

# 13. Fresh Fruits

## 1. Definition of Category

A wide variety of fresh fruits are imported into Japan, including tropical fruits (bananas, pineapples, avocados, mangos, papayas, etc.), temperate climate fruits (grapes, melons, kiwifruits, cherries, etc.), and citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, grapefruits, etc.) But this report will examine only the most common types of imported fresh fruit. This report will not address frozen, dried or canned fruit products.

HS Numbers	Commodity
0803.00-100	Bananas
0804.30-010	Pineapples
0804.40-010	Avocados
0804.50-011	Mangoes
0805.10-000	Oranges
0805.30-010, -090	Lemons, limes
0805.40-000	Grapefruits
0806.10-000	Grapes
0807.11-000, 19-000	Water melons, melons
0807.20-000	Papayas
0808.10-000	Apples
0809.20-000	Cherries
0810.50-000	Kiwifruits

## 2. Import Trends

### (1) Recent Trends in Fresh Fruit Imports

Japan imported less than 1.5 million tons during 1989-1991 (time of liberalization). Progress in liberalization, however, has led to increase to 1.55-1.80 million ton ranges. Banana imports, which account for majority of increase in total fruit import in recent five years (about 260,000 tons), and topped 1.0 million ton mark in 2000. Imports of bananas, Japan's flagship fresh fruit import, were down in 2001, and overall fresh fruit imports were also off, slipping to 1,719,893 tons (down 5.4% from the year before), worth some ¥152.6 billion (down 2.0%).

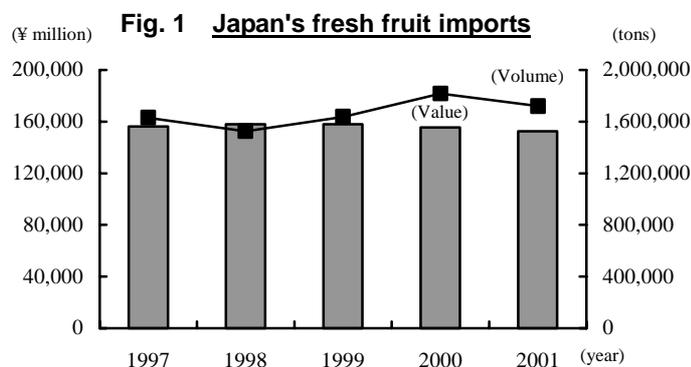
Banana imports, which account for 57.6% of all fresh fruit imports fell by 8.8% to 990,554 tons in 2001. Other tropical fruits being imported include pineapples (118,344 tons), avocados (10,821 tons), mangoes (8,892 tons), and papayas (6,869 tons). The only tropical fruits to maintain or exceed previous year import levels were pineapples and papayas.

The main types of citrus fruits being imported are grapefruits (268,650 tons, ranked second with a share of 15.6% of total fresh fruit imports), followed by oranges (126,203 tons) and lemons/limes (84,333 tons), while the main types of temperate climate fruits being imported are kiwifruits (39,564 tons), melons/watermelons (34,783 tons), cherries (17,031 tons) and grapes (11,511 tons). In 2001, all of temperate climate fruits other than cherries failed to maintain previous year import levels. Apple importation is limited to exports from particular nations, due to plant quarantine considerations. In 2001 apple imports rose from 594 tons to 2,339 tons, with exports coming from the Republic of Korea, Australia and the United States. (see Fig. 1)

### (2) Imports by Place of Origin

The suppliers of any particular kind of fresh fruit are generally limited due to the small number of producing areas and plant quarantine regulations. In most cases some 80-90% of any one fresh fruit comes from a single country/region. Much of the tropical fruit is from the Philippines. Bananas are overwhelmingly from the Philippines (78.9%), and also being imported from Ecuador (17.2%). Pineapples are almost all from the Philippines (97.9%), and avocados are almost all from Mexico (97.8%). Mangoes are mostly imported from the Philippines (60.7%) and Mexico (27.5%). Papayas almost all hail from Hawaii (50.9%), but since the ban on imports from the Philippines was lifted, the Philippines have been increasing their shares (48.4%).

