



Food Safety Commission of Japan (FSCJ) Annual Work Program for Fiscal Year 2024

March 2024

1. FSCJ's Administrative Policy for FY2024

The Food Safety Commission of Japan (hereinafter referred to as “FSCJ”) remains dedicated to fulfill its mission by prioritizing public health protection within its jurisdiction, adhering to the basic principles and policy direction outlined in the Food Safety Basic Act (Act No.48 of 2003), and matters stipulated under Article 21, paragraph (1) as per the Cabinet Decision on June 29, 2012. The FSCJ continues to enhance its operations.

2. FSCJ's Key Activities

(1) Commission meeting

As a standard practice, the FSCJ holds weekly committees in public on a date determined by the FSCJ Chairperson in consultation with other commissioners. Additionally, extraordinary meetings shall be held for urgent and high-priority matters.

(2) Expert Committee: Planning and Retrospective review

The Expert Committee shall be held to discuss FSCJ's FY2023 achievements and FY2024 plan. The discussion schedule is as follows.

● June, 2024

FSCJ **FY2023 Annual Report**

Selection process of FY 2024 “Self-tasking” risk assessments

● November, 2024

Progress report of activity performance described in **FY2024 Annual Work Program**

Selection of candidates of FY2024 “Self-tasking” risk assessments (First)

● January, 2025

FSCJ **FY2025 Annual Work Program**

Selection of candidates of FY2024 “Self-tasking” risk assessments (Second-Final selection)

Effectiveness of FY2024 Food Safety Emergency drill

FY2025 Food Safety Emergency drill plan



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(3) Expert Committee: Risk assessment

To enhance research and discussions, the following measures are taken to address topics that exceed the scope of existing expert committees requiring the involvement of other expert committees.

- i. Under the FSCJ, Working Groups will be set up as equivalent to the Expert Committees on relevant issues.
- ii. Expert committees and other relevant meetings may invite members from other expert committees for research and discussion process.
- iii. Joint-expert Committees and other relevant meetings can be convened to address cross-sectional topics.

(4) Enhancing cooperation between the commissioners and Expert committees

To facilitate efficient research and discussions in the Expert committees and other relevant meetings, commissioners attend all Expert Committee meetings as a general rule to provide information and advice.

(5) Enhancing cooperation with risk management organizations

In light of the transfer of food sanitation standards administration from the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) to the Consumer Affairs Agency in April 2024, cooperation with relevant risk management organizations¹ will be strengthened through liaison conferences. The goal is to maintain harmonized food safety measures across these organizations.

(6) Steps taken by the FSCJ to promote digital transformation (DX)

Pertaining to its risk assessment reports and toxicity evaluation results, while considering intellectual property rights owned by businesses, the FSCJ will delve into digital technology to improve the efficiency of risk assessments based on the outcome of research and discussions, with the goal of promoting Open Data.

To streamline the information collection process through digital technology, **an investigative survey** will be conducted to identify challenges.

Additionally, the Government Solutions Service (GSS), introduced to the Cabinet Office in FY 2023, will be leveraged to improve operational efficiency.

¹ Risk management organizations are the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW), the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), and the Consumer Affairs Agency.



(7) Enhancing FSCJ's Governance

To facilitate risk assessment process, financial and human resources will be secured; and the processes and workflows will be streamlined.

3. Conducting Risk Assessment

3.1 Consistent performance of risk assessments in response to requests by risk management organizations

The FSCJ conducts risk assessments in an objective, neutral and impartial manner, drawing upon the most current scientific knowledge.

(1) Risk assessments requested to the FSCJ from risk management organizations

The FSCJ will promptly conduct scheduled research and discussions and publish risk assessment reports based on the content of evaluation requests, unless additional information for evaluation is required due to other specific reasons.

Specifically, in response to the reevaluation request on **pesticides initiated in October 2022**, the FSCJ will conduct evaluations based on the latest scientific standards. These evaluations will cover a variety of test data and references from published scientific literature.

