

Chapter 7 Response Specific to the Nuclear Disaster

Section 4 Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication

1. Current situation

(1) Coping with hesitation to buy products from Fukushima Prefecture

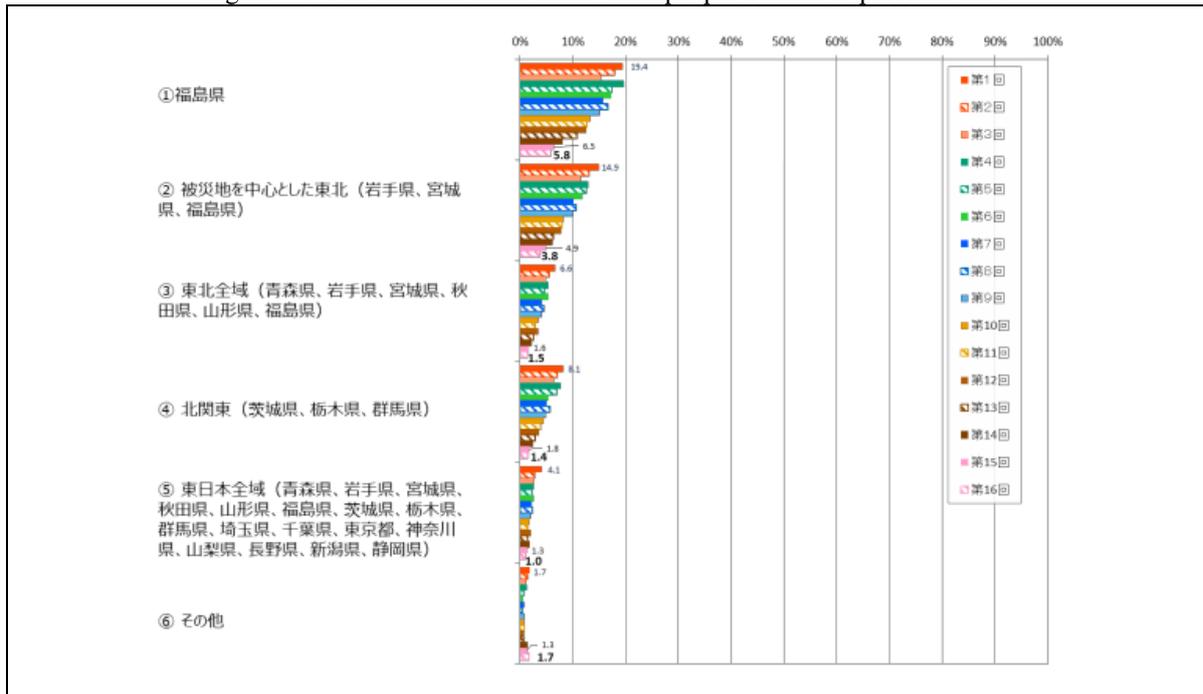
Ten years after the Great East Japan Earthquake, memories of the accident were still fresh in the minds of people both at home and abroad, and for many people the image of Fukushima from that time still lingers today.

Between 2013 and 2023, the Consumer Affairs Agency conducted 16 surveys on agriculture, forestry, and fishery products, etc. in the disaster-affected prefectures in order to investigate the reasons why consumers were refraining from purchasing them, and to contribute to efforts to improve consumer understanding and take countermeasures against harmful rumors, including explanations of future risk communication.

In the first survey conducted in February 2013, 19.4% of all respondents said they would hesitate to purchase products from Fukushima Prefecture because of radioactive materials, but in a survey conducted in January 2023 (5,176 respondents), this figure was down to 5.8%, the lowest ever, albeit still higher than for other regions.

In a survey of Tokyo residents conducted by a private company, one out of four said they were hesitant to recommend food from Fukushima or travel to Fukushima to family or friends because of concerns about radiation (Mitsubishi Research Institute, Inc., “Questionnaire survey No. 3 to ascertain Tokyo residents’ awareness and understanding of the reconstruction situation in Fukushima Prefecture and the health effects of radiation,” conducted in July 2020).