In the past, the United States accounted for about 90% of the three main types of citrus fruit imported. But, recently significant amounts are being imported from South Africa, with 18.0% for grapefruits and 7.4% for oranges in 2001. Another leading exporters to Japan are Chile for grapes, Mexico for melon/water melons, the United States for cherries, and the Republic of Korea for apples. (see Fig. 2)



	1997		1998		1999		2000		2001	
	Volume	Value								
Bananas	885,140	52,646	864,853	61,515	983,204	62,593	1,078,655	59,301	990,554	54,801
Pineapples	96,087	5,517	84,710	4,970	89,866	5,020	100,092	5,330	118,344	7,154
Avocados	6,040	1,637	8,605	2,285	7,491	2,141	14,070	3,026	10,821	3,031
Mangoes	8,599	3,113	8,877	3,211	8,873	2,934	9,627	2,940	8,892	3,093
Oranges	171,269	18,042	150,470	17,714	89,703	13,680	136,150	11,207	126,203	13,083
Lemons/limes	89,423	17,649	86,445	17,104	84,597	14,370	91,728	13,180	84,333	13,471
Grapefruits	283,773	31,124	229,905	26,232	262,416	27,163	272,278	27,338	268,650	27,330
Grapes	7,351	2,157	7,649	2,064	9,005	2,019	13,219	2,845	11,511	2,475
Water melons, melons	24,313	2,941	30,449	3,794	40,204	4,515	36,864	3,922	34,783	3,799
Papayas	5,104	2,356	4,670	1,983	5,180	1,796	5,796	1,778	6,869	1,997
Apples	150	27	221	30	308	72	594	93	2,339	295
Cherries	12,492	9,667	7,253	6,701	15,891	11,905	16,716	12,460	17,031	12,783
Kiwifruits	40,223	9,538	42,537	10,459	41,249	9,990	41,531	12,281	39,564	9,327
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,629,963</b>	<b>156,413</b>	<b>1,526,644</b>	<b>158,063</b>	<b>1,637,987</b>	<b>158,197</b>	<b>1,817,320</b>	<b>155,701</b>	<b>1,719,893</b>	<b>152,640</b>

Units: tons, ¥ million

Source: Japan Exports and Imports

Note: Oranges, lemons/limes, and grapefruits include dried fruits.

**Fig. 2 Principal exporters of fresh fruits by product category (2001, volume basis)**

	First	Share	Second	Share
Bananas	Philippines	78.9%	Ecuador	17.2%
Pineapples	Philippines	97.9%	Taiwan	0.8%
Avocados	Mexico	97.8%	U.S.A.	1.7%
Mangoes	Philippines	60.7%	Mexico	27.5%
Oranges	U.S.A.	82.5%	South Africa	7.4%
Lemons/limes	U.S.A.	77.3%	Chile	15.4%
Grapefruits	U.S.A.	75.3%	South Africa	18.0%
Grapes	Chile	67.6%	U.S.A.	28.0%
Water melons, melons	Mexico	61.1%	U.S.A.	30.8%
Papayas	U.S.A.	50.9%	Philippines	48.4%
Apples	North Korea	60.3%	Australia	27.8%
Cherries	U.S.A.	98.7%	Chile	1.2%
Kiwifruits	New Zealand	88.4%	Chile	11.6%

Source: Japan Exports and Imports

### (3) Imports' Market Share in Japan

Most fresh fruit imports consist of fruits that are not grown at all, or grown only in very small amounts in Japan. Since domestically grown fresh fruit is used not only as fresh food but also to make juice and other processed fruit products, it is impossible to calculate a precise market share for fresh fruit imports.

Fresh fruit production in Japan fell in FY 2000 by 10.3% from the year before, to 3.85 million tons. More than half of that total consisted of mandarin oranges (1.14 million tons) and apples (800,000 tons). Imports' share of the combined total market for fresh fruit and processed fruit products rose from 33.7% in FY 1989, the last year before fruit imports were liberalized, to 56.1% in FY 2000. Imported fresh fruit and processed fruit products have become an essential component, therefore, of the Japanese diet.

**Fig. 3 Imports' share in the Japanese market**

	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Domestic production	3,900	4,587	3,935	4,289	3,847
Imports	4,384	4,265	4,110	4,626	4,843
Exports	15	20	13	59	68
Changes in inventory	+15	145	+36	112	+69
Domestic supply totals	8,284	8,687	8,068	8,744	8,691
Imports' share	52.9%	49.1%	50.9%	52.9%	56.1%
Unit: 1,000 tons		Source: Food Supply and Demand (2000)			

## 3. Key Considerations related to Importing

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

The importation in Japan of fresh fruits is subject to provisions of the Plant Protection Law and the Food Sanitation Law.

