

9. Pasta

1. Definition of Category

Pasta such as spaghetti, macaroni, and those containing eggs.

HS Numbers	Commodity
1902.11	Pasta (containing eggs), other than cooked, stuffed or otherwise prepared
1902.19	Pasta (not containing eggs), other than cooked, stuffed or otherwise prepared
-093	Spaghetti
-094	Macaroni

2. Import Trends

(1) Recent Trends in Pasta Imports

Pasta imports had been setting new records every year, reflecting the overall growth in the pasta market in Japan. However, 2001 marked the first year-to-year import decline since 1990, with imports slipping 2.5% to 92,675 tons. In part this may have been a reaction to the strong growth posted in 2000, when imports rose by 10.8% from the year before, but it is also true that pasta consumption in Japan has lost the buoyancy it enjoyed for a time.

Virtually all of pasta imports was concentrated in spaghetti (85,808 tons, 92.6%) in 2001. Imports of macaroni and egg noodles remain rather small. But, macaroni was the only pasta category to register annualized import growth in 2001

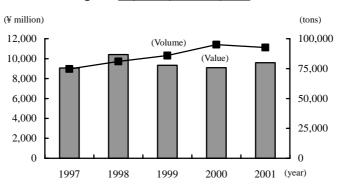


Fig. 1 Japan's pasta imports

		1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
		Value	Volume								
	Spaghetti	67,795	7,795	75,433	9,329	80,010	8,482	88,347	8,242	85,808	8,561
Pasta	Macaroni	6,168	986	5,065	843	5,263	671	5,807	682	6,244	849
Pasta	Egg pasta	804	287	641	232	586	189	945	180	623	184
	TOTAL	74,767	9,068	81,139	10,404	85,858	9,342	95,099	9,104	92,675	9,593

Units: tons, ¥ million

Source: Japan Exports and Imports

(2) Imports by Place of Origin

The leading exporter of pasta to Japan is Italy, which consistently enjoyed a dominating import share of around 93% up through 1997. Nevertheless, from 1998 onward imports from the United States have risen dramatically, and this not only lost Italy market share, but also led to a first-ever decline in Italian imports on a volume basis in 1999. There are several reasons why this happened. First, the Italian food fad had begun to wane, and imports of smaller Italian brands, which had risen with the wave of the fad, declined as well. Second, this was the startup of full-scale production in the United States by Japan's two main pasta makers.

Despite the "Italy 2001 in Japan" project that was carried out in many places around Japan in 2001, Italian pasta imports finished the year down by 3.0%, to 73,778 tons, the first year-to-year import decline since 1990. In contrast, American imports grew by 2.4% to 15,269 tons (import share 16.5%), continuing their growth trend. Imports from Indonesia also finished the year down, sliding from 2,968 tons to 1,868 tons.

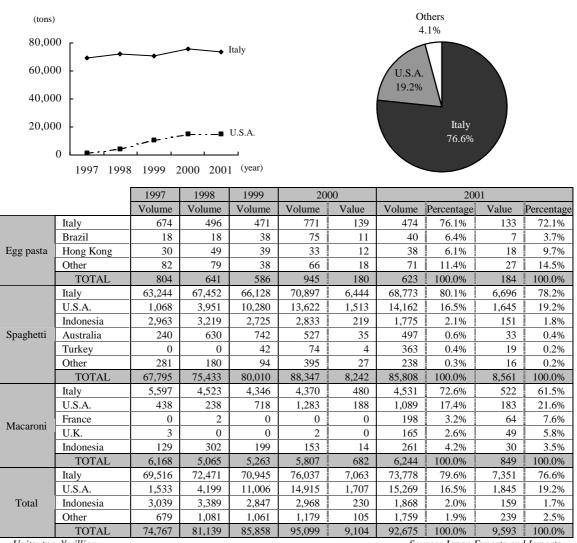


Fig. 2 Principal exporters of pasta to Japan

Shares of pasta imports in 2001 (value basis)

Units: ton, ¥million

Source: Japan Exports and Imports

(3) Imports' Market Share in Japan

Trends in import volume by leading exporters

The size of the pasta market (in terms of supply volume) has grown for nine straight years from 1991 onward. However, 2000 marked the first year in the last ten when overall domestic pasta supplies declined. Imports' share of the pasta market rose to 38.9% in 2000, an all-time record, as consumers continue to prefer authentic products, and as leading Japanese makers increase production in the United States.