Figure 7-4-1 Production areas from which people hesitate to purchase food

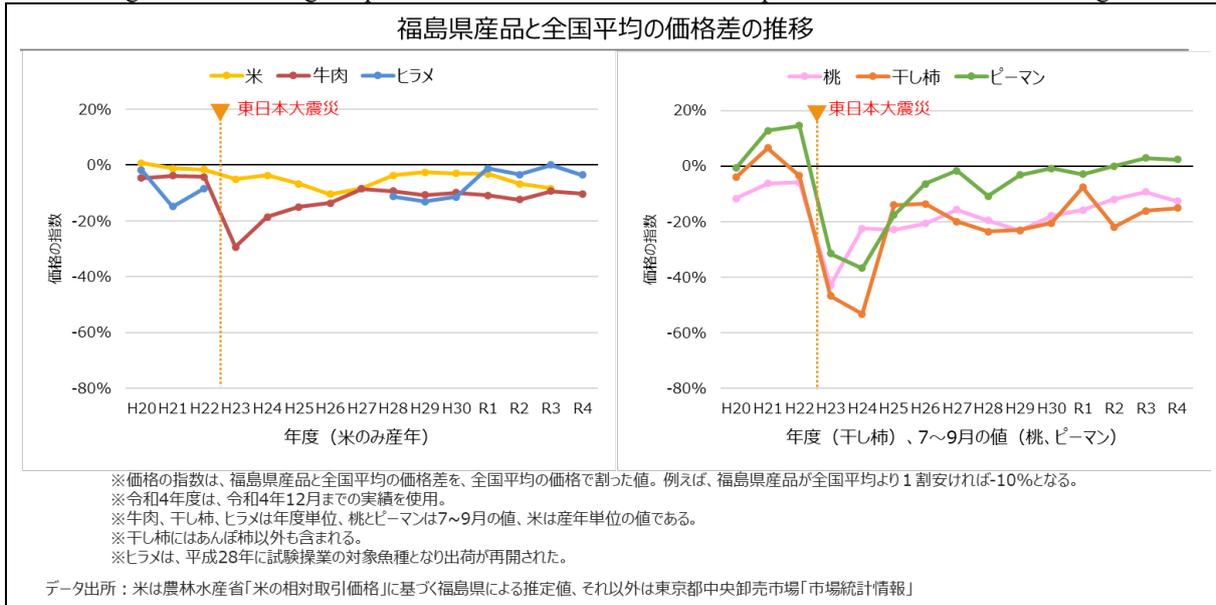


Source) Consumer Affairs Agency, “Report on the Survey on Consumer Awareness of Harmful Rumors” (No. 16, March 10, 2023) https://www.caa.go.jp/notice/assets/consumer_safety_cms203_230306_02.pdf (browsed March 17, 2023)

(2) Price difference between Fukushima products and the national average

According to the “Survey on Distribution of Agricultural Products from Fukushima Prefecture” conducted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the prices of agricultural products from Fukushima Prefecture in general fell below the national average immediately after the earthquake, but the price gap has gradually narrowed since then. On the other hand, prices of items such as beef and peaches are still below the national average, and for some items, the price gap between them and the national average, which emerged and expanded after the earthquake, has remained fixed. The reasons why the price gap has not budged are thought to be changes in distribution structure, such as meeting demand with products from other prefectures, and delays in branding, etc.

Figure 7-4-2 Change in price difference between Fukushima products and the national average



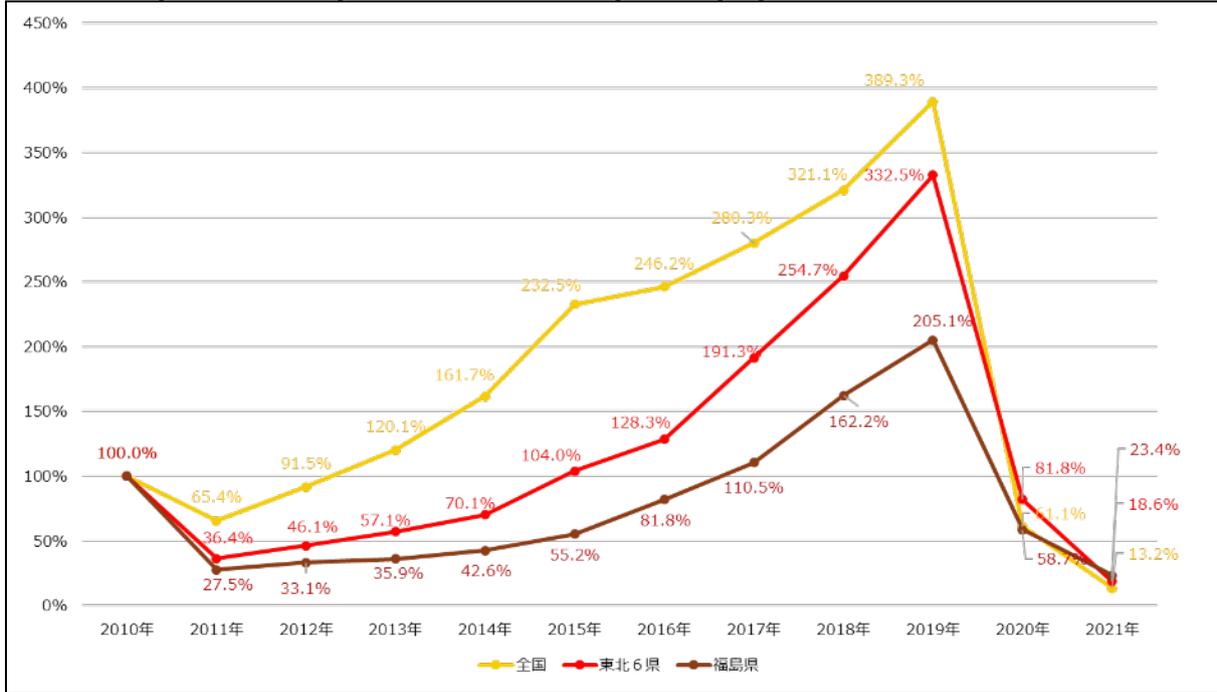
Source) Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, “Overview of the Report on the ‘Fiscal 2022 Survey on Distribution of Agricultural Products from Fukushima Prefecture,’” p. 6 (March 2023)
<https://www.maff.go.jp/j/shokusan/ryutu/R4kekka.html> (browsed August 22, 2023)

