

FOOD SAFETY COMMISSION OF JAPAN



1 Who We Are

All foods are not necessarily safe, despite the human inclination to believe they are. Plants often contain different alkaloids such as solanine, a well-known toxic substance contained in the green tubers or buds of potatoes. Inappropriate consumption of these plants causes plant poisoning due to these alkaloids. Cassava, an important crop in the tropics, is another example of a toxic plant because it contains a cyanogenic glycoside as a component, and is highly hazardous if someone eats it without pretreatment. Human beings have been contriving to make these toxic crops edible for survival throughout our long history. Our long fight against pathogenic bacteria that cause serious foodborne diseases is one of control for our very survival.

Food Safety Commission of Japan (FSCJ) is a risk assessment organization for science-based assessment of food safety risks to human health. A serious need exists for science-based assessment of the effects of food on human health, especially when human society faces food safety issues of a new kind that are uncontrollable through prior experience. The BSE crisis was one such issue. Surge of the food trade, including both expanded volume and variety of foods, along with the increased number of trading countries is thought to be one such new situation. Beside these, risk assessment was certainly required for establishing the common rules for use of pesticides. The standard for use of additives has been demanded to be established through risk assessments. Pesticides and additives are largely used for ensuring food productivity or ensuring food of a certain quality. This is the aim of genetically modified foods as well.

Humans eat food to survive, but we also eat for sensuous enjoyment. Because of the latter, human beings have been trying to eat what we were not eating before, eating things in new ways. This human approach sometimes causes food safety issues we

have not experienced before. Anisakiasis, parasitic infection, is caused by the consumption of raw seafood. Apparently, recent incidence of this foodborne disease is a result from people's new preference for eating food raw, which were not eaten raw before. FSCJ also conducts risk assessment of such kind.

FSCJ, however, is responsible not solely for assessment of food safety risks; it is also responsible for "risk communication" through which the information on risk assessments is to be provided correctly in an easy-to-understand manner. Through risk communication, FSCJ should provide people with the knowledge and wisdom of consuming food safely.

FSCJ needs to listen to consumer's questions and opinions about food safety and about risk assessments through communication. Building mutual understanding among stakeholders, FSCJ has to make the healthy and enjoyable dietary life of the nation based on its own decisions. In addition, FSCJ is requested to provide the relevant information to the world. It is particularly important to provide the information to Asian countries, because these countries are actively involved in the food trading of our country. Moreover, communication among risk assessment organizations of each country, and international bodies, collaboration or exchange of food safety information are necessary for establishing food safety worldwide. Fortunately, FSCJ is successfully publishing an on-line journal, "Food Safety," which was founded as the official journal commemorative for the 10th anniversary of FSCJ. I believe FSCJ should promote the transmission of information on its activities to the world by means of this on-line journal.



Chairperson
Hiroshi SATOH

Mission

FSCJ implements science-based risk assessment of food in an objective, neutral, and impartial manner to protect the health of the people.

In addition, FSCJ implements risk communication about the results of its risk assessments and scientific findings on food safety.

To implement risk assessment separately from risk management*, FSCJ was established as a part of

Japan's Cabinet Office in July 2003, independently from risk management organizations*.

**Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF)*

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW)

Ministry of Environment (MOE)

Consumer Affairs Agency (CAA)

Food Safety Commission

Food Safety Commission comprises seven commissioners, including four full-time commissioners. All the weekly Commission meetings are open to the public. Draft risk assessment reports developed by

Scientific Panels are reported to the Commission for discussion. After being adopted by the Commission, the report is submitted to risk managers.

Chairperson

Hiroshi SATOH

M.D., Ph.D., Prof. Emer. Tohoku Univ.

Public Health

Acting Chairperson

Yasushi YAMAZOE

Ph.D., Prof. Emer. Tohoku Univ.

Drug metabolism & Pharmacology

Susumu KUMAGAI

Ph.D., Prof. Emer. The Univ. of Tokyo

Microbiology

Midori YOSHIDA

D.V.M., Ph.D. (Sep.2007-Jun.2015
National Institute of Health Sciences)

Toxicology

Katsue ISHII

Ph.D., Prof., Shukutoku Univ.

Cookery Science

Itsuko HORIGUCHI

D.D.S., Ph.D., Associate Prof., Nagasaki Univ.

Health Risk Communication

Masatsune MURATA

Ph.D., Prof., Ochanomizu Univ.

Food Chemistry

Organizational structure of FSCJ

Food Safety Commission

Scientific Panels
Planning Committee

Secretariat

Scientific Panels

Scientific Panels, which consist of Expert Committees and Working Groups, carry out risk assessments on specific hazards. Nearly 2,000 Risk Assessments are completed as of 31st March, 2015. Scientific Panels are made up of more than 200 experts who belong to universities, public research

institutes, or other organizations.

In addition to the Scientific Panels above, FSCJ has Expert Committee on Planning which commits to activities such as developing strategic plans of risk assessment, emergency responses, and risk communication.