#### 1) Plant Protection Law

Under the Plant Protection Law, in order to prevent the entry and spread into Japan of harmful microorganisms, insect pests, and parasites that would cause serious damage to crops and forest resources of Japan,

- No root crops with soil attached can be imported into Japan.
- No host fresh (frozen) vegetables of the Mediterranean fruit fly, the Colorado leaf beetle, the citrus burrowing nematode, etc. from or through the infested area are allowed into Japan.

There is a separate list of import-prohibited items for every infested area. If one of these import-prohibited items is brought to Japan, an order will be issued to burn and the like.

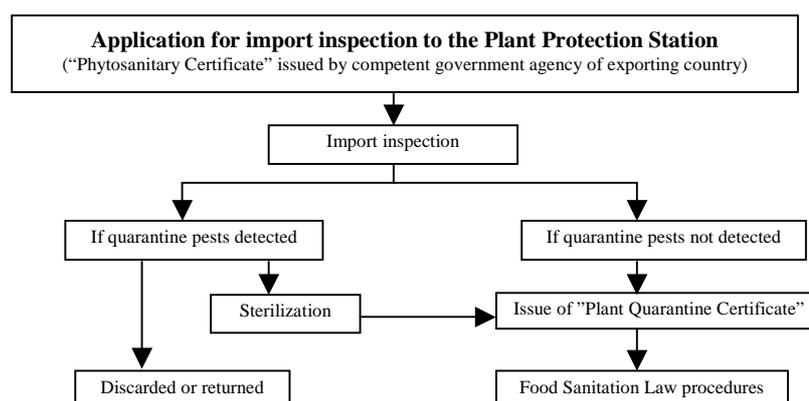
Fresh fruit imports are subject to provisions of the Plant Protection Law. Upon arrival at the port of entry, the importer must promptly submit to the Plant Protection Station an "Application for Import Inspection of Plants and Import-Prohibited Articles" along with a "Phytosanitary Certificate" issued by the competent government agency of the exporting country. Importers should note that only certain ports of entry equipped with plant quarantine facilities are designated for plant imports. If an infestation is detected, and then the importer will be ordered to decontaminate, discard, or return to the shipper.

#### Conditionally permitted items

When the Japanese plant quarantine authorities and a government organization requesting that a prohibition against certain fresh fruit be lifted engage in technical deliberations and the exporting country establishes a full disinfection method etc., the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries may set a plant quarantine standard and lift the prohibition on import for fruit meeting all of its conditions. The methods of disinfection differ for each product and country and include the following:

Steam heating, low temperature, a combination of steam heating and low temperature, fumigation by methyl bromide etc., and shipment from quarantine controlled regions.

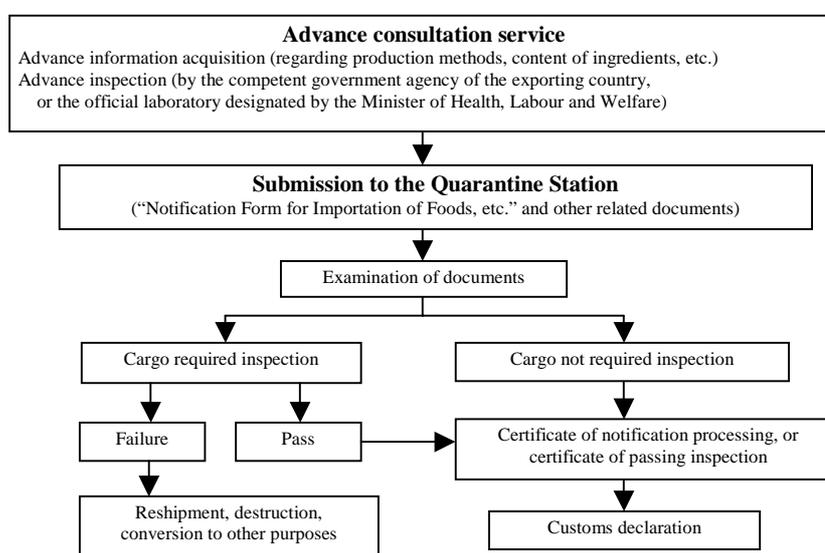
In both the case of imported fresh fruit and conditional and other imports, the fruit is inspected upon landing. If a disease or pests are discovered, it is fumigated by cyanide gas (in the case of scale insects, thrips, white flies, and cockroaches) or methyl bromide gas.