(2) Risk assessments requested to the FSCJ via risk management organizations in response to applications submitted from industries.

Research and discussions will take place as scheduled so that risk assessment results can be notified within the standard processing period (one year excluding the time required for submission of additional data) based on the “Standard Processing Period for Risk Assessment of the Effect of Food on Health Regarding Applications Submitted from Industries” (FSCJ decision dated July 16, 2009).

(3) Conducting risk assessments of items on the “**Positive List**”

Research and discussions will take place as scheduled based on the “Procedure for Risk Assessment of Agricultural Chemicals for which provisional standards are established” (FSCJ decision dated June 29, 2006).

3.2 Formulating Guidelines for risk assessment



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Guidelines (assessment procedures and methodology) will be developed and periodically revised to ensure consistency across risk assessments and to enhance transparency and efficiency of the research and discussion process.

In FY2024, the “Assessment guideline for the Effect of Food on Human Health Regarding Antimicrobial-Resistant Bacteria Selected by Antimicrobial Use in Food-producing animals” (FSCJ decision dated September 30, 2004) will be revised in order to align the evaluation approach for drug-resistant bacteria in farmed aquatic animals.

Furthermore, long-term challenges in risk assessment shall be examined so that approaches can be deliberated based on the existing “Guidance on the Use of the BMD Approach in Risk Assessment by the FSCJ” (FSCJ decision dated October 29, 2019), the “Guidance for Evaluating Mutagenicity using (Q)SAR in Risk Assessment” (Decision of the Assessment Methodology Development Working Group, FSCJ, dated February 2021) and the issues raised in FSCJ’s 20th Anniversary Symposium.

3.3 Promotion of “Self-tasking” risk assessment

(1) Selection of candidates for the “Self-tasking” risk assessment

Candidates for the FY2024 “Self-tasking” risk assessments will be selected based on the criteria outlined in the “Items required for documents submitted to the Expert Committee for Self-tasking Risk Assessment” (FSCJ decision dated May 27, 2004) and the “Stance of the Expert Committee on Planning and Coordination for selecting candidates of hazard items for Self-tasking risk assessment by the FSCJ” (FSCJ decision dated June 17, 2004). The selection schedule is as follows.

- June 2024: Discussion at Expert Committee – Selection process of “Self-tasking” risk assessment activities
- July 2024: Request feedback from the general public via web
- August – October, 2024: Listing candidate activities for “Self-tasking” by FSCJ secretariat
- November, 2024: Discussion at Expert Committee (First selection)
- January, 2025: Discussion at Expert Committee (Second selection) -Decision of candidates
- February, 2025: Discussion at the FSCJ – candidate activities for “Self-tasking”, other decision (i.e., information dissemination)
- March, 2025: Discussion at the FSCJ – Decision of “Self-tasking” activities referring to the collected opinions and information.



(2) Publication of “Self-tasking” risk assessment outcomes

Once “Self-tasking” risk assessments are completed, the FSCJ will provide relevant information to the public through suitable channels, including opinion exchange meetings and online platforms such as Facebook, tailored to specific recipients.

Information will be shared through FSCJ’s website, Facebook, or other channels based on decisions made (grounded in relevant data) during the selection process of “Self-tasking” risk assessments.

4. Monitoring Risk Management Strategies

4.1 FSCJ’s monitoring on actions taken by risk management organizations (MHLW, MAFF, Consumer Affairs Agency)

The FSCJ notifies its results of risk assessments to risk management organizations. Referring to such results, those organizations should review their current strategies to update necessary measures on health and economic effects, consumer selection, the impact on stakeholders, and other risks. In order to monitor the organizations’ actions, the FSCJ will plan research in **October, 2024** to analyze the notified risk assessment results conducted from October 1, 2022 to September 30, 2023.

4.2 Activity reports from monitors on food safety

The FSCJ will request food safety monitors to provide their opinions and suggestions of the risk management strategies that were developed based on the results of risk assessments. Reported outcomes of questionnaire surveys will be used as reference materials to formulate recommendations and opinions to the risk management organizations.

