

Pet Food Export Guide to Japan

December, 2021

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Mon-Fri 8:30 AM -5:30 PM Japan Standard Time



Pet Food Export Guide to Japan

December, 2021

Prepared for the Agricultural Trade Office
U.S. Embassy, Tokyo, Japan

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Introduction to this Guide

- **The purpose of this Guide is to provide a representative example of regulatory procedures facing US products entering the Japanese market. This is the updated 2021 version of this Guide. This is not intended to be a do-it-yourself manual, but to inform you in your discussions with potential Japanese importers.**
- Please note that these requirements may change without warning. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Agricultural Trade Office.
- The series covers a total of 24 products listed below.
- This report is **#11 Pet Food Guide**. This report only covers pet food for cats and dogs, not other animals

24 products covered in this series:

- | | |
|---|---|
| #1 Fresh fruits | #13 Fruit/vegetable juice |
| #2 Frozen fruits/vegetables | #14 Sugar/flavor added water |
| #3 Processed fruit puree | #15 Mineral water |
| #4 Condiments & sauces | #16 Ice Cream |
| #5 Cookies & chips | #17 Wine |
| #6 Live seafood (e.g. shellfish, lobster, etc.) | #18 Distilled spirits |
| #7 Soups | #19 Cheese |
| #8 Health bars | #20 Dough Mixes |
| #9 Chocolates | #21 Dried fruits |
| #10 Breakfast Cereals | #22 Herbal teas |
| #11 Pet Food | #23 Non-alcoholic beverage bases and syrups |
| #12 Frozen breads | #24 Frozen prepared foods |

Disclaimer

- This Guide is for general information purposes only.
- While every effort has been taken to ensure accurate information at the time of publication, neither USDA nor Meros can accept liability for any content or information contained in any other website to which this guide refers.
- Any and all information is subject to change without notice.
- Legal or other professional advice should be sought for any specific matters of concern.
- All information must be re-confirmed with importers and competent authorities.

Step-by-step Checklist



A. Pre-Embarkation

- 1. Prepare an Ingredient List and a Manufacturing Process Flowchart
- 2. Check the sanitary requirements that apply to your product
- 3. Confirm legal compliance with pet food standards and other regulations
- 4. Check the tariff classification and customs duty
- 5. Create a product label
- 6. Register trademarks and other intellectual property rights

B. Embarkation

- 7. Obtain a Sanitary Certificate and a Certificate of Analysis
- 8. Clear export customs

C. Import Clearance

- 9. Clear sanitary inspection
- 10. Clear import customs



A.

Pre-Embarkation

These steps will help confirm product eligibility for import into Japan and provide guidelines for preparing required documentation.

A. Pre-Embarkation Checklist

- 1. Prepare an **Ingredient List** and a **Manufacturing Process Flowchart**
- 2. Check the **sanitary requirements** that apply to your product
- 3. Confirm **legal compliance with pet food standards** and other regulations
- 4. Check the **tariff classification** and customs duty
- 5. Create a **product label**
- 6. Register **trademarks** and other intellectual property rights

1 Prepare an Ingredient List and a Manufacturing Process Flowchart

Exporters will be required to provide a list of all ingredients, as well as a manufacturing process flowchart. Generally, potential importers will request this information early in the process of vetting new products for purchase in order to confirm whether the product can be imported as pet food.

Importers should provide these documents to a Customs Office to get an Advance Ruling (Refer to Step 4). The regulations and guidelines under the Act on Ensuring the Safety of Pet Food require importers have these documents, which will be checked when MAFF officials visit the importer in person, as prescribed by the Act on Ensuring the Safety of Pet Food.

Steps to take:

- 1-1 Prepare an **Ingredient List**
- 1-2 Prepare a **Manufacturing Process Flowchart**

Sample documents are found on the next two pages.

Whose responsibility is this?

The manufacturer or exporter is responsible for creating these documents for the importer

Timeframe / Cost:

No fees required at submission or for Prior Consultation.

Responsible government agency:

- [Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries \(MAFF\)](#)

Relevant laws/regulations:

- [Act on Ensuring of Safety of Pet Food](#)

Best Practices

- It is best to prepare these documents even before talking with importers.
- A non-disclosure agreement (NDA) can be signed by your importer or local partners before sharing these documents.

Common Concerns

- Many manufacturers are protective of their proprietary recipes and processes. Contact the ATO Tokyo if you have doubts about how to prepare these documents.

Key Contacts

- For further information, contact [Agricultural Trade Office \(ATO\), Tokyo](#)
E-mail: atotokyo@usda.gov
Tel: (011-81-3) 3224-5115
Mon-Fri 8:30 AM -5:30 PM in Japan time
- [The Manufactured Imports and Investment Promotion Organization - MIPRO](#) provides free phone consultation for both exporters and importers.
Tel (English and Japanese): (011-81-3) 3989-5151
Mon-Fri 10:30 AM - 4:30 PM in Japan time

1-1

Sample of an Ingredient List

The document can be prepared in English or Japanese on the Manufacturer's or Importer's letterhead. There is no required format, but should include the following:

XYZ FOODS	123 Woodland Avenue, City, State, ZIP, United States (103) 222 2222 / (103) 222 2223
INGREDIENT LIST	
Product:	XYZ Brand Cat Food 70 g
Manufacturer:	XYZ Foods Ltd.
Address:	123 Woodland Avenue, City, State, ZIP, United States
Factory:	XYZ Foods Park Avenue Factory
Address:	111 Park Avenue, City, State, ZIP, United States
INGREDIENTS:	
Chicken	
Beef	
Seafood (sardines)	
Vegetables (spinach, carrots)	
Vegetable oil	
Ground Corn Meal	
Thickening stabilizer	
Seasoning	
Vitamin A	
Vitamin B2	
Vitamin C	
Antioxidant agent (mixed tocopherol)	
Coloring	
Feb 7, 2019 Michael Williams Director, Manufacturing XYZ Foods Ltd.	