**Fig. 4 Import inspection (quarantine) procedures under the Plant Protection Law**

## 2) Food Sanitation Law

Under provisions of the Food Sanitation Law, an import notification is required for fresh fruits 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.

The food sanitation inspection on fresh fruits mainly checks for food additives (anti-molding agent, film compounds, coloring agent, etc.) and residual agricultural chemicals. Regulations specify the types of fruit with which anti-molding agent may be used and the permissible level of residue. Usage standards have also been defined for film compounds and coloring agents. If non-designated additives are found, the fruit must be burned or otherwise disposed of. Residual agricultural chemical standards have been defined for each type of fruit. It is essential to find out in advance what agricultural chemical usage patterns prevail in the producer nation (including whether the producer nation uses chemical post-harvest, which is normally not done in Japan).

**Fig. 5 Procedures required under the Food Sanitation Law**

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 fresh fruits is subject to the Food Sanitation Law, the JAS Law, and the Law for Promotion of Effective Utilization of Resources.

### 1) Food Sanitation Law

The Food Sanitation Law prohibits the sale of foods containing toxic or harmful substances and foods that are unsafe for human health.

### 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. Fresh fruits are subject to the Fresh Food Product Quality Labeling Standard. (see 4. Labeling)

## (3) Competent Agencies

- Plant Protection Law  
Fruit and Flower Division, Agricultural Production Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
TEL: 03-3502-8111 <http://www.maff.go.jp>  
Plant Protection Division, Agricultural Production Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
TEL: 03-3502-8111 <http://www.maff.go.jp>
- 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.mhlw.go.jp>
- JAS Law  
Standards and Labeling Division, General Food Policy Bureau, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries  
TEL: 03-3502-8111 <http://www.maff.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

Fresh fruits are subject to the Fresh Food Product Quality Labeling Standards under the JAS Law. It is required to place labeling of the following items on the container or packaging in a readily visible location, or to display it in a readily visible location adjacent to the applicable fresh fruits.

- 1) Product name
- 2) Country of origin

#### <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.

< Example >



External packaging



Individual packaging

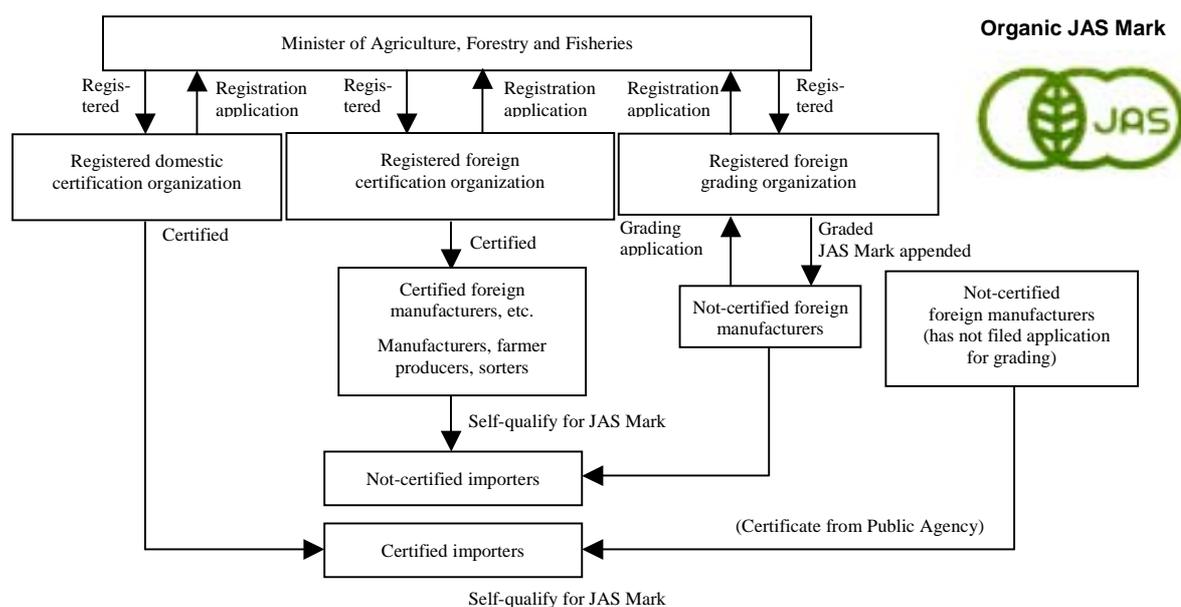
## (2) Voluntary Labeling based on Provisions of Law