(3) Status of travel to Fukushima Prefecture

By 2019, the total number of foreign overnight guests in Fukushima Prefecture had recovered to the level above the number before the earthquake (2010), but the growth rate compared to before the earthquake (205.1%) was lower than the national level (389.3%) and the level for the six Tohoku prefectures (332.5%). The number of tourists visiting Fukushima Prefecture in the same year recovered to the level before the earthquake, but recovery in the Hamadori region has been delayed. Although the number of students visiting Fukushima Prefecture on school trips in the same year recovered to 72.8% of the level before the earthquake, recovery remained particularly slow in the Hamadori region.

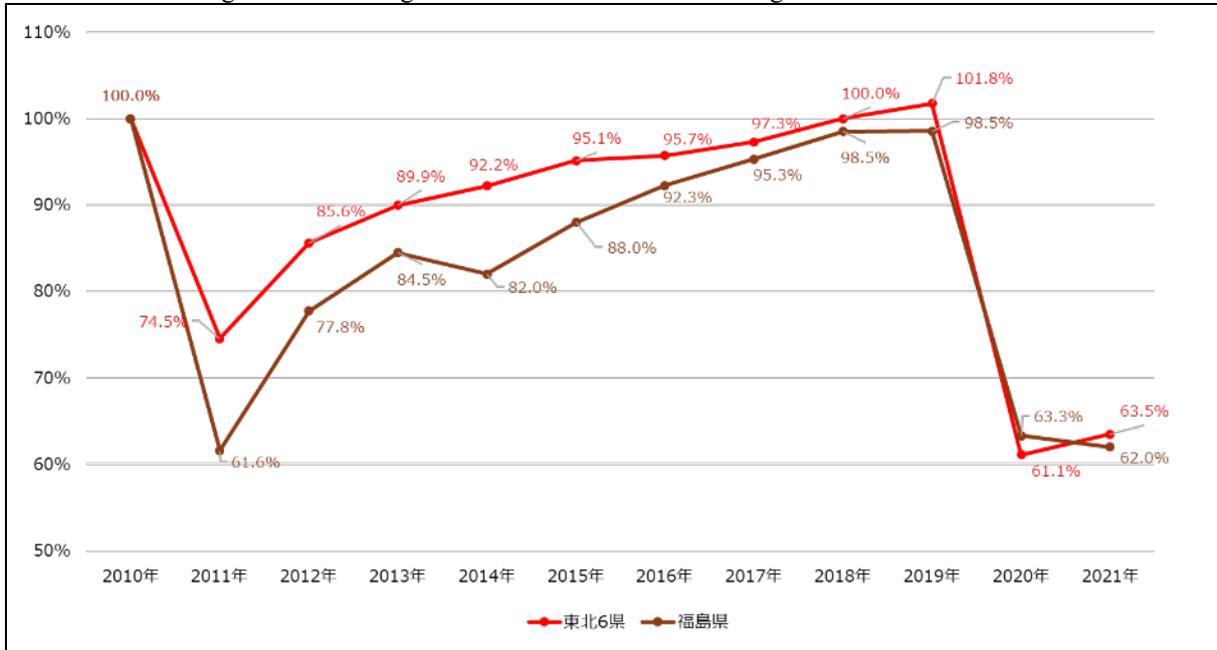
It should be noted that the total number of foreign overnight guests and tourists in Fukushima Prefecture has dropped since 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19, as has been the case throughout Japan and in the six Tohoku prefectures.