Additionally, a food safety awareness survey will be implemented by monitors, around **February 2025**.



5. Promotion of Study and Research Projects to Ensure Food Safety

Studies and research will take place sequentially in alignment with the “Strategic direction for promoting study and research to ensure food safety” (FSCJ decision dated December 16, 2010) (hereinafter referred to as “the Roadmap”). The findings will then be used in risk assessments.

5.1 Promoting study program for risk assessment on food safety

(1) Implementing post-evaluation of study projects completed in **FY2023**

A post-evaluation will be implemented for study projects completed in the previous fiscal year.

- Implementation of Post-evaluation (July -August, 2024)
- Reporting to the FSCJ (September, 2024)
- Presentation of studies (December 2024)

Additionally, a study results presentation meeting will be held, and the findings will be published on the FSCJ website.

(2) Study projects for **FY2024**

The mid-term evaluation of study projects for FY2024 will be carried out.

- Submission due for outcome of study projects (mid-term report) (November, 2024)
- Implementation of mid-term evaluation (December, 2024)
- Decision of the FSCJ (February, 2025)

In line with this mid-term evaluation, the advice should be given to the chief researchers to modify the study plan as required.

(3) Selection of study projects for risk assessment on food safety

Pertaining to the Study Projects for Risk Assessment on Food Safety for **FY2025**, the FSCJ will prioritize study subjects based on the Roadmap. The FSCJ will publicly solicit study subjects, followed by screening, according to the following schedule.

- Decision of priority study projects for FY2025 (September, 2024)



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- Study project application (October, 2024)
- Screening of applications (November-December, 2024)
- Interview (January, 2025)
- Selection of study project candidates and adjustment to meet targeted studies
(January – February, 2025)
- Decision of the FSCJ to select new study projects (February- March, 2025)

This approach ensures selection of essential subjects that require risk assessment. Upon soliciting, the projects will be widely disseminated to researchers affiliated with relevant institutions including universities. The meeting proceedings for the theme selection will be disclosed.

(4) Ensuring appropriate accounting

In order to ensure proper fund management, the FSCJ will monitor research institutions' implementation status in accordance with the "Guidelines for the Management and Audit of Public Research Funds at Research Institutions (Implementation Standards)" (as determined by the Director-General of FSCJ, Cabinet Office, dated September 17, 2021).

(5) Collaboration with relevant ministries and organizations

The FSCJ will participate in meetings with officials responsible of relevant domestic ministries: to exchange opinions about competitive fund management; review research regulations; and conduct efficient research. Additionally, the FSCJ will organize the "Liaison Meeting to promote study for Food Safety" (arrangement between relevant ministries and agencies dated January 31, 2005) to enhance collaboration and policy coordination among relevant government organizations.

5.2 Promoting research program to ensure food safety

(1) Selection of projects for the research program on food safety

Projects covered by the Research Program on Food Safety for FY2025 will be prioritized based on the Roadmap, ensuring that essential subjects that require risk assessments, etc., will be selected. The selection process will follow the schedule.



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- Decision of priority research projects for FY2025 (September, 2024)
- Selection of research project candidates and adjustment to meet targeted research (January – February, 2025)
- Decision of the FSCJ (February 2025)

Additionally, public bidding shall be widely disseminated to research institutions.

(2) Implementation of the research program on food safety

Regarding the subjects selected for the Research Program on Food Safety, plans for their implementation will be publicly notified and updated by posts on the FSCJ website and others. The selected subjects will be publicized, unless they contain information unsuitable for disclosure such as personal information or intellectual property.

5.3 Follow-up of FSCJ's study and research programs

Follow-up will be undertaken to make sure the significance of the projects, policy justification, and effective utilization of research and study programs on risk assessments.

5.4 Revision of the Roadmap

The Roadmap will be revised.

The revised Roadmap aims to adjust FSCJ's long-term challenges. In order to tackle such challenges, it will provide a guideline to implement research and study projects strategically.

