

“Food with a Visible Face”: Japanese Traceability Initiatives and Private Governance of the Food System

Derek Hall
Wilfrid Laurier University
Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

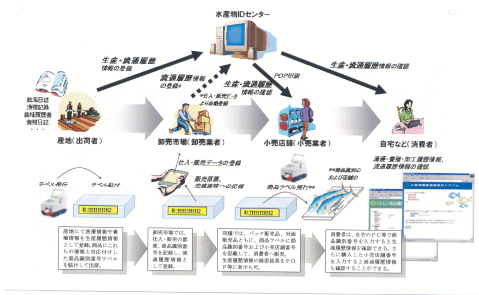
Introduction: Food Scandals

- large numbers of food scandals in Japan since about 2000
- food safety and false labeling
- traceability as one solution taken up by government, (some) businesses
- goals for this talk
- caveats

What is Traceability?

- “the ability to follow the movement of food through specified stages of production, processing and distribution.” - Codex Alimentarius 2004
- reasons for introducing:
 - crisis management
 - providing/verifying information, branding
 - efficiency gains in good chains
- variation in systems; chain traceability vs. chain and product traceability

実証試験で開発したトレーサビリティシステムのイメージ



Foreign/International Standards

- EU as early mover
- national standards in EU countries: UK, France, Italy
- Codex Alimentarius
- ISO 22005:2007 and others
- countries in the South

How and by Whom is Traceability being Implemented in Japan?

- national government (MAFF) efforts
 - beef traceability mandated since 2003-4
 - otherwise voluntary but encouraged
- MAFF activities supporting traceability
 - writing guidelines
 - subsidizing development and testing of traceability systems and technology
 - promoting traceability to public and companies

How Much of it Is There?

- Food Manufacturers 2005: 17.2% had introduced for all food, another 20.7% for some food
- Food Retailers 2005: 14.8% for all food, 21% for some food
- source: MAFF 2007

Actors Introducing Traceability Systems in Japan

- prefectural and local governments
- industry associations
- fisheries and agricultural cooperatives
- retailers (Itoyokado: Kao no Mieru Shokuhin)
- international environmental certification organizations (MSC)
- research institutes helping to create

Traceability in Japan 1: Mandatory vs. Voluntary

- EU 178/2002: mandates one-up, one-down traceability for all food and feed
- EU standards for GMOs, beef, fish, organics
- national standards in Europe
- Japan: only beef is mandatory, otherwise voluntary

What Counts?

- regulation of what counts as traceability?
- certification i.e. "Anshin Tabeyo Net" (Nihon Toresabiriti Kyoukai)
- 2006 "Requirements for Food Traceability Systems" (revised 2008) from FRMIC (with MAFF subsidy)
- but the Requirements are not required...
- two levels of varying standards
- relationship to international standards

Traceability in Japan 2: Internal vs. Consumer-Oriented

- EU: traceability laws not aimed at consumer information
- Japan: consumer use of traceability systems high priority for MAFF
- yubikitasu and kao no mieru kankei
- responding to consumer demands while telling consumers what they're demanding





Traceability in Japan 3: Imports?

- EU system mandates traceability for imports
- in MAFF policy, imports almost invisible
- Japan's food self-sufficiency rate: 39%

3 (cont'd): Traceability in Domestic Food

- domestic producers, retailers of domestic products and traceability
- premium for domestic food
- todôfuku keen on this
- the “visible face” is a Japanese face
- Anzen Tabeyo Net: domestic only
- anzen - anshin (safety - reliability/ security)

Traceability and Imports

- what about the companies selling imported food?
- shrimp as example: almost all farmed shrimp are imported, consumers especially nervous about seafood
- traceability in farmed shrimp imports:
 - 1. overseas suppliers introduce
 - 2. Japanese companies introduce to partners
 - 3. J. companies direct involvement in production
- vertical integration
- response to consumer demand?



Traceability, Private Governance and Global Standards

- 1. promotion of private governance by government
- 2. extremely dense public-private interconnections
- 3. harmonization vs. divergence, trade-facilitating or protectionist
- 4. role of global/overseas norms
- 5. adding the national to the global and the local