### <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. (see Fig. 6)

- 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. 6 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>

## (3) Voluntary Industry Labeling

There is no voluntary industry labeling for fresh fruits.

## 5. Taxes

### (1) Customs Duties

Fig. 7 below presents tariff rates on fresh fruits. Tariff rates on bananas, oranges, grapefruits, and grapes differ according to the seasons being imported.

**Fig. 7 Customs duties on fresh fruits**

HS No.	Description	Rate of Duty (%)			
		General	WTO	Preferential	Temporary
0803	Bananas				
-100	(1) If imported during the period from 1st April to 30th September	40%	20%	10% *Free	
-100	(2) If imported during the period from 1st October to 31st March	50%	25%	20% *Free	
0804.30-010	Pineapples	20%	17%		
0804.40-010	Avocados	6%	3%	3% *Free	
0804.50-011	Mangoes	6%	3%	Free	
0805.10	Oranges				
-000	(1) If imported during the period from 1st June to 30th November	20%	16%		
-000	(2) If imported during the period from 1st December to 31st May	40%	32%		
0805.30-010	Lemons and limes	Free	(Free)		
-090					
0805.40	Grapefruits	10%	(10%)		
0806.10	Grapes				
-000	(1) If imported during the period from 1st March to 30th October	20%	17%		
-000	(2) If imported during the period from 1st November to the last day of February	13%	7.8%		
0807.11, 19	Watermelons and other	10%	6%		
0807.20	Papaws (papayas)	4%	2%	2% *Free	
0809.20	Cherries	10%	8.5%		
0810.05	Kiwifruit	8%	6.4%		

Note 1: “\*Free” in Preferential Rate is applicable only for Least Less Developed Countries.

Note 2: 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) Timing of Fresh Fruit Imports

Fig. 8 on the following page illustrates timing of fresh fruit imports.

### (2) Product Characteristics

#### 1) Bananas

Only green bananas are imported (importation of yellow bananas is prohibited under the Plant Protection Law). The green bananas are then left to ripen in warehouses before being put on sale. Almost all of the bananas imported are of the Cavendish variety or other improved varieties, though some so-called “monkey” bananas are also imported. Bananas are imported from the Philippines and Ecuador year-round, and from Taiwan from February through September.

#### 2) Pineapples

Almost all imported pineapples are “smooth cayenne” pineapples, although Japan also imports some “Queen” variety pineapples from Taiwan as well as so-called snack pineapples that can be split open by hand and eaten. Pineapples are imported fresh, frozen and canned. Frozen pineapples are peeled and cored before being quick-frozen and are consumed directly as a type of frozen fruit. When thawed, frozen pineapple can be used as raw material for making juice or canned pineapple. Pineapples are imported from the Philippines year-round and from Taiwan from March through July. In recent years, almost all of pineapples are imported from the Philippines.

#### 3) Papayas

Papayas grown in Hawaii and Solo type papayas from the Philippines are exempt from the normal import prohibition under plant quarantine regulations. Papayas are imported year-round.

Fig. 8 Timing of fresh fruit imports

Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Bananas	←	←					Philippines Taiwan		→			→
Pineapples	←						Philippines					→
Mangoes	←		←	Mexico			Philippines		→			
Papaya	←				U.S.A. (Hawaii), Philippines							→
Avocado	←				Mexico		U.S.A.			←		→
Kiwifruits					←			New Zealand				→
Melons					U.S.A. (California)		Chile					←
Cherries					U.S.A.		U.S.A. (Washington)					←
					U.S.A. (California)						New Zealand	↔
Grapes	←	←				New Zealand						→
	←				Chile		U.S.A. (California)					→
	→				Mexico					Mexico	←	
Grapefruits	←					U.S.A. (California, Florida)					Swaziland	→
Lemons	←					U.S.A. (California, Arizona)						→
Oranges	←					U.S.A. (California, Florida)						→

#### 4) Mangoes

Japan imports “Manila Super” variety mangoes, also known as “pelican mangoes,” from the Philippines. Japan imports mangoes from Mexico that are also called “apple mangoes” because of their red skin color. They are imported in 5-kilogram cartons. The import season is year-round for imports from the Philippines and from March through September for imports from Mexico.