6. Promoting Risk Communication and Disseminating Information

The FSCJ aims to build trust and understanding among diverse stakeholders, including consumers, government bodies, the media, industry and experts in the field. Additionally, the FSCJ seeks to enhance awareness of its role as a risk assessment organization by promoting risk communication and sharing relevant information through tailored channels for different audiences. The ultimate goal is to foster a better understanding of scientific principles and findings related to food safety. In doing so, the following actions will be taken based on the results of the "Survey on Awareness of Risk Communication by the FSCJ" conducted in FY2020, which revealed that the consumers' main sources



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of information on food safety were publicized on television and newspapers. Referring to the outcome of the “Survey on Dissemination of Information and Strengthening Risk Communication on Food Safety Conducted by the FSCJ in Cooperation with Local Governments, etc.” (FY2022 - FY 2023), the following actions will be taken:

- Share relevant scientific information and exchange opinions concerning risk assessments conducted by the FSCJ with communicators involved in food safety, including media representatives, local government officials and food industry operators as appropriate.
- Provide information relevant to pregnant women, parents of infants, elementary and junior/high school students and consumers in general. While clarifying the intended audience, the information materials will be designed for secondary use.
- Provide scientific data, diagrams and other materials that local governments can disseminate so that they can proactively communicate with local residents and businesses.

The most effective communication methods will be selected based on the audience type and size, utilizing online, offline or hybrid formats during opinion exchange meetings.

6.1 Utilizing multiple channels to disseminate information

The most appropriate channels are selected when sharing the latest scientific findings concerning food safety, including outcome of risk assessments and information abroad.

(1) FSCJ website

The FSCJ website is designed to serve individuals seeking food safety information via web searches or social media. Its content encompasses the results of FSCJ’s risk assessments, schedules for the Commission meeting, the Expert Committee and opinion exchange meetings, and contains the latest discoveries related to food safety. Moreover, the website features tailored content aimed at specific target audience, including pregnant women, parents of infants, and elementary and junior/high school students. The website will undergo content reviews and structural updates to enhance readability and facilitate seamless access to the desired information.

(2) Social media and related channels

From the perspective of disseminating information about the FSCJ, a variety of communication platforms, including social media and online newsletters in Japanese are utilized. These platforms efficiently cater to different types of users and their optimal and combined use is designed to proactively share information.



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i. Facebook

The FSCJ maintains an official Facebook account tailored for followers with an interest in and/or have a certain level of expertise in food safety-related information. The content featured on this page includes updates on FSCJ's activities, health incidents that require intervention, and seasonal articles. These articles are crafted with the understanding that they may be widely shared with an audience beyond the account's existing followers.

ii. Online newsletter

For individuals who have registered for the online newsletter and possess a keen interest in food safety, the FSCJ newsletter provides updates on the Commission meeting, the Expert Committees and opinion exchange meetings.

Additionally, timely and accurate information related to food safety is disseminated, particularly during emergency situations.

iii. Blog

For individuals seeking source information from links posted on search engines and X (formerly known as Twitter), the FSCJ blog provides access to detailed and in-depth information on food safety. Serving as an informational hub, the blog archives a wealth of food safety content, information including date of posts and Facebook content. This stored information can readily be redistributed via X when the opportunity arises.

iv. YouTube

For individuals who frequently search for video and audio content, the search and recommendation functions on YouTube allow retention of viewership. FSCJ's video content, which includes recordings of opinion exchange meetings and popular short reels among consumers, will be stored on FSCJ's YouTube account. The information will be disseminated via X or Facebook.

v. X

X is a platform widely used for gathering information by many people, including members of the press, where the information is often spread. This platform leverages its advantage to disseminate information on preventing food poisoning, engaging food-related topics, timely subjects and urgent matters, while also raising awareness of FSCJ activities.