Fig. 3 Imports' share in the Japanese marker

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Fiscal year	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Domestic production	149,272	158,147	159,304	161,603	149,858
Imports	71,082	74,767	81,139	85,858	95,066
Exports	2,441	1,911	1,548	661	376
Total market	217,913	231,003	238,895	246,800	244,548
Imports' share	32.6%	32.4%	34.0%	34.8%	38.9%
Unit: tons				Source: Foo	d Agency

3. Key Considerations related to Importing

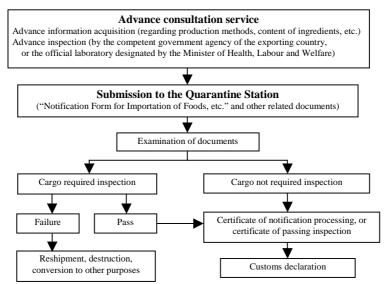
(1) Regulations and Procedural Requirements at the Time of Importation

The importation of pasta is subject to provisions of the Food Sanitation Law.

1) Food Sanitation Law

Under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law, an import notification is required for pasta being imported for the purpose of sale or for other commercial purposes. Importers are required to submit the completed "Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc." to the Quarantine Station at the port of entry. A determination is made based on the document examination whether or not an inspection at the bonded area is required.

Fig. 4 Procedures required under the Food Sanitation Law



Frozen pasta products are defined under the Food Sanitation Law as frozen foods to be heated before consumption. Note that separate standards apply to frozen foods that are heated immediately before being frozen, and other frozen foods.

Prior to importing, the importer may take a sample of forthcoming imports to official laboratories designated by the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare in Japan or in exporting countries. Those test results may be substituted for the corresponding inspection at the port of entry, which expedites the quarantine clearance process.

In addition, importers who wish to submit their notifications by computer may make use of the computerized FAINS (Food Automated Import Inspection and Notification System) for processing import-related documentation. Importers who have the required hardware and software may apply for a security code from the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare to access the system.

(2) Regulations and Procedural Requirements at the Time of Sale

The sale of pasta is subject to provisions of the Food Sanitation Law, the JAS Law, the Measurement Law, the Nutritional Improvement Law, the Containers and Packaging Recycling Law, and the Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources.

1) Food Sanitation Law

The Food Sanitation Law prohibits to see foods containing toxic or harmful substances and foods that are unsafe for human health. When selling packaged pasta, it must be labeled in accordance with provisions of the Food Sanitation Law. (see 4. Labeling)

2) JAS Law

(Law Concerning Standardization and Proper Labeling of Agricultural and Forestry Products)

The JAS Law establishes quality labeling standard for all food and beverage products sold to ordinary consumers. (see 4. Labeling)

3) Measurement Law

Pasta sealed in wrapping or containers is required the labeling of the net content to certain accuracy (range of error specified by Cabinet Ordinance).

http://www.mhlw.go.jp

http://www.maff.go.jp

http://www.meti.go.jp

4) Nutrition Improvement Law

When employing labeling for nutritional ingredients or calories, labeling must be in accordance with the requirements under the Nutrition Improvement Law. (see 4. Labeling)

5) Containers and Packaging Recycling Law (Law for Promotion of Sorted Collection and Recycling of Containers and Packaging)

The Containers and Packaging Recycling Law was enacted to promote recycling of container and packaging waste materials. It provides for sorting by consumers, sorted collection by municipalities, and product reuse (recycling) by product makers and distributors for glass bottles, PET bottles, paper and plastic containers and packaging. Consequently, pasta importers incur the obligation for recycling of containers and packaging (although stipulated small-scale importers are exempt). Please consult the competent government agencies listed below for more information.

6) Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources

As of April of 2001, new identifier labeling requirements apply to paper (not including beverage containers not containing aluminum) and plastic container materials, in addition to previously existing labeling requirements for steel and aluminum cans or PET bottles. (see 4. Labeling)

(3) Competent Agencies

· Food Sanitation Law

Policy Planning Division, Department of Food Sanitation, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare TEL: 03-5253-1111 http://www

• JAS Law Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Measurement Law

Measurement and Intellectual Infrastructure Division, Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

TEL: 03-3501-1511

TEL: 03-3502-8111

Nutrition Improvement Law
 Department of Food Sanitation, Pharmaceutical and Medical Safety Bureau, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
 TEL: 03-5253-1111
 http://www.mhlw.go.jp

• Containers and Packaging Recycling Law / Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources Recycling Promotion Division, Industrial Science and Technology Policy and Environment Bureau, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

 TEL: 03-3501-1511
 http://www.meti.go.jp

 Recycling Promotion Division, Waste Management and Recycling Department, Ministry of the Environment

 TEL: 03-3581-3351
 http://www.env.go.jp

 Food Industry Policy Division, General Food Policy Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

 TEL: 03-3502-8111
 http://www.maff.go.jp

4. Labeling

(1) Legally Required Labeling

When selling pasta sealed in wrapping or containers, following items must be listed all together on the label, under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law, the JAS Law, and the Measurement Law.

<Labeling items to be listed all together>

- 1) Product name
- 2) List of ingredients (also list of food additives, if used)
- 3) Net contents
- 4) Date of minimum durability or best-before date
- 5) Preservation method
- 6) Country of origin
- 7) Importer's name and address

Example of labeling for imported pasta

Product name	Spaghetti	 Macaroni, spaghetti, vermicelli, noodles (See Fig. 7 for JAS product category definitions).
Ingredient name	Durum semolina	 Raw material wheat flour and, other raw materials and additives must be listed in descending order by percentage of weight within the product. Raw material wheat flour may be described on the label by the phrases "durum semolina," "durum wheat flour," "reinforced wheat farina," or "re- inforced wheat flour."
Net content	300 kg	 Gram (g), kilogram (kg)
Date of minimum durability	2000.4	 Year/month or Year/month/day
Preservation method Country of origin Importer's name, address or t	Keep out of direct sunlight. Italy telephone No.	Products that can be stored at room temperature may omit this instruction from labeling.

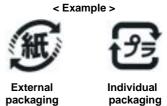
<Labeling of Food Products Containing Allergens>

The Food Sanitation Law mandates or recommends raw material labeling for 24 food products that contain allergens. Processed food products containing the foods listed in the following table, and processed foods containing additives derived from these foods are either required or advised to bear labeling to the effect that they contain allergenic foods. This provision was adopted as of April 2001, and from April 1, 2002 onward, it will apply to all manufactured, processed and imported processed food products and food additives.

Labeling mandatory (5 products)	Wheat, buckwheat, eggs, milk, peanuts
Labeling recommended (19 products)	Abalone, squid, salmon roe, shrimp, crabs, salmon, mackerel, oranges, kiwi fruit, peaches, white potatoes, apples, walnuts, soybeans, gelatin, beef, pork, chicken, <i>matsutake</i> mushroom

<Labeling under the Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources>

When paper or plastic is used as a packaging material for wrapping of individual product items, or for labels, external packaging or elsewhere, a material identifier mark must be displayed with information where the material is used.



packaging

JAS Mark

(2) Voluntary Labeling based on Provisions of Law

1) JAS Law

<JAS Mark>

The JAS Law defines standards on macaroni. Products that undergo inspection and are certified compliant with JAS standards are allowed to display the JAS mark. However, application for grading is voluntary, and products do not have display the JAS mark in order to be sold.

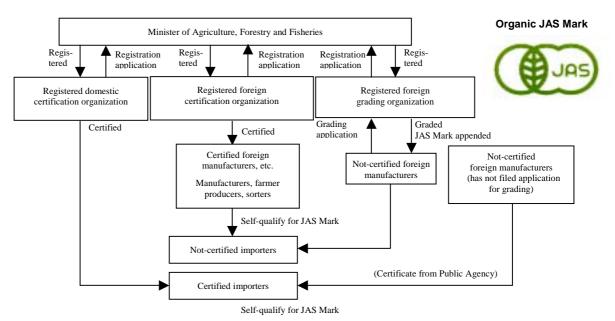
Under the previous JAS Law, manufacturers must undergo inspection by a registered grading organizations. But under the amended JAS Law, both domestic and overseas manufacturers, production process supervisors (farmer producers), sorters, and importers in Japan may be authorized to self-qualify with the approval of a registered certification organization.