- All ingredients, in descending order, by weight.

- Product name
- Manufacturer and facility name (official name, no abbreviations) and address (physical address, not P.O. box)
- Share by weight is optional.**
However, share by weight may be required by the importer for customs clearance and for Advance Ruling in order to determine the tariff classification (See Step 4). You may be able to provide share by weight as a range (e.g. 40-45%).

- Date of document preparation, person responsible, title, company name, signature

1-2

Sample of a Manufacturing Process Flowchart

The document can be prepared in English or Japanese. Use the Manufacturer's or Importer's letterhead. There is no required format, but should include the following:

- Description of **the entire manufacturing process** from raw material processing to packaging.

XYZ FOODS 123 Woodland Avenue,
City, State, ZIP, United States
(103) 222 2222 / (103) 222 2223

MANUFACTURING PROCESS FLOWCHART

Product: XYZ Brand Cat Food 70 g
 Manufacturer: XYZ Foods Ltd.
 Address: 123 Woodland Avenue, City, State, ZIP, United States
 Factory: XYZ Foods Park Avenue Factory
 Address: 111 Park Avenue, City, State, ZIP, United States

Manufacturing Process:

```

graph TD
    A[Steaming meat and fish] --> B[Cooling]
    B --> C[Flaking]
    C --> D[Combining other ingredients and seasoning]
    D --> E[Filling retort pouch]
    E --> F[Hot melt sealing and retort sterilization]
    F --> G[Packing in cardboard cartons]
            
```

Feb 7, 2019

 Michael Williams
 Director, Manufacturing
 XYZ Foods Ltd.

- Product name
- Manufacturer and facility name (official name, no abbreviations) and address (physical address, not P.O. box)

- Date of document preparation, person responsible, title of the person, company name, signature

2 Check the Sanitary Requirements that Apply to Your Product

Some pet food products which include meat, organs, bone, fat, egg, milk or dairy products could be subject to animal health quarantine, depending on the degree of processing and type of packaging.

Certain products containing certain types of meat are currently prohibited or have special requirements (i.e. certification requirements for meat processing facility, etc.)

More details about the sanitary requirements for pet food can be found here:

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/export/iregs-for-animal-product-exports/sa_international_regulations/sa_products_japan/ct_pet-food-chews-and-treats-animal-origin

If your product is subject to animal health quarantine, a USDA Sanitary Certificate must accompany the shipment. (See Step 7)

Compliance with sanitary requirements will be examined during the Sanitary Inspection at the Animal Quarantine Service under MAFF (See Step 9).

Steps to Take:

- 2-1 Confirm that your product is eligible for export to Japan under sanitary regulations.
- 2-2 Confirm sanitary requirements that apply to your products.
- 2-3 Have your importer confirm those requirements through Prior Consultation at the Animal Quarantine Service office under MAFF that oversee the port of entry planned for your product.

Whose responsibility is this?

The importer is responsible, but the manufacturer/exporter should be familiar with this process.

Timeframe / Cost:

No fees required at Prior Consultation.

Responsible government agencies:

- [Animal Quarantine Service, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries \(MAFF\)](#)

Relevant laws and regulations:

- [Act on Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control \(Japanese\)](#)

Best Practices

- Some US products cannot be exported to Japan due to sanitary regulations. Therefore, it is best to investigate this area early in your export planning.
- USDA APHIS maintain a registry of exporter requirements but work closely with your importer to check the sanitary requirements in detail.
- Be aware that dairy products were recently added to the list of livestock products that must receive sanitary authorization.

Key Contacts

- **ATO Tokyo**
E-mail: atotokyo@usda.gov
- **USDA contact point** for exporters is:
 - Your local Service Centers, Veterinary Services, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/contacts/field-operations-export-trade.pdf

Contact Information for Prior Consultation

- [29 Animal Quarantine Service offices under MAFF](#) offer Prior Consultation for importers (Japanese only).

3 Confirm Legal Compliance with Pet Food Standards and Other Regulations

Japan's Law for Ensuring the Safety of Pet Food establishes the standards for pet food products. Pet food importers must submit notification to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF).

Compliance with pet food standards is not part of the import clearance process but will be checked when MAFF officials visit the pet food importer in person, as a requirement of the Law for Ensuring the Safety of Pet Food.

Steps to take:

- 3-1 Confirm legal compliance regarding **pet food standards**

Whose responsibility is this?

The importer is responsible, but the manufacturer/exporter should be familiar with these issues.

Responsible government agency:

- [Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries \(MAFF\)](#)

Relevant laws/regulations:

- [Act on Ensuring of Safety of Pet Food](#)
- Ministerial ordinances and other legal documents are available at: <http://www.famic.go.jp/ffis/pet/sub1.html>

Best Practices

- Assess your product's compliance with pet food standards before moving forward.
- Since the number of English-language documents are limited and the regulations can change, collaborate closely with an importer or a trusted advisor to ensure your product meets all standards.

Key Contacts

- [ATO Tokyo](#)
E-mail: atotokyo@usda.gov
- Regional Agricultural Administrations under MAFF are contact points for importers. Contact phone numbers are available at: <http://www.maff.go.jp/j/syouan/tikusui/petfood/>
- MIPRO provides free phone consultation.