Figure 7-4-3 Changes in the number of foreign overnight guests in Fukushima Prefecture



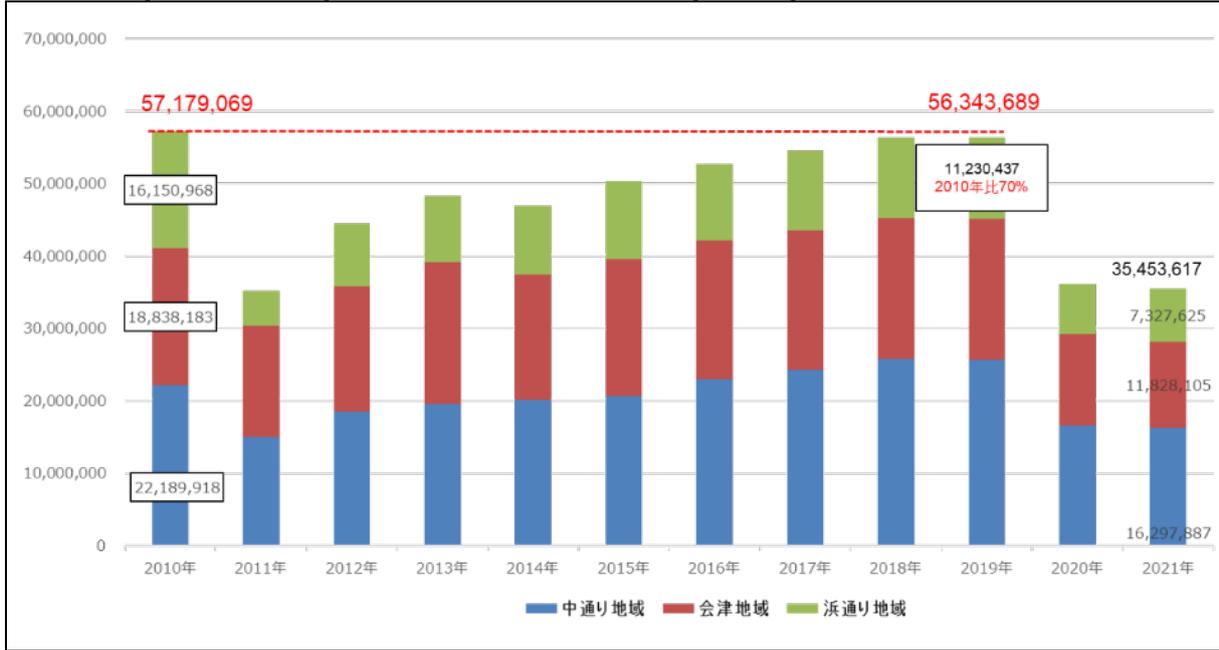
Source) Data from Japan Tourism Agency, "Lodging and Travel Statistics"
 Note: Covers accommodations with 10 or more employees.

Figure 7-4-4 Change in the number of tourists visiting Fukushima Prefecture



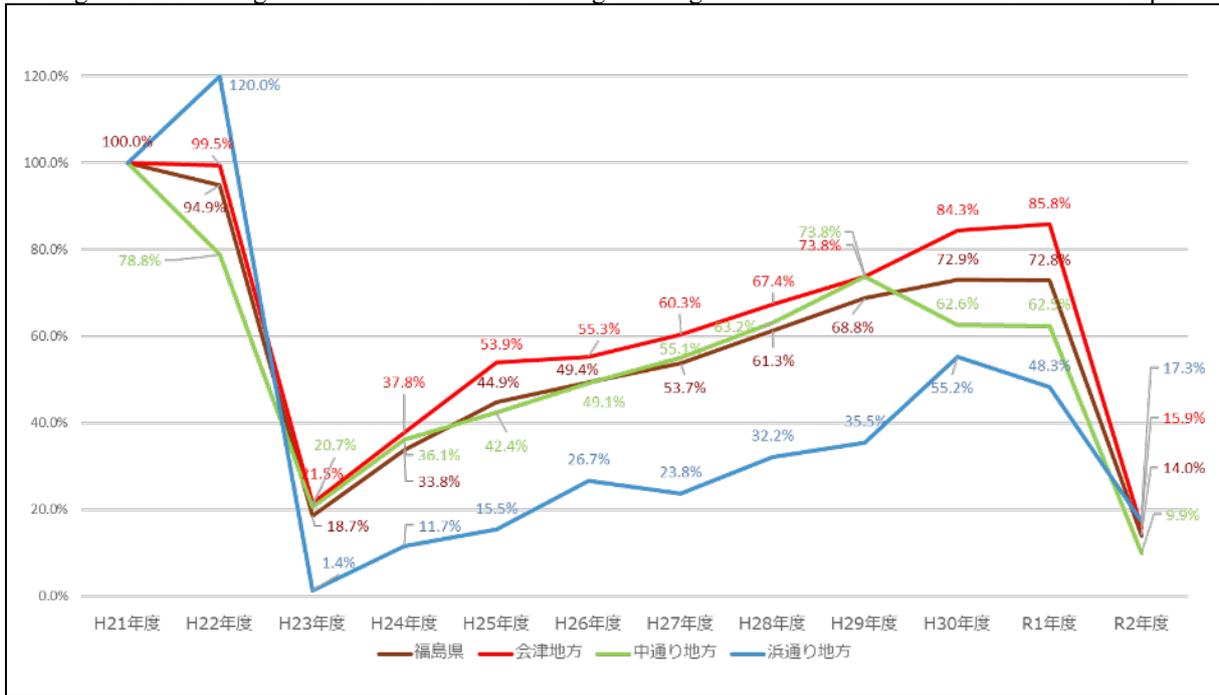
Source) Data from Statistics on Tourists Visiting Each Prefecture in the Tohoku Region