Scientific Panels

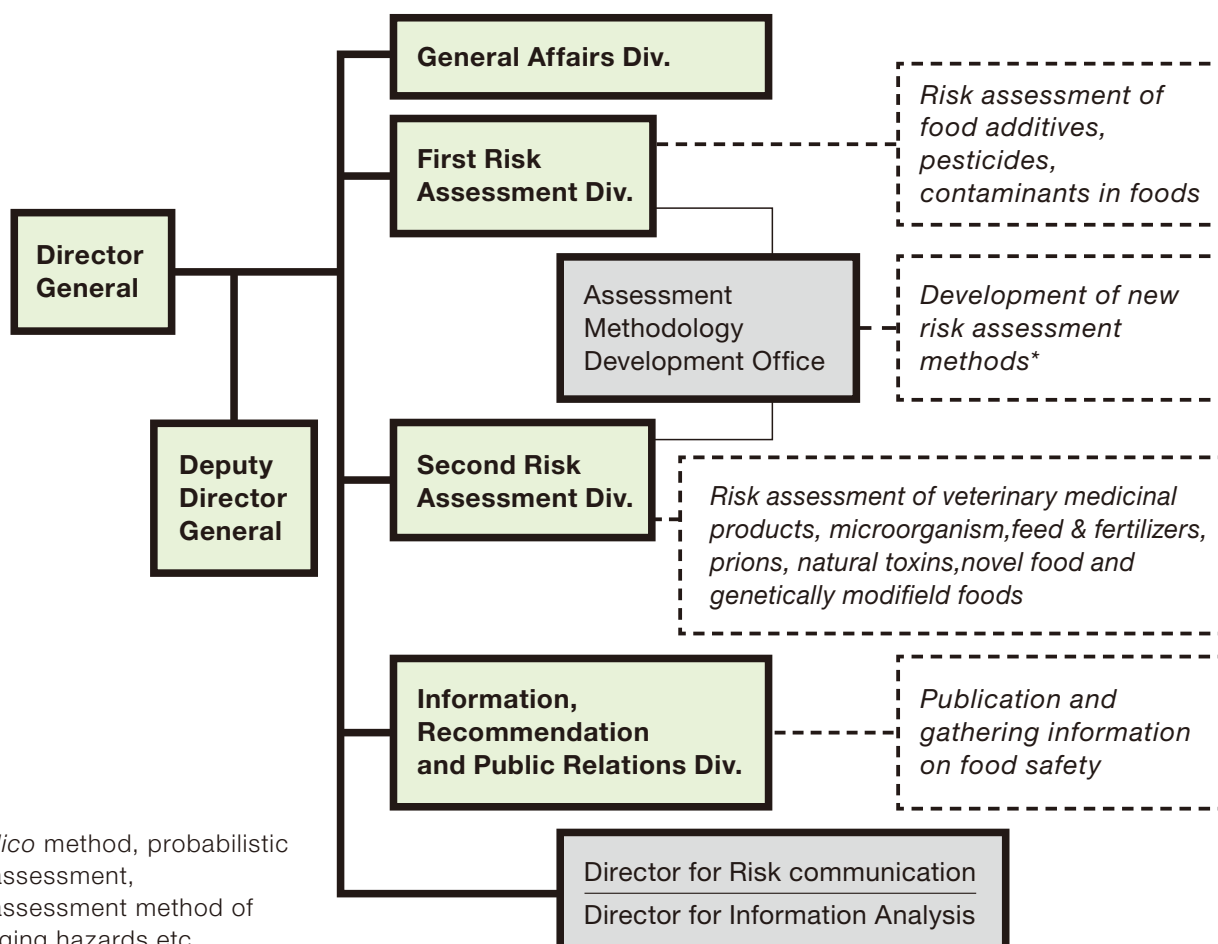
Food Additives	Prions	Reproductive and Developmental Toxicity of Bisphenol A
Pesticides	Natural Toxins and Mycotoxins	Antimicrobial-resistant bacteria
Veterinary Medicinal Products	Genetically Modified Foods	Lead
Apparatuses, Containers and Packages	Novel Foods*	Acrylamide
Contaminants in Foods	Feeds and Fertilizers	Health Foods
Microorganisms and Viruses	Food Additives as Nutrients	

* Food for specified health uses provided in The Health Promotion Law

Secretariat

The Secretariat supports risk assessment work of the Commission and Expert Committees by organizing scientific findings/evidence used for risk assessment, communicating with risk managers, and

conducting risk communication. Approximately 60 officials, 30 technical advisers, and 20 assistants belong to Secretariat.



**in silico* method, probabilistic risk assessment, risk assessment method of emerging hazards etc.



2 What We Do

Risk Assessment

FSCJ assesses risks to human health posed by microorganisms, chemicals, and others contained in food, on the basis of the scientific evidence. Its assessment is mainly conducted in response to

requests from risk managers. FSCJ also carries out risk assessment on its own initiative when it finds it necessary to do so. It is called "self-tasking" risk assessment.