3-1

Standards regarding Constituents

Categories	Components	Maximum tolerance (µg/g)
Additive	Ethoxyquin, Butylated hydroxyanisole (BHA), and Butylated hydroxytoluene (BHT)	Total amount 150 (Ethoxyquin in dog food: below 75)
	Sodium nitrite	100
Pesticides	Chlorpyrifos-methyl	10
	Pirimifos-methyl	2
	Malathion	10
	Methamidophos	0.2
	Glyphosate	15
Mycotoxins	Aflatoxin B1	0.02
	Deoxynivalenol	2 for dogs, 1 for cats
Heavy metals	Cadmium	1
	Lead	3
	Arsenic	15
Organochlorine compounds	BHC (sum of α -BHC, β -BHC, γ -BHC and δ -BHC)	0.01
	DDT (sum of DDD, DDE and DDT)	0.1
	Aldrin and Dieldrin	0.01
	Endrin	0.01
	Heptachlor and Heptachlor epoxide	0.01
Others	Melamine	2.5

3-1 Standards for Manufacturing Methods and Phytosanitary Regulation on Wood Pallets

Standards for Manufacturing Methods

- **Pathogenic Microorganisms:**
If the pet food has undergone heat treatment or drying, this process must be sufficiently effective to eliminate any microorganisms that are present in the pet food or which have originated from its raw materials or have possibly developed within.
- **Additives:**
Propylene glycol shall not be used for manufacturing pet food for cats.
- **All ingredients:**
Ingredients that contain harmful substances, are contaminated with microbes or are suspected of contamination shall not be used.

Wood pallets

- Note that wood pallets must be fumigated and be certified by the American Lumber Standard Committee (ALSC) and the National Wooden Pallet and Container Association (NWPCA). The International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC)'s International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures Guidelines for Regulating Wood Packaging Material in International Trade (ISPM 15) regulates this protocol.

IPPC standard:

- ISPM 15 and applicable Japanese regulations are explained here:
http://www.maff.go.jp/pps/j/konpozai/faq_eng_2009_12.html
- For more details, refer to the instruction at National Wooden Pallet & Container Association
https://www.palletcentral.com/page/ISPM_15

4 Confirm Tariff Classification, Customs Duty and Country of Origin Regulations under the USJTA

Check your product's tariff classification in the most recent Japanese Tariff Schedule under the US Japan Trade Agreement (USJTA) and confirm the tariff rate applied to your products.

In order to receive the preferential duty rate under the USJTA, check the regulations related to Country of Origin and help your importer prepare the document required to confirm that your products meet the country of origin criteria.

Steps to Take:

- 4-1 Check tariff classification and confirm the customs duty imposed on your products under the USJTA.
- 4-2 Check Country of Origin Regulations and help your importer to prepare the Origin Declaration Document and other supplementary documents to receive benefits from the preferential duty under the USJTA.

Whose responsibility is this?

The **importer** is responsible, but the manufacturer/exporter should be familiar with the process and should provide the importer with the necessary data for the documents to confirm Country of Origin.

Responsible government agency

- [Japan Customs](#)

Related laws/regulations

- [Customs Act](#) (Japanese only)
- [Trade Agreement between Japan and the United States of America](#) (English)

4-1

Confirm Tariff Classification and Customs Duty under the USJTA

Check your product's tariff classification in the most recent Japanese Tariff Schedule and confirm the tariff rate applied on your products. The most recent Tariff Schedule is here:

<http://www.customs.go.jp/english/tariff/index.htm>

For the preferential duty rate under the USJTA, look under the column "JP-US Trade Agreement".

In order to expedite the customs clearance process, as well as to confirm the duties imposed on your product, your importer may get an Advance Ruling from the customs office that confirms the classification of your product.

Steps to Take:

- 4-1-1 Check tariff classification and confirm the customs duty imposed on your products.
- 4-1-2 Confirm that the importer has received an Advance Ruling on the classification of your product from a Customs office in advance, especially for processed products.

Whose responsibility is this?

The **importer** is responsible, but the manufacturer/exporter should be familiar with the process.

Timeframe / Cost:

- No fees required for Advance Ruling.
- Customs will reply within 30 days of submission of the application.
- The response from customs is valid for three years from the date of issuance.

Responsible government agency

- [Japan Customs](#)

Related laws/regulations

- [Customs Act](#) (Japanese only)
- [Trade Agreement between Japan and the United States of America](#) (English)

Best Practices

- Check the tariff classification carefully because the Japanese classification can be different from the US classification.
- The product classification, particularly for processed products, can differ depending on the ratio of ingredients. Getting an Advance Ruling is especially useful for processed products to avoid spending time at the port of entry trying to confirm the product category.
- Tariffs for competing suppliers can also be checked.

Common Concerns

- Importers may require the ratios of ingredients in order to obtain Advance Ruling. For further information, contact [ATO Tokyo](#) Email: atotokyo@usda.gov

Contact Information for Advance Ruling

- Advance Ruling is available at **9 regional Customs offices**. Contacts (in Japanese) for Customs Duty Advance Ruling: <http://www.customs.go.jp/question2.htm#b>
- **What information must be submitted?**
 - Inquiry form (C-1000, Japanese), including:
 - Ingredient List with ratios indicated for each ingredient,
 - Manufacturing Process Flowchart
 - Packaging details, etc.
 - Documents to show the business relationship between the importer and the supplier (sales contract, etc.)

4-1

Tariff Schedule

- The tariff schedule does not have a detailed definition of each classification. Therefore, getting Advance Ruling is especially useful to avoid time spent at the port of entry trying to confirm the product category.
- Note that the product you plan to export might be categorized into a category which is not listed here, depending on its ingredients or manufacturing method. If your product qualifies as an originating product as defined by the USJTA, please use the rate in the "USJTA" column in the table below.
- Based on the USJTA, tariffs on some products will gradually be reduced over time. New tariff reductions go into effect every year on April 1st. Check the most recent tariff schedules [here](#).