#### 5) Avocados

Almost all avocado imports come from Mexico and partially from the United States (California). The import season is from October through March for imports from Mexico, and year-round for imports from the United States.

#### 6) Other tropical fruits

Japan also imports certain other tropical fruits, including about 1,000 tons of litchi from Taiwan as well as small amounts of several varieties of durian and passion fruit. Guavas and mangosteen are rarely imported in other than frozen form due to plant quarantine restrictions.

#### 7) Grapes

Most of Japan’s imports of fresh grapes come from Chile and the United States. Japan also imports small amounts of grapes from New Zealand. Grapes are imported virtually year-round, although American grapes are imported during October to November, while most imports from Chile come in from February through April.

8) Kiwi Fruits

Kiwi fruit is imported from New Zealand from April through December, from Chile from May through July, and from the United States from October through April.

9) Apples

Apple imports were officially liberalized in 1971, but plant quarantine regulations continued to ban imports in order to prevent the spread of certain plant diseases and pests. Consequently, the only imports came from places like the Republic Korea, to which these conditions had not yet spread. However, after fumigation technology was developed that allowed for complete destruction of all prohibited disease and pest organisms, the ban has been lifted on several varieties of apples such as Gara, Granny Smith, Fuji, Braiburn, Red Delicious and Royal Gara imported from New Zealand, Red Delicious and Golden Delicious apples from the United States. Finally, in October 2001, import ban was lifted on all varieties of apples from the United States which come up to the standards established by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

10) Cherries

Cherries can be divided into sweet and sour varieties. Virtually all of Japan's fresh cherry imports consist of sweet cherries. Almost all of Japan's cherry imports come from the United States. Imports of California cherries typically start in early May, while imports of Washington and Oregon cherries appear in mid-June. A small number of cherries come from New Zealand in December. In October 2001, import ban was lifted on all varieties of cherries from the United States (and Bing from Chile) which come up to the standards established by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

11) Nectarines

Nectarines are a modified variety of peach, smaller and with no fuzz on the skin. Import bans were lifted on six varieties of American nectarines in June 1988, another three varieties of American nectarines in June 1993, and a further variety in April 1995. Import bans have also been lifted on three varieties of New Zealand nectarines.

12) Oranges

Oranges are a citrus fruit belonging to the genus Rutaceae. They are grown over large areas of the world from the tropics into the temperate zone. Common varieties include Valencia oranges, navel oranges, blood oranges, and acid-free oranges. Navel oranges are grown in Japan. Almost all imported oranges come from the United States, with navel oranges imported in the winter and Valencia oranges imported during the summer.

13) Lemons

Unlike other citrus fruits, over half the demand for lemons comes from the commercial sector. Limes are of similar appearance and use to lemons but make up less than 1% of the total imports of lemons and limes. Almost all lime imports come from Mexico.

14) Grapefruits

Grapefruit are produced either by bud mutation or by natural cross-fertilization. The fruit grows in bunches like grapes. Japan produces virtually no grapefruit. Almost all imported grapefruit comes from the United States (from the states of Florida and California). Most of Japan's imports consist of white seedless grapefruit, although imports of ruby red grapefruit, characterized by its red flesh, have increased of late.

## 7. Domestic Distribution System and Business Practices

### (1) Domestic Market Conditions

The liberalization of fresh fruit imports resulted in a rapid increase in imports and a significant decline in Japan's domestic self-sufficiency rate in fruit. Domestic production continues to slide, due to a declining number of farm households raising fruit trees, the aging of fruit farmers, and lags in mechanization and adoption of energy-saving measures (Fig. 3). Domestic production has fallen of fruits characterized by a dramatic price differential between Japan and other countries, and by a high proportion of the cost of the fruit as a proportion of the retail price (such as with mandarin oranges and grapes).