(3) Developing FSCJ's annual magazine, brochure, posters and educational materials



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The FSCJ compiles its annual activities based on achievement and progress reports. These activities are then disseminated widely to the public through the annual magazine called “Food Safety.” Additionally, the FSCJ distributes published brochures “Food Safety Commission of Japan” and “Kids’ Box Highlights” during opinion exchange meetings and events for kids.

To enhance understanding of FSCJ’s activities, posters illustrating the organization’s risk analysis and assessment approaches are presented at academic conferences.

Furthermore, the FSCJ encourages professionals involved in education to utilize its materials at schools.

(4) Glossary of food safety

FSCJ’s glossary on food safety, which provides definitions for technical terms and explanations of basic food safety concepts, will be periodically updated online.

This glossary is available both online and in paper booklet form, aiming to promote a better understanding of risk assessment.

6.2 Raising awareness on scientific knowledge of “Food Safety”

The following activities will be undertaken with the objective of raising awareness and understanding of food safety among consumers.

(1) Lecture FSCJ’s risk assessment

The FSCJ will organize an open lecture titled “Advanced Lecture: Risk Assessment” for the purpose of gaining better understanding of risk assessment and risk profiles which serve as the foundation of effective risk management. The target audience are food-related business operators and administrative officials who are responsible for taking necessary measures to ensure food safety. Researchers in the field of food safety are also part of the intended audience.

(2) Opinion exchange meetings and dispatching lecturers

Meetings and seminars will be held with local governments, consumer organizations, academic institutions, professional associations, business groups and school stakeholders. The theme and format of these activities (dialogues, lectures and booth exhibits, etc.) will be determined based on the target audience, with a focus on disseminating scientific knowledge about food safety and enhancing understanding of risk assessments. Upon exchanging opinions and arranging lecturers, the FSCJ will collaborate with the Consumer Affairs Agency, which oversees integrated coordination of risk communication affairs.



(3) Accepting educational excursions

The FSCJ is open to receiving educational excursions from students at various levels, including elementary, junior and high schools as well as universities. These excursions aim to educate students about food safety.

(4) Food safety dial

Information obtained from consumers via FSCJ's food safety dial, as well as hazard information received from food safety monitors, serves as primary information on risks, consumer opinions and concerns. These insights are shared with risk management organizations with the goal of enhancing food safety and improving risk communication and are widely disseminated. In addition to food safety dial, the FSCJ provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) from consumers through various channels, including the official website and Facebook.

6.3 Enhancing liaisons with related organizations

(1) Establishing liaisons with risk management organizations

As a standard practice, the FSCJ holds bi-weekly "Risk communication Liaison Conferences for Concerned Government Organizations." These conferences aim to exchange information and align viewpoints. They will ensure that all involved parties share a common understanding of food safety based on scientific evidence, which serves as the foundation to disseminate consistent information.

(2) Establishing liaisons with local governments

To enhance information exchange, the FSCJ will strengthen existing relationship with food safety personnels at local government levels. This strategic approach aims to facilitate the effective dissemination of scientific knowledge among stakeholders in both the education sector and food businesses (as referenced in above 6.2 (2)).

Furthermore, the FSCJ will facilitate effective risk communication by organizing liaison conferences with local governments. Risk communication initiatives will be shared.

(3) Establishing liaisons with consumer, business and related professional organizations (setting up a system allowing efficient informational exchange)



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The FSCJ will forge stronger connections with consumer, business and professional groups in the field of food safety, establishing a framework for efficient information exchange among these stakeholders.

Specifically, when dispatching lecturers, the needs and preferences of the hosts will be prioritized, facilitating broader engagement in food safety information exchange.

(4) Information exchange with members of the media

Through liaison conferences, the FSCJ will create a framework to strategically share scientifically grounded food safety information with the media to reach the public. Subsequently, ongoing dialogue with media personnel will be maintained.

(5) Liaison activities with academia

Strengthening academic connections is crucial for advancing food safety research in Japan, disseminating scientific knowledge, and further inviting experts to the FSCJ. Specifically, the FSCJ will prioritize academic fields, organize lectures and participate in lectures and booth exhibits at academic conferences.