Tariff Schedule				
Import HS Code	Description	Tariff		
		As of April 1, 2021		As of April 1, 2022
		WTO bound rate	USJTA	USJTA
230910010	Dog or cat food, for retail sale, Containing not less than 10% lactose by weight	Per each kilogram, 59.50 yen plus 6 yen for every 1% exceeding 10% by weight of lactose contained	Per each kilogram, 19.83 yen plus 2 yen for every 1% exceeding 10% by weight of lactose contained	Per each kilogram, 9.92 yen plus 1 yen for every 1% exceeding 10% by weight of lactose contained
230910091	Dog or cat food, for retail sale, other; In airtight containers not more than 10kg each including container	0%		
230910092	Dog or cat food, for retail sale, other; More than 70yen/kg in value for customs duty, excluding those containing 35% or more by weight of crude protein	0%		

4-1

Tariff Schedule

Tariff Schedule				
Import HS Code	Description	Tariff		
		As of April 1, 2021		As of April 1, 2022
		WTO bound rate	USJTA	USJTA
230910093	Dog or cat food, for retail sale, other, other; In powders, meals, flakes, pellets, cubes or similar forms, containing less than 5% by weight of sugars evaluated as sucrose, less than 20% by weight of free starch, less than 35% by weight of crude protein, other than those be separable 10% or more by weight of broken rice and flour or meal of rice taken together when determined by means of separating methods stipulated by a cabinet order	0%		
230910099	Dog or cat food, for retail sale, other, other, other	36 yen/kg	0%	0%

4-2 Confirm Country of Origin Regulations and Prepare Origin Declaration Document

In order to receive preferential tariff treatment under the US-Japan Trade Agreement, food products must meet one of the following criteria;

- Foods that are wholly obtained or produced in the US (**WO**)
- Food products produced exclusively in the US using US and/or Japanese ingredients (**PE**)
- Food products produced in the US using non-US or Japanese ingredients, providing the final product results in the necessary HS code transformation (**PSR**).

Even if a product contains materials of non-US or non-Japanese origin and does not fulfill the HS Code transformation to qualify as **PSR**, the product may still receive preferential tariff treatment under the de minimus criteria (**DMI**) if the value of the non-US or non-Japanese materials does not exceed ten percent of the value of the final product. More details can be found here: [USJTA Rules of Origin and Origin Procedures](#)

To receive preferential treatment, importer needs to submit an Origin Declaration Document and a Detailed Origin Declaration Document. In addition, supplementary documents such as invoices of all ingredients and a manufacturing flow chart may also be requested. In order to expedite the origin declaration process, as well as to confirm whether your product is eligible for the preferential treatment, your importer may get an Advance Ruling from the Customs office.

Steps to Take:

- 4-2-1 Check whether your product is eligible for the preferential tariff under the USJTA.
- 4-2-2 Provide your importer with information for making the Origin Declaration Document, Detailed Origin Declaration Document and other supplementary documents.

Whose responsibility is this?

The **importer** is responsible. However, if Customs requests supplemental material from the importer, these supplementary documents can be provided to Customs directly from the exporter or producer.

Responsible government agency

- [Japan Customs](#)

Related laws/regulations

- [Trade Agreement between Japan and the United States of America](#) (English)

Best Practices

- By using the Advance Ruling system, it is possible to know in advance whether or not preferential tariffs will be applied. This helps manufacturers and exporters in planning their costs and developing their sales strategies. In addition, Advance Ruling may allow for smoother customs clearance.

Format of the Documents

- The format for the Origin Declaration Document and Detailed Origin Declaration Document are available here: <https://www.customs.go.jp/roo/procedure/index.htm> (Japanese)

Contact Information for Advance Ruling about Country of Origin

- Advance Ruling is available at **9 regional Customs offices**. Contacts (in Japanese) for Country of Origin Advance Ruling: <http://www.customs.go.jp/question2.htm#c>
- **What information must be submitted?**
 - Inquiry form (C-1000-2, Japanese)
 - This may include reference materials such as detailed ingredient list, manufacturing process chart, price lists samples, photographs, drawings as requested by Customs or recommended by your importer.

4-2

Sample of Origin Declaration Document

This document can be prepared in English or Japanese. There is no required format but should include the information below.

Origin Declaration Document (USJTA)

1. Exporter Name and Address XYZ Foods Ltd. 123 Woodland Avenue, City, State, ZIP, United States			
2. Producer Name and Address Same as above			
3. Importer Name and Address Meros Trading 1-19-3. Kanda Awajicho, Chiyoda-ku Tokyo, 101-0063 03-3526-3075			
No.	4. Products Detail (Name and Invoice #)	5. HS Code (6 digits)	6. Criteria
1	XYZ Brand Cat Food 70 g; XYZ-9876543 Invoice: ABC-D-1234 (2020.1.15)	2309.10	PE
7. Other Remarks			
8. Name & Address Meros Trading 1-19-3. Kanda Awajicho, Chiyoda-ku Tokyo		Date 2020/01/28	

Importer's address must be in Japan

List each product separately

Choose the applicable criteria (WO, PE, PSR) and if needed also note DMI

4-2

Sample of Detailed Origin Declaration Document

This document must be prepared in Japanese. There is no required format but should include the information below.