Figure 7-4-5 Change in the number of tourists visiting each region of Fukushima Prefecture



Source) Data from “Status of Tourist Visits to Fukushima Prefecture”

Figure 7-4-6 Change in number of students visiting each region of Fukushima Prefecture on school trips



Source) Data from “Report of Survey on School Trips to Fukushima Prefecture”

(4) Current status of import restrictions imposed by foreign countries and regions following the accident at TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station

In the wake of the accident at TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi NPS, 55 countries and regions imposed import restrictions on Japanese agriculture, forestry, and fishery products and foods. As a result of the government’s concerted efforts to urge these countries and regions to lift import restrictions at every opportunity, 48 countries and regions have lifted import restrictions as of August 15, 2023.

Figure 7-4-7 Relaxation or removal of import restrictions imposed on food products by other countries and regions following the nuclear power station accident



Source) Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, “Response to Import Restrictions by Foreign Countries and Regions Following the Accident at TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station” (August 15, 2023)
https://www.maff.go.jp/j/export/e_info/hukushima_kakukokukensa.html (browsed August 22, 2023)

2. Efforts to eliminate harmful rumors

(1) Task Force on the Nuclear Hazard’s Influence Including the Negative Reputation Impact

1) Task Force on the Nuclear Hazard’s Influence Including the Negative Reputation Impact

Two years after the earthquake, in addition to the direct effects of restrictions on the shipment of food and agriculture, forestry and fishery products, the nuclear disaster-affected areas continued to suffer from harmful rumors in a wide range of fields, including agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and tourism. In order to overcome these issues, the relevant ministries and agencies needed to make a concerted effort, and in March 2013, the “Task Force on the Nuclear Hazard’s Influence Including the Negative Reputation Impact” was established under the Minister of Reconstruction.

Figure 7-4-8 Task Force on the Nuclear Hazard’s Influence Including the Negative Reputation Impact



Reconstruction Agency
Reconstruction, revitalization and beyond

Task Force on the Nuclear Hazard's Influence Including the Negative Reputation Impact

1. Purpose

Under the direction of the Minister for Reconstruction, a meeting of a task force consisting of directors-general of relevant ministries and agencies will be held to manage the progress of countermeasures against rumors, identify issues, determine the future direction of countermeasures, and promote the countermeasures.

2. Constituent members

- ▶ Minister for Reconstruction
- ▶ Administrative Vice Minister, Director General, Councillor, and Counselor to the Director-General of the Reconstruction Agency
- ▶ Director, Public Relations Office, Minister's Secretariat of the Cabinet Office
- ▶ Director-General of Food Safety Commission Secretariat, The Cabinet Office
- ▶ Assistant Director-General, Nuclear Sufferers Life Support Team, Cabinet Office
- ▶ Vice-Commissioner of the Consumer Affairs Agency
- ▶ Director-General of the Economic Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ▶ Assistant Minister for policy coordination, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology
- ▶ Councillor for Environmental Health and Food Safety, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare
- (Observer)
Fukushima Prefecture
- * If ALPS treated water is included in the agenda, additional members are required.