On the other hand, fruits with a relatively small price differential between Japan and other countries (such as apples and cherries) have fared relatively well since liberalization, partly also because of the quality differential they enjoy. Taken as a whole, the increase in imports of fruit and processed fruit products has stimulated the domestic market and altered the structure of the fruit industry.

In Japan, eating fruit is more than just a way of obtaining dietary nutrients. Traditionally fruit was served in a way that conveys a sense of the season, and that enhances its appearance and fragrance. The increase in fruit imports has made fruit eating more of a casual affair. Especially among young adults, more and more people are preferring to eat fruit with the skin still on, in contrast to the traditional serving practice. People increasingly want to eat fruit in a more ordinary and unassuming way. Instead of eating expensive Japanese apples with the skin peeled off, people are eating inexpensive bananas, and instead of eating fresh oranges, they are drinking orange juice. For their part, fruits such as apples, cherries, and mandarin oranges are combating imports through superior appearance and quality. They have held onto a certain level of demand despite their relatively high prices by finding new customers and carving out a spot in the market as niche products.

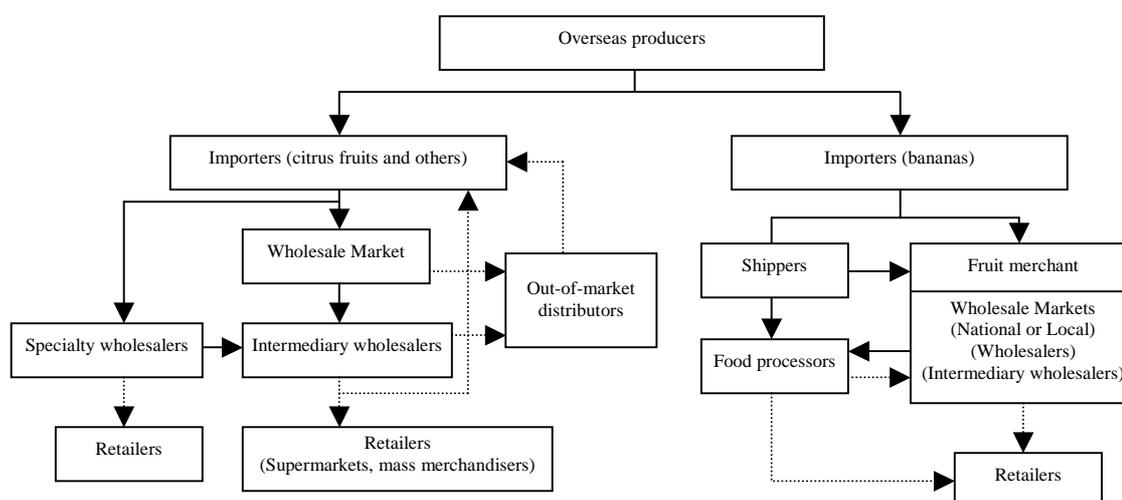
## (2) Distribution Channels

The principal distribution channel for imported fresh fruits is from importer to national or local fruit merchants, to primary and then secondary wholesalers, to retailers, and finally to the consumer. Specialty wholesalers directly to retailers also distribute some fresh fruits, while others are sold by import trading companies to food processors.

Fresh fruits are sold by a variety of retail outlets, including fruit stands, vegetable stands, supermarkets, department stores and so-called fruit parlors. The five leading types of fresh fruits, including bananas and pineapples, are available at virtually every one of these retail outlets. However, other varieties of fresh fruit are sold mainly only at specialty shops, upscale supermarkets and department stores.

The increase in fresh fruit imports has led to an increase in distribution outside the wholesale market channel. Multinational companies and trading companies that import fruit are absorbing wholesalers as affiliates, while doing a greater volume of business directly with large supermarkets.