Example of Detailed Specification Declaration of Origin (USJTA) (Write in Japanese Only)

1. Invoice Number and Date ABC-D-1234 (2020.1.15)	
2. Product Number on Origin Declaration Document Same as above	3. HS Code 2309.10
4. Criteria <input type="checkbox"/> WO <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PE <input type="checkbox"/> PSR <input type="checkbox"/> DMI	
5. Explanations why the product satisfies above criteria <Ingredients> 1. Chicken: Produced in the US 2. Beef: Produced in the US 3. Seafood (sardines): Produced in the US 4. Vegetables (spinach, carrots): Harvested in the US 5. Vegetable oil: Produced in the US 6. Ground Corn Meal: Produced in the US 7. Thickening stabilizer: Made in the US 8. Seasoning: Made in the US <Manufacturing process> To manufacture this product, first the meat and fish is steamed and cooled before being combined with the other ingredients. The mixture is then poured into a retort pouch to be sealed. <Criteria> Ingredients 1-4 are wholly obtained products. 5-8 are also originating materials under USJTA. Since the product is produced exclusively from these materials in the United States, it is a US originating material under USJTA. These facts can be seen in the attached documents.	
6. Other Remarks	
7. Name & Address Meros Trading 1-19-3. Kanda Awajicho, Chiyoda-ku Tokyo	Date 2020/01/28

Check one of the three criteria: WO, PE or PSR. If you check PSR and DMI is applicable, check DMI as well.

Explain how the product fulfills the criteria:

- **WO:** Facts confirming that the food was wholly obtained in the US
- **PE:** Facts confirming that the food product was produced in the US using only US and/or Japanese ingredients
- **PSR:** Facts confirming that the food product was produced in the US using non-US or non-Japanese ingredients, providing the final product results in the necessary HS code transformation
- **DMI:** Facts confirming that the value of the non-US or non-Japanese materials does not exceed ten percent of the value of the product

More samples of Detailed Origin Declaration Documents can be found here, [USJTA Rules of Origin and Origin Procedures](#)

5 Create a Product Label

Product labels must be prepared in Japanese in accordance with Japanese regulations.

The Act on Ensuring the Safety of Pet Food defines the standard for labeling of pet food. The label should include the name of the pet food, best-before date, name and address of importer (or seller), country of origin, and ingredient list.

The Fair Competition Code for Pet Food defines more specific labeling standards. The Fair Competition Code is voluntary regulation, but major retailers will require that these standards be met.

Generally, a product label is prepared by the importer with information from the exporter /manufacturer. However, the manufacturer will, at times, create the design if they want to print directly on the original packaging.

Product labels can be affixed to products in the US or in Japan before commercial distribution. Consult with your importer on how to handle labeling.

Steps to take

- 5-1 Provide the importer with all necessary product information and prepare product label according to Japanese pet food labeling regulations.

Whose responsibility is this?

Importer

Responsible government agency:

- [Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries \(MAFF\)](#)

Relevant laws/regulations:

- [Act on Ensuring of Safety of Pet Food](#)
- [The Fair Competition Code for Pet Food](#) (only in Japanese)

Best Practices

- Labeling regulations are varied, are often different from US regulations and **change frequently**, so consult closely with your importer about the labeling.

Key Contacts

- [ATO Tokyo](#)
E-mail: atotokyo@usda.gov
- Regional Agricultural Administrations under MAFF are contact points for importers. Contact phone numbers are available at: <http://www.maff.go.jp/j/syouan/tikusui/petfood>

5-1

Sample of a Product Label

Cat Food

Name of product:	Cat Food / General nutrition (for Adult Cat)
Ingredients:	Meat (chicken, beef, poultry meal), cereals (wheat gluten), shellfish (sardines), sugars (glucose, sugar syrup), minerals (Ca, P, K, Na, Cl, Mg, Fe, Cu, Mn, Zn, I), vitamins (A, D, E, K, B1, B2, pantothenic acid, niacin, B6, folic acid, biotin, B12, Colin), Amino acids (taurine), thickening polysaccharides, coloring agents (iron oxide)
Net weight:	70g (Metabolic Energy: About 65kcal/100g)
Best-before date:	Shown on the lower right
Assurance component:	Protein more than 12%. Lipids 2.8% or more. Crude fiber 0.5% or less. Ash content 3% or less. Water 82% or less
Country of origin:	United States
Importer:	Meros Trading 1-19-3, Kanda Awajicho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

- Feeding method (approximate): Feed twice a day. Recommended total daily feeding amount of 1 pouch per kilogram of body weight. Adjust daily feed volume according to cat type and exercise level.
- If there are any problems with the quality, please contact us. We will send a replacement and cover the shipping charges. Contact phone no: 03-3526-2075

Recycling symbol: plastic

Best before date: Apr 1, 2022

キャットフード

名称:	キャットフード/総合栄養食(成猫用)
原材料名:	肉類(チキン, ビーフ, 家禽ミール等), 穀類(小麦グルテン等), 魚介類(いわし), 糖類(ぶどう糖, シュガーシロップ), ミネラル類 (Ca, P, K, Na, Cl, Mg, Fe, Cu, Mn, Zn, I), ビタミン類 (A, D, E, K, B1, B2, パントテン酸, ナイアシン, B6, 葉酸, ビオチン, B12, コリン), アミノ酸類(タウリン), 増粘多糖類, 着色料(酸化鉄)
内容量:	70g(代謝エネルギー: 約65kcal/100g)
賞味期限:	本欄右下に記載
保証成分:	粗たんぱく質12%以上, 粗脂肪2.8%以上, 粗繊維0.5%以下, 粗灰分3%以下, 水分82%以下
原産国名:	アメリカ
輸入者:	東京都千代田区神田淡路町1-19-3 株式会社メロス貿易

- 給与方法(目安): 成猫体重1kgあたり約1袋を目安に、1日2回に分けて与えてください。種類・運動量等に応じて調節してください。
- 万一製品に異常がありましたら、ご一報ください。代品と郵送料をお送りいたします。お問合せ先: 03-3526-2075



賞味期限
2022.04.01

- If it is not written in Japanese or not written in the order of "Year.Month.Date," an explanation must be provided to avoid misunderstanding by the consumer. For example, "The first two digits are the day, the next three letters are the month, and the next two digits are the year." If using the English alphabet, JAN will be January, FEB for February ... DEC for December etc.

