Kobe port, Shimizu port ,Hakata port and Yokohama port.

We are seriously concerned that the growing of GM canola will spread further and intercross with Japanese rapeseed plants, and moreover to contaminate related plants, such as cabbage, Chinese cabbage, daikon radish and turnip.

We have no idea how much GM canola contamination has already been spread in Japan. Spilled GM canola may have grown wild and may have crossed with related crops nearby or continuously crossed from one generation to another.

In Japan, especially farmers are seriously worried about the GM canola pollution. However we have no solution to prevent further contamination caused by canola seed imports.

In Japan, nearly 80% of consumers do not want to eat GM foods. Imported canola is mainly used for cooking oil, and the oil is also used for manufacturing margarine and mayonnaise. The oil meal is mainly used for fertilizer, and for animal feed.

We do not want GM canola to contaminate our environment and our food. Therefore we would like to ask you to take a wise decision upon reflecting on our wishes.

Therefore, we demand that the Canadian government:

1. take all possible action to prevent any further release of GM canola into the environment
2. refrain from exporting GM canola to Japan
3. release the latest information concerning the availability of non-GM canola seed in Canada ,as well as make the information on the environmental impact regarding GM canola cultivation available to the public

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