<Inspection and Certification of Organic Agricultural Products and Processed Organic Agricultural Products>

The JAS Law establishes a "special JAS standard" for organic agricultural products and processed organic agricultural products. Only those products that comply with this standard are allowed to include in their labeling the phrase "organic" and to display the Organic JAS Mark. Organic agricultural products produced abroad (in countries recognized as having a certification program equivalent to the JAS system) must be qualified according to one of the following methods in order to use the phrase "organic" and to display the Organic JAS Mark.

- 1) Product is qualified by a foreign grading organization registered with Japan's Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and is imported with the JAS Mark attached.
- 2) Manufacturers, production process supervisors (farmer producers) and sorters shall be authorized to self-qualify with the approval of a registered certification organization. This provision applies to foreign countries as well. This means that foreign manufacturers, etc., may be authorized to self-qualify by registered a foreign certification organization, and to export the product with the JAS Mark attached to Japan.
- 3) Importers may obtain approval to qualify from a registered certification organization in Japan, and they may self-qualify the imported product by accompanied certificate (or copy) issued by a public agency abroad.

Fig. 5 Inspection and certification system for imported organic agricultural products and processed organic agricultural products



Contact:

Center for Food Quality, Labeling and Consumer Services Headquarters Standard and Labeling Department TEL: 048-600-2371 http://www.cfqlcs.go.jp

2) Labeling under the Nutrition Improvement Law

When employing labeling for nutritional ingredients or calories in Japanese, either on the packaging or in accompanying documentation, labeling must be in accordance with the requirements under the Nutrition Improvement Law.

< Example> Labeling must contain the quantities of calories, proteins, fats, carbohydrates, sodium,, and other nutritional ingredients present, in descending order by content volume.

(3) Voluntary Industry Labeling

There is no voluntary industry labeling for pasta.

5. Taxes

(1) Customs Duties

The Uruguay Round agriculture agreement stipulated progressive reductions in pasta tariff rates (WTO rates) from ¥40/kg beginning in 1995. 2000 represented the final year of the tariff reductions.

HS No.	Description	Rate of Duty (%)					
H5 INO.		General	WTO	Preferential	Temporary		
1902.11	Pasta, containing eggs	¥40/kg	¥30/kg				
1902.19	Pasta, not containing eggs						
-093,094	- Spaghetti and macaroni	¥40/kg	¥30/kg				

Fig. 6 Customs duties on pasta

Note: Refer to "Customs Tariff Schedules of Japan" (published by Japan Tariff Association) etc. for interpretation of tariff table.

(2) Consumption Tax

(CIF + Customs duty) x 5%

6. Product Characteristics

(1) Classification by Varieties

The word "pasta" literally means "flour dough" in Italian. It is a term generally applied to noodles such as spaghetti and macaroni. Please note, however, that there are different definitions of pasta under the JAS Law and for customs and tariff classification purposes ^(Note 1). The JAS Law defines as macaroni products that are made by adding water to durum semolina ^(Note 2), ordinary wheat or reinforced wheat farina, or to ordinary wheat flour, and then made into dough with eggs or vegetables, etc., added or not added, and then pressed at high pressure using a macaroni forming machine, after which it is cut and dried. The Law imposes further sub-classifications based on shape as described in Fig. 7.

Because of the properties of durum wheat flour, pasta does not disintegrate when boiled, but instead retains a flexible chewiness. Unlike other types of noodles that are typically eaten with soup broth, pasta can be freely combined with olive oil, tomato sauce, cheese, fish and shellfish, meats and vegetables. Thus, pasta offers a diverse menu of possible food dishes.

There are more than 300 different types of pasta, with different terms for each type according to the shape, the shape of the sectional cut, and the thickness. Pasta may be broadly classified into long types and short types. In Japan, the most widely purchased type is spaghetti, one of the varieties of long pasta.

Note 1: The category of pasta under HS No. 1902 in the official customs and tariff classification system includes products made from rice flour, along with Japanese udon, soba and ramen noodles, plus ravioli and other stuffed pasta products. The category also includes non-dried products and frozen products.