6 Register Trademarks and other Intellectual Property Rights

To protect your trademarks in the Japanese market, you or your importer may want to register your trademarks. You may also consider using the Madrid System to register a trademark internationally.

Manufacturers may want to design logos, brand names or distinctive packaging specifically for the Japanese market and therefore the trademarks that you register for the Japanese market may differ from the trademarks you have registered for the products sold in the US.

Existing trademark registrations in Japan can be looked up here.

<https://www.j-platpat.inpit.go.jp/t0100>

Steps to take

- 6-1 Confirm that the name you want to trademark is not already registered in Japan.
- 6-2 Apply for trademarks and other intellectual property rights in Japan with the Japan Patent Office (JPO).

Whose responsibility is this?

Manufacturer / Exporter / Importer, depending on the situation

Application Information

- Refer to the Japan Patent Office (JPO)'s 'How to apply?'
<https://www.jpo.go.jp/e/faq/yokuaru/apply.html>
- Sample form is available here. <https://www.jpo.go.jp/e/faq/yokuaru/forms.html>

Timeframe / Cost

- It normally takes around 9 months for trademark registration.
(For fast track, less than 3 months, if certain conditions are met.)
- For a trademark, JPO's application charge is JPY 3,400 + JPY 8,600/per classification.
It may be necessary to consider additional patent attorney fees as well.

Government agency & law

- [Japan Patent Office \(JPO\)](#)
- [Trademark Act](#)

Best Practices

- Since trademark registration takes time, starting the process as early as possible is recommended.
- Consult with your importer. Your importer may be willing to help register the trademarks of your product/brand, for example, if they have exclusive import rights to the product.
- If your company does not have a representative office in Japan, you will need to appoint a Patent Administrator located in Japan.
- Be sure to check the name you want to trademark both in English and in Japanese (*katakana*). There are cases of US companies finding that there is already an existing trademark on the name they want to register.

Key Contacts

- International Affairs Division,
General Affairs Department
Japan Patent Office
Address: 3-4-3 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo
100-8915, Japan
Tel: (011-81-3) 3581-1101
Email: PA0842@jpo.go.jp
Website: <https://www.jpo.go.jp/e/index.html>
- Japan Patent Attorney Association
Tel: (011-81-3) 3581-1211
E-mail: master@jpaa.or.jp
Website: <https://www.jpaa.or.jp/en/>
The JPAA can be helpful in finding a representative for you in Japan.

B.

Embarkation

The following are steps to be taken upon embarkation.



B. Embarkation Checklist



7. Obtain a Sanitary Certificate

8. Clear export customs

7 Obtain a Sanitary/Health Certificate

If your product is subject to Sanitary Inspection, a USDA Sanitary/Health Certificate **must** accompany the shipment.

Steps to take

- 7-1 Obtain a **USDA Sanitary/Health Certificate** (See below.)

Whose responsibility is this?

Manufacturer / exporter

Timeframe / Cost

- Varies by Product

Further instructions by product:

Pet food containing meats

Japan requires a veterinary certificate issued by APHIS for some pet food containing meat products imported from the United States. For applicable products, obtain VS Form 16-4 from APHIS, USDA.

Pet food containing dairy products

Japan requires a veterinary certificate issued by APHIS for pet food containing dairy products imported from the United States. The specific certificate requirement differs according to factors such as whether or not the product contains other ingredients of animal origin.

For a full list of the required certificates, please consult:

[USDA APHIS | Japan iRegs.](#)

Key Contacts

- **ATO Tokyo**
E-mail: atotokyo@usda.gov

Where to obtain a Sanitary/Health Certificate?

- **Veterinary Service Center (SC)**, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), USDA
https://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal_health/downloads/nies_contacts/sc.pdf

8 Clear Export Customs

Electronic Export Information (EEI) filing is a common practice for export control documents. It is required for shipments above US\$2,500 in value and for shipments of products which require an export license. It should be filed electronically through the Automated Export System (AES).

After embarkation, send the documents required for Japanese import clearance: Commercial Invoice, Packing List, Bill of Lading (B/L) or Airway Bill, as well as any sanitary certificates required. You may need to confirm with the importer (and with the customs broker) about the format and content of those documents in advance.

Steps to take

- ❑ 8-1 Prepare the following documents:
 - Commercial Invoice
 - Packing List
 - Shipping Instructions (These are instructions for shipping prepared by the exporter and provided to the shipping company.)
- ❑ 8-2 Declare export through EEI filing with the above documents, proceed through export customs clearance, and receive a B/L after loading.
- ❑ 8-3 Send the documents for import clearance to the importer.
 - Commercial Invoice
 - Packing List
 - B/L or Airway Bill
 - Sanitary Certificates, as needed

Whose responsibility is this?

Manufacturer / exporter. The export clearance procedures often are consigned to a customs broker.