- ▶ State Minister for Reconstruction
- ▶ Deputy Director-General for Policy Coordination (New Business and Food Industry), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
- ▶ Director-General of the Food Safety and Consumer Affairs Bureau, Director-General of the Export and International Affairs Bureau
- ▶ Director-General, Fukushima Reconstruction Promotion Group, Minister's Secretariat, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
- ▶ Vice-Commissioner of Japan Tourism Agency, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism
- ▶ Director-General, Environmental Health Department, Ministry of the Environment
- ▶ Director-General for Radiation Protection Strategy and Security, Nuclear Regulation Authority
- ▶ Director of Project Management Department, Acquisition, Technology & Logistics Agency, Ministry of Defense

3. Results of meeting

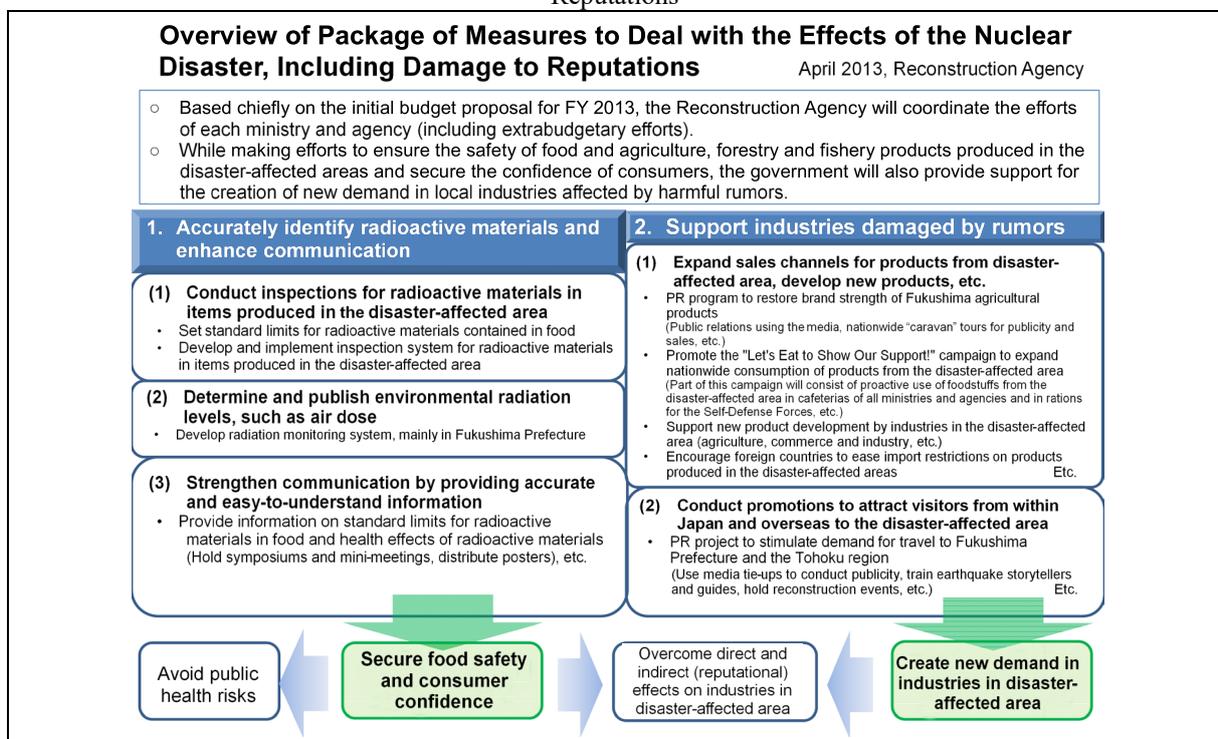
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ March 21, 2013 Compilation of countermeasures against harmful rumors by ministries and agencies (April 2, 2013 "Measure Package" announced) ▶ November 7, 2013 Follow-up ▶ June 23, 2014 Compilation of Guidelines for Strengthening Harmful Rumor Countermeasures ▶ June 4, 2015 Follow-up ▶ April 1, 2016 Re efforts directed toward the G7 ▶ October 7, 2016 Follow-up ▶ February 24, 2017 Follow-up ▶ July 21, 2017 Follow-up ▶ December 12, 2017 Formulation of "Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication" ▶ July 5, 2018 Follow-up ▶ April 12, 2019 Follow-up <li style="padding-left: 40px;">Re efforts directed toward the G20 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ November 1, 2019 Follow-up <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Strengthening of efforts at home and abroad ▶ April 22, 2021 Follow-up <li style="padding-left: 20px;">Re the handling of ALPS treated water ▶ August 20, 2021 Re Measure Package for Information Provision to Increase Understanding of ALPS Treated Water ▶ April 26, 2022 Follow-up ▶ October 3 and October 17, November 2 and November 28, and December 23, 2022; January 23, 2023 Held as the "Review Conference on Sustainable Reconstruction Publicity" ▶ April 13, 2023 Follow-up
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Source) Reconstruction Agency