**Fig. 9** Distribution channels for imported fresh fruits

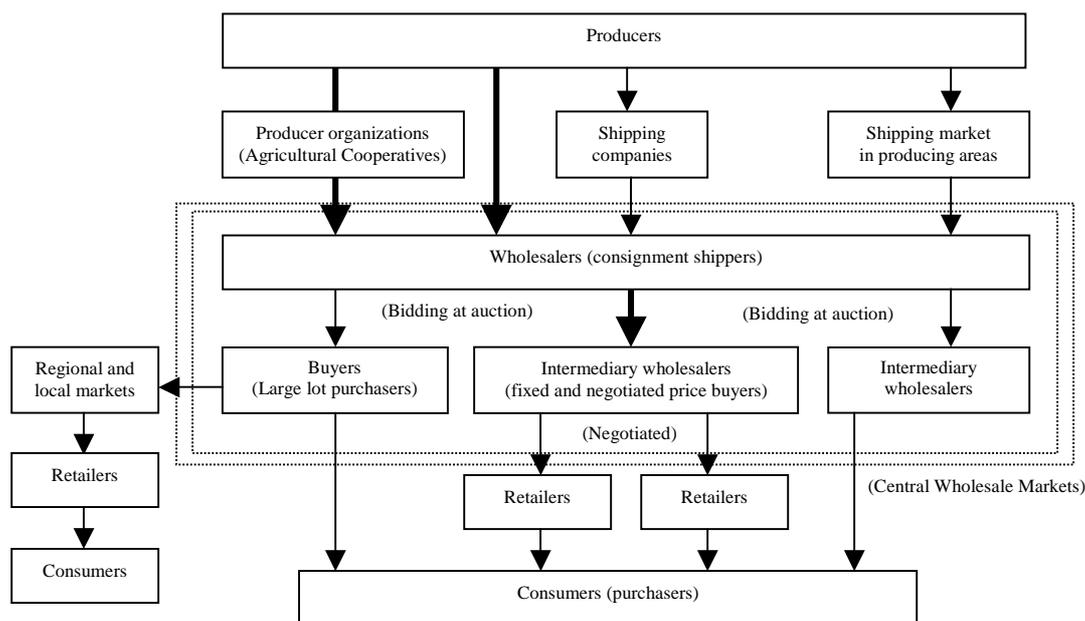


Most fresh fruit grown in Japan is shipped from agricultural cooperatives, of which most farmers are members, to wholesale markets. From that point on the distribution system is essentially the same as for imported fresh fruits. (see Fig. 10)

## (3) Key Considerations for entering the Japanese Market

To enter the market or increase sales in the Japanese market, importers must thoroughly understand Japanese people's food preferences and culinary culture. Importers must make sure they can maintain product quality and food grading standards. Because it takes some time to ship food to Japan and on to consumers, importers must take measures to preserve freshness and minimize damage to fruit. Furthermore, Japanese food grading reflects size and gloss as well as product type and overall fruit quality. Since pricing systems reflect good grading, importers need to understand the grading criteria thoroughly. Importers should also note that some fruits, which cannot be imported fresh, can be imported as juice, jam, dried fruit, or frozen fruit.

**Fig. 10 Distribution channels for domestically grown fresh fruits**



## 8. After-Sales Service

Importers and resellers bear legal responsibility for any defects in fresh fruits.

## 9. Related Product Categories

### 1) Juice concentrate and jams

Imports of juice concentrate and jams are subject to notification requirements under the Food Sanitation Law. Importers must submit a “Notification Form for Importation of Foods, etc.” Provisions of the Enforcement Regulations regulate food additives for the Food Sanitation Law and by the Specifications and Standards for Food Additives, etc. Jams are subject to quality standards and labeling requirements adopted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and administered by the Japan Agricultural Standards Association (JAS).

### 2) Canned fruits

Imports of canned fruits are subject to notification required under the Food Sanitation Law. Because of the great variety of canned fruits, and because the contents are not visible, both domestic and imported canned fruits are subject to a greater number of administrative regulations and labeling requirements.

### 3) Fresh and frozen vegetables

Imports of both fresh and frozen vegetables are subject to provisions of the Plant Protection Law and the Food Sanitation Law. However, there are no quantitative restrictions, and importers may import as much as they wish provided they satisfy procedural requirements. Please refer to the “I-10 Fresh and Frozen Vegetables” section in this guidebook for more information.

## 10. Direct Imports by Individuals

Individuals may import fresh fruits deemed appropriate for personal consumption without being subject to the Food Sanitation Law. However, imports by individuals are not exempted from inspection requirements under the Plant Protection Law.

## 11. Related Organizations

- Japan Fresh Produce Import Facilitation Association (Nisseikyo)
- The Japan Banana Importers Association

TEL: 03-5833-5141  
 TEL: 03-3263-0461  
<http://www.banana.co.jp>