Note 2: Durum wheat is the type of flour best suited for making pasta, with large amounts of flexible gluten (protein) and a yellow color. Durum wheat is hard and difficult to grind into flour, and is used in rough-ground form, which is called durum semolina.

Product name	Definition
Spaghetti	Cylindrical pasta with a thickness of at least 1.2 mm, or tubular pasta with a thickness of less than 2.5 mm
Macaroni	Tubular or other shaped pasta (excluding cylindrical or flat pasta) with a thickness of at least 2.5 mm
Vermicelli	Cylindrical pasta with a thickness of less than 1.2 mm
Noodles	Flat-shaped pasta

Fig. 7 Definitions of macaroni under the JAS Law

(2) Characteristics of Products from Different Countries / Regions

The most commonly imported form of pasta is spaghetti. Other imported pastas include fettuccine, other egg pastas, and pastas with added spinach, tomatoes or paprika powder, in a wide variety of colors and shapes not found among pasta made in Japan.

Italy

In Italy, pasta is defined as being made from 100% durum flour, with no artificial colors or preservatives. Italy is widely known in Japan as the birthplace of pasta. Leading Italian pasta brands such as Barilla, Buitoni and DeCecco are already in the Japanese market. Many of them are imported and exclusively sold by Japanese pasta makers and food product makers. Some have set up production lines especially for the Japanese market, where the wheat mix proportions are adjusted for Japanese people's taste preferences. Some makers are producing premium brands for the commercial market in Japan, while others offer pasta made from organic flour.

While the intense phase of the Italian food fad is behind us now, a number of events are planned during 2001 under the banner "Italy 2001 in Japan" to introduce Italy's rich culture to Japan. These events can be expected to further elevate the profile of pasta as one of Italy's most representative forms of food.

United States

Japan imported just 288 tons of pasta from the United States in 1995 (208 tons of which was macaroni). However, imports soared to 15,269 tons by 2001 (see Fig. 2). Nearly all of these imports consisted of production from US factories owned by leading Japanese makers, or development imports, produced for those makers on an OEM basis. Most pasta imported from the United States is for commercial and industrial use, rather than for consumer sale.

By setting up production facilities where the durum wheat is grown, Japanese makers hoped to supply the Japanese market with inexpensive and high-quality pasta. Imports of pasta are expected to grow further from the United States in the future.

Indonesia

Indonesia exports pasta under the Bogasari brand label made by the state-owned corporation to Japan through multiple importers. Despite the inexpensive price, Indonesian pasta is made from 100% durum wheat and offers consistent product quality. It is used in the commercial and industrial market (especially for frozen and processed foods), and is also sold at retail in some mass merchandiser outlets.

At one time Japanese pasta had a reputation for being softer than Italian pasta, and for losing its flavor in cooking. In recent years, though, technical cooperation with Italian makers, new production facilities, and increased proportions of durum semolina have narrowed the product quality gap with Italian pasta. Many observers now say that Japanese pasta is much closer to Italian pasta in quality.

7. Domestic Distribution System and Business Practices

(1) Domestic Market Conditions

Japanese people generally are fond of noodle dishes, including long-time Japanese favorites *ramen*, *udon* and *soba* noodles. Thus, it is easy for Japanese people to adapt to and come to enjoy pasta-based Italian food. Pasta has also gained attention for its health benefits, which has helped elevate the profile of pasta and other Italian food ingredients such as red wine and olive oil. The Japanese pasta market has experienced steady growth, but the growth rate in pasta consumption has slowed since it topped the 200,000 ton mark in 1996. 2000 marked the first year in the last ten when overall domestic pasta supplies declined. The likely reason for this decline was a drop in the incidence of purchasing dry pasta for preparation at home.

In recent years, makers have launched a number of quick-preparation fresh pasta foods, including chilled products (where dry pasta is softened by adding hot water) and frozen products, where the pasta is combined with sauce and microwaved. These products target the home user market as part of efforts to diversify pasta consumption. These efforts are helping popularize thinner types of long pasta, with diameters of 1.4-1.6 mm, in addition to standard 1.9 mm spaghetti.