2) Package of Measures to Deal with the Effects of the Nuclear Disaster, Including Damage to Reputations

On April 2, 2013, the Reconstruction Agency announced that it had organized the wide-ranging measures in the policy fields that were being taken by the various ministries and agencies around the following four pillars centered on the FY 2013 budget: ① reliable implementation of radioactivity testing of products and measurement of air dose, etc., in the disaster-affected area, ② provision of accurate and easy-to-understand information, including information on the health effects of radioactive materials, etc., ③ support for expansion of sales channels and development of new products, etc., in the disaster-affected areas, and ④ promotion of efforts to attract visitors from Japan and overseas to the disaster-affected areas.

Figure 7-4-9 Package of Measures to Deal with the Effects of the Nuclear Disaster, Including Damage to Reputations



Source) Reconstruction Agency, "Overview of Package of Measures to Deal with the Effects of the Nuclear Disaster, Including Damage to Reputations" (April 2013)

https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/20130402_fuhyopkg.pdf (browsed November 16, 2022)

Figure 7-4-10 Package of Measures to Deal with the Effects of the Nuclear Disaster, Including Damage to Reputations: examples of main efforts



Source) Reconstruction Agency, "Package of Measures to Deal with the Effects of the Nuclear Disaster, Including Damage to Reputations: examples of main efforts" (April 2013)

https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/20130402_fuhyopkg.pdf (browsed November 16, 2022)

3) Guidelines for Strengthening Harmful Rumor Countermeasures

In order to eliminate the harmful rumors that continued to circulate after the Great East Japan Earthquake, the Reconstruction Agency published "Package of Measures to Deal with the Effects of the Nuclear Disaster, Including Damage to Reputations" (hereinafter referred to as "Package of Measures") in April 2013, summarizing the efforts centered on the FY 2013 budget that were being taken by each ministry and agency, and in follow-up conducted in November, it was confirmed that certain effects had materialized, such as an increase in the willingness to purchase agricultural products produced in Fukushima Prefecture, expanded relaxation and lifting of import restrictions by foreign countries, and a halt to the decline in, or a recovery in, the number of tourists visiting the six Tohoku prefectures.

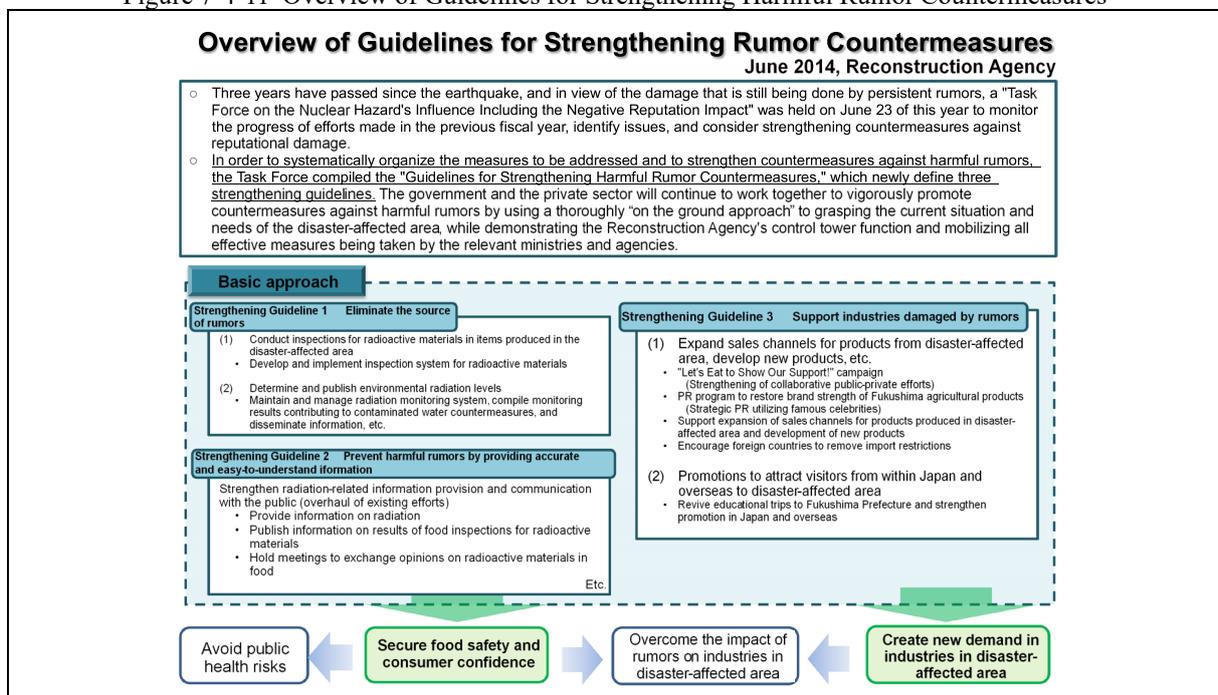
Even as the reconstruction and revitalization of Fukushima entered a new stage with the completion of the zoning review in all parts of Fukushima Prefecture in August 2013 and the lifting of the evacuation order in Tamura City of Fukushima Prefecture in April 2014, there still remained a need to compile measures for dealing with the persistent damage caused by rumors that persisted three years after the disaster.