Revision of Countermeasures Against BSE in Japan

FSCJ concluded that BSE risk to human health is negligible even if the age limit for BSE testing at slaughterhouses is lifted to more than 48 months, as a result of its assessment. (May 2013)
(This assessment was requested by MHLW.)

Arsenic in foods

A large amount of organic arsenic compounds such as arsenobetaine and arsenosugar are contained in algae, fish and shellfish that Japanese are traditionally eating a lot. At the present, there is no data to suggest any adverse health effects associated with intake of arsenic through normal dietary life. (December 2013)
(This assessment was conducted as self-tasking assessment.)

Okadaic Acid Group Toxins in Bivalve Molluscs

Okadaic acid group toxins in bivalve molluscs cause diarrhetic shellfish poisoning. Since the poisoning is due to acute effects of the toxins, FSCJ established an acute reference dose (ARfD) but not a tolerable daily intake (TDI). (July 2014)
(This assessment was requested by MHLW.)

Advantame

FSCJ conducted a risk assessment of advantame, a food additive used as a sweetener, whose sweetness is said to be approximately 14,000 to 48,000 times higher than that of sugar. FSCJ established an acceptable daily intake (ADI) of advantame as a result of the assessment. (July 2013)
(This assessment was requested by MHLW.)

Research and Survey Program

FSCJ has work programs for researches and surveys, where FSCJ collects data and information required for risk assessment.

Research grant

Researches which provide information required for establishment of risk assessment guidelines/guidances are selected,

e.g. a study for risk assessment of the ingestion of foods containing arsenosugars and arsenolipids.

Contracted survey program

Surveys which include collection, coordination and analysis of data required for a risk assessment, e.g. investigation on food safety assessments of fumonisin.

Risk Communication

FSCJ implements various activities to communicate its risk assessment results as well as basic knowledge on food safety to the public.

Seminars on risk analysis

Since fiscal year 2013, FSCJ is holding a series of seminars on risk analysis as an event of risk communication. This course, entitled "Science in food", consisted of 6 or 7 sessions lectured by the Commissioners.



Meeting with stakeholders

FSCJ holds meetings for opinion and information exchange with consumer groups, media, etc.

Future direction of risk communication

In order to explore the better way for risk communication, FSCJ established "Study group on future direction of risk communication" and conducted study sessions with experts in fiscal year 2014. The result of the sessions were published as the report, which is available on our website.

<http://www.fsc.go.jp/english/index.html>

Provision of information

FSCJ provides information to the public in various formats, such as website, quarterly magazine, brochures, E-mail magazine, Facebook, official blog etc.



"Food Safety Hotline"

FSCJ receives inquiries from consumers by telephone or e-mail.

Gathering information on food safety

For ensuring food safety, we have to comprehend what are the emerging problems and their current situations. FSCJ gathers information on adverse events on human, and surveys on hazards in foods and risk assessment reports from overseas. FSCJ

summarizes information and shares it with risk management organizations including MHLW and MAFF, although both the risk management bodies also collect and analyze relevant information. In addition, FSCJ posts the information on its website.

International Collaboration

FSCJ periodically holds a meeting with risk assessment agencies of foreign countries, in order to exchange updated information and opinions.

In addition, FSCJ makes efforts on development of international collaboration, participating to the international conferences such as Joint Food and

Agriculture Organization (FAO)/World Health Organization (WHO) Expert Committees, organizing seminars and symposia with guest scientists invited from overseas, and disseminating information through English website.

Cooperation with overseas risk assessment agencies

European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)

Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between EFSA and FSCJ was signed in December 2009. Regular meeting is held on a yearly basis alternately in Parma and Tokyo.

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)

MoC was signed in July 2010. Regular meeting is held on a yearly basis alternately in Canberra and Tokyo.

Economic and Food Safety Authority of the Portuguese Republic (ASAE)

MoC was signed in September 2015.

French Agency for Food, Environmental and Occupational Health Safety (ANSES)

MoC was signed in October 2015.

FSCJ actively cooperates with other international counterparts such as Federal Institute for Risk Assessment of Germany (BfR), U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Health Canada.

International seminar

FSCJ invites experts from overseas and organizes thematic seminars and symposia on various topics in the area of food safety risk assessment. A few seminars and symposia are held each year with a large number of audience.

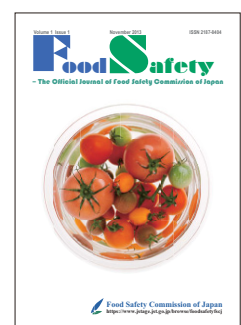


Seminar on Risk Communication
(Nov., 2014)

The Official Journal – Food Safety

FSCJ publishes a peer-reviewed open-access electronic online journal in English, *Food Safety*-The official Journal of Food Safety Commission of Japan, quarterly since November 2013. The aim of the publication of the *Food Safety* is to gather and disseminate scientific and technological information in the field of food safety on human health, and thereby facilitate the development of science and technology for risk assessments of foods. We welcome to accept your manuscript for submission to the *Food Safety*.

<https://www.jstage.jst.go.jp/browse/foodsafetyfscj>





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