7. Emergency Response

7.1 Emergency response

In the event of food safety emergencies, the FSCJ collaborates closely with relevant governmental organizations, to promptly share accurate scientific findings regarding the toxicity, etc., of hazardous substances. This information is provided to relevant ministries, organizations and the public in accordance with the “Guidelines for FSCJ’s Emergency Response” (FSCJ decision dated April 21, 2005).

7.2 Preparedness in response to food safety emergencies

The FSCJ prioritizes preparedness for food safety emergencies by gathering and organizing scientific data and conducting emergency training in accordance with the aforementioned emergency response guideline. Additionally, the Expert Committee reviews post-incident response management, and scrutinizes actual measures for emergency and internal emergency training exercises. Lessons learned (issues and suggestions for improvement) from these measures and exercises may be incorporated into the emergency response guideline.

7.3 Food safety emergency drill



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The FSCJ will conduct a hands-on, step-by-step emergency response training for field-level personnel sometime between **April and November**. Additionally, in collaboration with the Consumer Affairs Agency, which oversees emergency response management, an emergency drill will take place around **December**. The goal is to verify the effectiveness of the emergency response plan and to enhance the hands-on skills of those in charge.



8. Collecting, Organizing and Utilizing Food Safety Information

The FSCJ provides science-based information on food safety to the **Japanese** public. This information is collected from publication from international organizations, domestic and overseas governmental agencies and academic journals on a daily basis. This is promptly shared with risk management organizations and accumulated in the “Integrated Information System on Food Safety,” a database on the FSCJ website.

Scientific information impacting food safety will be systematically organized and shared from a mid- to long-term perspective. Additionally, to maximize expertise on food safety, the FSCJ will strengthen its relationship with experts and professional organizations to enhance information exchange, particularly in risk assessment and emergency response.

9. Promoting International Collaboration and Disseminating FSCJ’s publications overseas

The FSCJ will undertake the following activities to strengthen its ties and cooperation with overseas organizations while contributing to the global community and advancing scientific knowledge.

9.1 Sending FSCJ commissioners and secretariat staff to attend international meetings

FSCJ’s commissioners, Expert Committee members, and secretariat staff will participate in the following meetings (including online meetings):

April 2024	The 17 th Session of Codex Committee on Contaminants in Foods (CCCCF)
July	Annual Meeting of the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP 2024)
September	The 14 th Global Summit on Regulatory Science (GSRS24)
September	JOINT FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) 2024
February 2025	The 40 th Session of the OECD Pesticide Working Group
March	The 64th Annual Meeting of the Society of Toxicology (SOT)

In addition to those listed above, commissioners may be dispatched to international meetings including the subcommittees of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.



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9.2 Inviting researchers from abroad

The FSCJ will invite researchers and experts engaged in food safety from abroad to enhance the scientific knowledge necessary for food safety policies. Additionally, information exchange will be promoted by online conferences, etc.

9.3 Strengthening ties with food safety organizations abroad

To enhance cooperation with international organizations focused on food safety, the FSCJ will engage in information exchange related to risk assessment through online conferences and e-mails. Additionally, both online and offline meetings will be held as needed to strengthen collaboration with partners such as the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ), the Portuguese Economic and Food Safety Authority (ASAE), the French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health & Safety (ANSES), the German Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) and the Technical University of Denmark (DTU). The FSCJ also aims to establish information exchange and cooperation with other foreign government agencies, including the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), as well as food safety agencies in Asian countries.

The FSCJ will work together to provide trainings for overseas government officials as part of its international contribution.

9.4 Disseminating information abroad

The FSCJ posts on its website the Japanese-to-English translations of its **risk assessment abstracts** as well as outcomes of its **research and studies on Food Safety**.

Additionally, the FSCJ publishes research papers on food safety and risk assessment reports in its quarterly English journal, “Food Safety-The Official Journal of Food Safety Commission of Japan.” This journal is also available on PubMed Central (PMC) to disseminate relevant information both domestic and abroad.