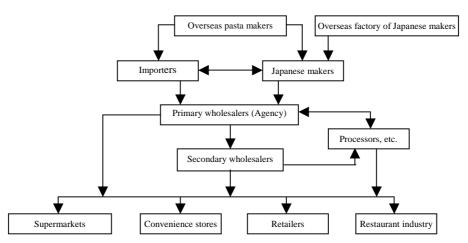
In the commercial and industrial market, Italian restaurants have fared well in spite of the overall poor sales in the food service industry, which has been hurt by the slump in consumer spending. Italian restaurants have proliferated in a variety of forms, including hotel restaurants, Italian style *ristorante*, and pasta specialty restaurants. Growth in pasta demand has also been aided by the popularity of pre-packaged lunch and snack foods sold at convenience stores, as well as steady strong demand in the food processing industry. The market for convenience store pasta lunches has grown into a large market, with annual use about 20,000 tons of pasta. Future growth is expected in this sector in the future. Nearly all frozen pasta is imported as unprepared pasta and then is processed and frozen after being brought into Japan. However, as consumer demand spreads for the convenience afforded by frozen pasta, imports of frozen pasta (frozen and frozen cooked pasta) appear likely to increase.

The annual per capita consumption of pasta in Japan is only about 1.7 kg. This is far less than the United States' annual per capita consumption of 10 kg, not to mention Italy's 28 kg. This means that further growth can be expected in the future. Spaghetti has long been the favorite in Japan, but makers and importers are working to promote short pasta and stimulate demand by devising new menu items that combine short pasta with a variety of pasta sauces.

(2) Distribution Channels

There are two main types of distribution channels in the pasta market. Pasta for the consumer market is distributed from makers or importers through food product wholesalers to retail stores. On the other hand, pasta for the commercial and industrial market is distributed direct to Italian restaurants and other food service establishments, and to food product makers and food processors. According to a survey by the All Japan-Macaroni Association, 56.8% of domestic pasta production was sold into the consumer market in 2000, while 43.2% was sold to the commercial and industrial market. In recent years growth has been stronger in the commercial and industrial market than in the consumer market. There are no similar statistics on sales of imported pasta, but industry sources say that imports are sold in larger proportion to the commercial and industrial market than is the case with pasta made in Japan. The four top Japanese pasta makers together account for 80% of total domestic pasta production. The two leading brands are also importers and resellers of well-known imported pasta brands. Their market leadership comes from the fact that they have all areas covered. They produce pasta themselves in Japan and overseas, plus they import pasta by foreign makers.

Fig. 8 Distribution channels for pasta



(3) Key Considerations for entering the Japanese Market

The Japanese pasta market is divided between the consumer market and the commercial-industrial market. At the same time, the forms of consumption and the modes of commercial and industrial use are diversifying as well. To enter the Japanese market, it is essential to formulate a carefully targeted approach that meets the needs of each type of use. The pasta market has matured, and the Italian food fad has waned somewhat. Entering the Japanese market at this stage requires that an importer be able to offer something distinctive, something that contributes to product diversification and that addresses consumer needs.

8. After-Sales Service

In general, there is no after-sales service required, but either the distributor or importer is held liable for defective products.

9. Related Product Categories

For customs and tariff purposes, pasta is classified under HS No.19.02. This category includes non-fermented products made from a variety of flours, including durum semolina, wheat, corn, rice and potato flour. These include *biefun* (1902.19-010), Japanese *udon, somen* and *soba* noodles (1902.19-092), stuffed pasta (1902.20) and instant *ramen* (1902.30-290). Virtually all imports of stuffed pasta products consist of Chinese-style dumplings and egg rolls, most of which are imported frozen. Note that content standards under the Food Sanitation Law differ between products that were heated immediately prior to being frozen, and other products. Also, make sure to check on the regulatory status in Japan of any food additives that might have been used during the manufacturing process.

10. Direct Imports by Individuals

Individuals may import without restriction quantities of pasta deemed appropriate to personal consumption. Individual imports for personal consumption are exempt from procedural requirements of the Food Sanitation Law, Imports for the purpose of distribution to a multiple non-specific persons are subject to provisions of the Food Sanitation Law.

11. Related Organization

• Japan-Pasta Association

TEL: 03-3667-4245

JETRO Marketing Guidebook For Major Imported Products