US export customs clearance instructions:

Further instructions can be found in:

- Export Education, The International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce
<https://www.export.gov/export-education>
- Basic Importing and Exporting, U.S. Customs and Border Protection
<https://www.cbp.gov/trade/basic-import-export>

List of documents to be sent to the importer

- **Commercial Invoice:**
This is an invoice for the goods from the manufacturer/exporter to the importer. The invoice will be used by both US and Japan customs to determine the value of goods. It should include:
 - Information about the exporter (seller) and the importer (buyer)
 - descriptions of goods
 - quantity and unit price
 - payment information
 - mode of transport and its details
 - country of origin
- **Packing List:**
This gives detailed information about the shipment, including:
 - information about the exporters and importers
 - invoice number
 - date of shipment
 - mode of transport and its details
 - the type of packaging
 - the quantity of packages
 - total net and gross weight (in kilograms)
 - total dimensions, etc.
- **Bill of Lading (B/L) or Airway Bill:**
This is a contract between the exporter (owner of the goods) and the shipping company (carrier), which will be prepared based on the Shipping Instructions, and will be issued by the shipping company after loading. B/L is for sea freight and Airway Bill is for air cargo. The importer usually needs the original document as proof of ownership of the goods.

C.

Import Clearance

The following steps must be completed before entering Japan

C. Import Clearance Checklist



- 9. Clear sanitary inspection

- 10. Clear import customs

9 Clear Sanitary Inspection

Import clearance starts from Sanitary Inspection at the **Animal Quarantine Service**, if the product is subject to such inspection (See Step 2). This inspection aims to prevent the spread of animal diseases.

Steps to take:

- ❑ 9-1 Submit an application for Sanitary Inspection to the Animal Quarantine Service with the **USDA Sanitary Certification** obtained in Step 7.
 - The Animal Quarantine Service may require other documents, such as the Commercial Invoice, Packing List, B/L and Manufacturing Process Flowchart.
 - The application can be submitted electronically through the Nippon Automated Cargo and Port Consolidated System (NACCS) or by paper copy.
 - Applications are accepted from as early as three days prior to the scheduled arrival of the cargo, and no later than one day prior to scheduled arrival.
- ❑ 9-2 Undergo document examination and on-the-site **Sanitary Inspection**.
- ❑ 9-3 If disease is detected, the Animal Quarantine Service will order either disposal or return of the shipment.
- ❑ 9-4 Once the shipment passes inspection, receive the **Inspection Certificate**.

Whose responsibility is this?

Importer. The entire import clearance process is often consigned to a customs broker.

Timeframe / Cost

- The Sanitary Inspection is free of charge. However, the importer needs to cover the cost of disposal or shipment return if ordered.
- The customs broker will usually charge 2000-5000 JPY for submitting the application, and they will add expenses for disposal or return if ordered.
- The timeframe for sanitary inspection varies from 10 mins to half a day.

Responsible government agency and relevant law/regulation

- [Animal Quarantine Service](#), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)
- [Act on Domestic Animal Infectious Diseases Control](#)

Sanitary inspection/sterilization method

Inspection method

The inspection method is described here (Japanese only):

Import Inspection Procedure of Livestock Products
<http://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/hou/attach/pdf/96-22.pdf>

Sampling size

The inspection method indicates the sampling size. For example, dairy products will require 3 samples regardless of the size of the shipment.

Designated sterilization method

Sterilization is mainly for bones, skins, etc., and not for meat and dairy products.

Rejection Rates at Sanitary Inspection

- The overall rejection rate for US meat products was 0.9% in 2019 and 0.8% in 2020.

Key Contacts

- **ATO Tokyo**
E-mail: atotokyo@usda.gov
- The 28 **Animal Quarantine Service** contact points:
<https://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/english/attach/pdf/contactus-18.pdf> (Japanese only)

10 Clear Import Customs

Finally, clear import customs and pay applicable import taxes (See Step 4) at the **Customs office**.

Steps to take:

- ❑ 11-1 Submit Import Declaration (and Origin Declaration Document, if applicable) to Customs:
The application can be submitted electronically through Nippon Automated Cargo and Port Consolidated System (NACCS) or by paper copy.
The application can be submitted after disembarkation or up to 2 weeks prior to scheduled arrival of cargo.
- ❑ 11-2 Clear document examination
- ❑ 11-3 Clear on-the-spot **Customs Inspections** (See the right column), if required
- ❑ 11-4 Pay the import tax and consumption tax
- ❑ 11-5 Receive an **Import Permit**

Whose responsibility is this?

Importer. The entire import clearance process is often consigned to a customs broker.

Timeframe / Cost

If the product is not subject to inspection, customs clearance only takes a couple hours.

Product inspection can take up to half a day.

Customs will not charge for customs clearance procedures.

The customs broker will charge from about JPY 3000 to 10,000 for customs clearance procedures and will add other extra costs if the product becomes subject to inspection.

Responsible government agency and relevant law/regulation

- [Japan Customs](#)
- [Customs Act](#) (Japanese only)

Customs Inspection

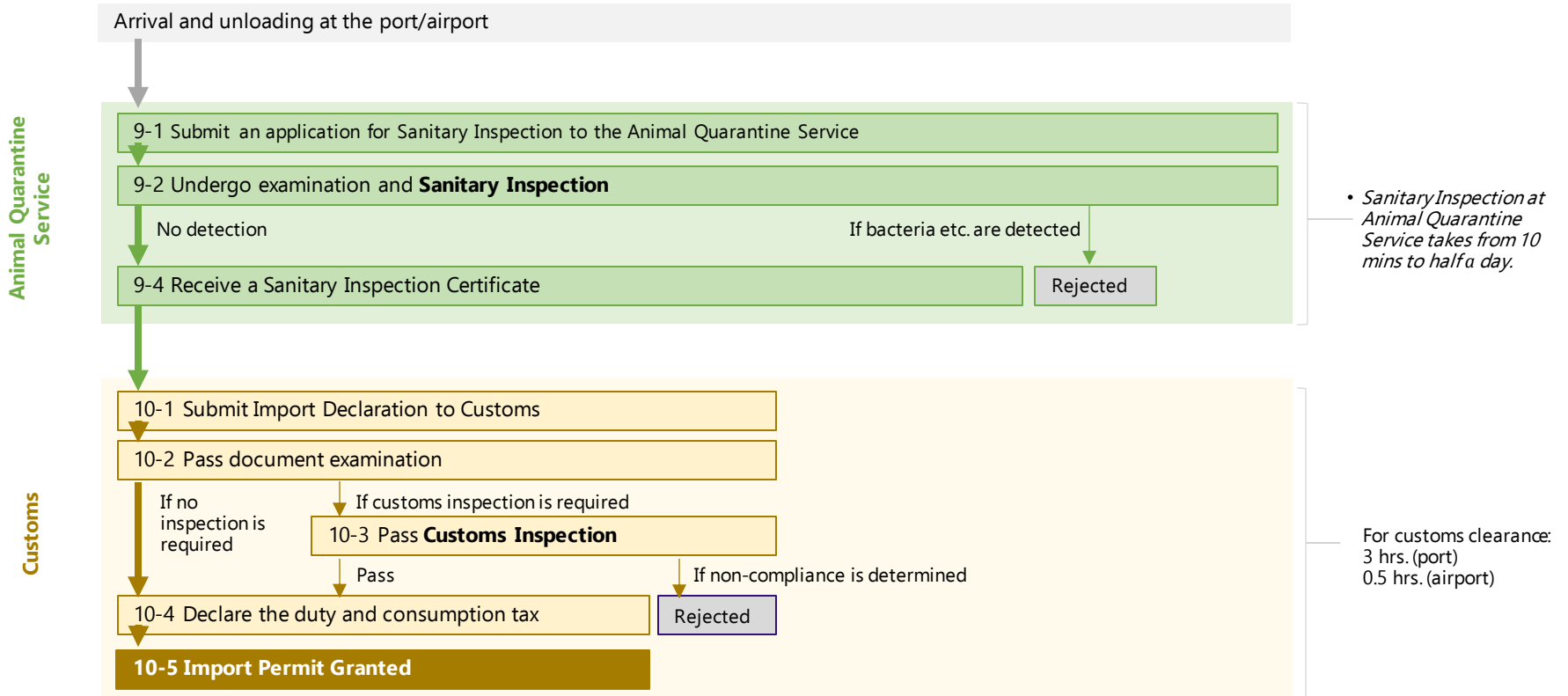
- **What will be inspected?**
 - Prohibited items such as drugs, guns, counterfeits
 - The Inspection Certificate and the Certificate of Import Notification of Foods in order (if they are required)
 - Indications of misrepresentation or misleading in regards to the place of origin
 - Whether or not a proper tax filing has been submitted
- **Inspection method**
Major inspection methods include:
 - [For drugs, guns, etc.] X-ray inspection
 - [For counterfeits] Visual confirmation
- **Cost**
Inspection is free of charge, but the importer needs to cover transportation costs to the inspection site.

Key Contacts

- Contact points of the 9 regional Customs offices (English):
http://www.customs.go.jp/question_e.htm

Summary Import Clearance Flow

Average duration



Contacts

General Help Desks

Need help? Contact ATO Tokyo

 atotokyo@usda.gov

Agricultural Trade Office (ATO), Tokyo

Embassy of the United States of America, Tokyo, Japan

E-mail: atotokyo@usda.gov

Tel: (011-81-3) 3224-5115
(Mon-Fri 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM Japan Standard Time)

Fax: (011-81-3) 3582-6429

Address: Unit 9800, Box 591, DPO AP 96303-0591

Further contact information available at:

https://apps.fas.usda.gov/overseas_post_directory/ovs_directory_result.asp?posts=580

Website: <http://www.usdajapan.org/>

Twitter: @USDAJapan

Free consultation service is also available at:

Japan External Trade Organization

Trade & Investment Consulting

Tel (English and Japanese): (011-81-3) 3582-5651
(Mon-Fri 9:00 AM-12:00 PM and 1:00 PM- 5:00 PM in Japan time)

Online Inquiry Form (English):

<https://www.jetro.go.jp/form5/pub/csa/contact-en>

Address: Ark Mori Building, 6F, 1-12-32, Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo

The Manufactured Imports and Investment Promotion Organization (MIPRO)

Tel (English and Japanese): (011-81-3) 3989-5151
(Mon-Fri 10:30 AM-4:30 PM in Japan time)

Online Inquiry Form (Japanese only):

https://krs.bz/mipro/m/advisement_form_web

Address: World Import Mart Building, 6F, 3-1-3, Higashi Ikebukuro, Toshima-ku, Tokyo

Contacts of Competent Authorities in Japan

Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)

Address: 1-2-1, Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

Website: <http://www.maff.go.jp/e/>

Online inquiry form:

<https://www.contactus.maff.go.jp/j/form/kanbo/koho/160807.html>

Animal Quarantine Service

Animal Health Division, Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau

Tel: (011-81-3) 3502-5994

Website: <http://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/languages/info.html>

Inquiries can be sent to Animal Quarantine Stations listed at:

<http://www.maff.go.jp/aqs/sosiki/attach/pdf/address-6.pdf>

(Japanese)

Pet Food Safety

Animal Products Safety Division, Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau

Tel: (011-81-3) 6744-1708

Website: <http://www.maff.go.jp/j/syouan/tikusui/petfood/>

(Japanese)

Ministry of Finance (MOF)

Address: 3-1-1 Kasumigaseki, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo

Website: <https://www.mof.go.jp/english/index.htm>

Customs

Japan Customs

Website: <http://www.customs.go.jp/english/index.htm>

Contacts for inquiries: http://www.customs.go.jp/question_e.htm