The Harmful Rumors Countermeasures Task Force compiled "Guidelines for Strengthening Harmful Rumor Countermeasures" on June 23, 2014 in order to follow up the efforts of each ministry and agency and to strengthen the necessary countermeasures.

These Guidelines include instructions to "Eliminate the sources of rumors," "Prevent rumors by promoting the provision of accurate, easy-to-understand information," and "Support industries that have sustained reputational damage," etc.

The first guideline, “Eliminate the sources of rumors”, mandated testing of products produced in the disaster-affected areas for radioactive materials, along with the measurement and publication of the amount of radiation in the environment to counter groundless rumors. Based on the Prime Minister’s instructions, the second guideline, “Prevent rumors by promoting the provision of accurate, easy-to-understand information,” called for reviewing existing methods of communicating information with an eye to improving accuracy and conveying the information that consumers want to know in an easy-to-understand manner so that scientific and specialized knowledge can be disseminated from the consumer’s perspective in an accessible form. The third guideline, “Support industries that have sustained reputational damage,” called upon government and the private sector to join forces in supporting industries that have been hit by harmful rumors, taking action to expand sales channels for products produced in the disaster-affected areas, promote the development of new products, and attract visitors from other parts of Japan and overseas.

Figure 7-4-11 Overview of Guidelines for Strengthening Harmful Rumor Countermeasures



Source) Reconstruction Agency, “Guidelines for Strengthening Harmful Rumor Countermeasures” (June 2014)
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-4/20140623_fuhयोगaiyo.pdf (browsed November 16, 2022)

Figure 7-4-12 Guidelines for Strengthening Harmful Rumor Countermeasures: examples of main efforts

Guidelines for Strengthening Rumor Countermeasures: examples of main efforts

Strengthening Guideline 1 Eliminate the source of rumors

Conduct inspections for radioactive materials in items produced in the disaster-affected area

- Conduct inspections for radioactive materials in foods produced and processed in the disaster-affected area at each stage of production, shipment, and distribution.

< Example of inspection efforts >

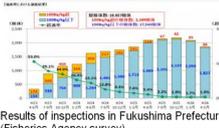
- In Fukushima Prefecture, all bags of rice are inspected throughout the prefecture. In the 2013 crop, about 11 million bags of rice were inspected. Of these, 99.9997% were within the standard limit (as of May 31, 2014).
- Since the nuclear power station accident, 52,588 samples of marine products have been tested (as of May 31, 2014). In Fukushima Prefecture, 98.1% were within the standard limit (April-May 2014).



Radiation inspection apparatus



Inspection of all bags (image)



Results of inspections in Fukushima Prefecture (Fisheries Agency survey)

Determine and publish environmental radiation levels

- Promptly publish results of measurements of radiation levels in the environment, mainly in Fukushima Prefecture, on website.
- Compile results of ocean monitoring conducted by monitoring organizations and publish on a weekly basis, together with results of evaluation and analysis by Nuclear Regulation Authority.
- Provide monitoring results to the IAEA and disseminate information to the international community through diplomatic missions.
- Coordinate with IAEA to improve the reliability of monitoring results.



Visits by IAEA experts and exchanges of opinion (published by NRA)

Strengthening Guideline 2 Prevent harmful rumors by providing accurate and easy-to-understand information

Strengthen radiation-related information provision and communication with the public (overhaul of existing efforts)

- Publish results of testing for radioactive materials in food on website.
- To expand consumers' understanding of food and radioactivity, provide information on the health effects of radioactive materials in food, together with results of inspections for radioactive materials and information on measures to control the absorption of radioactive materials at production sites, in an easy-to-understand manner (including revision of website from the viewpoint of ease of understanding).
- Post "Basic Information on Radiation Risk" booklet prepared by related ministries and agencies and more than 50 experts on website. Distribute upon requests by local governments, etc. (plan to distribute approximately 20,000 copies by June 2014)
- Compile and publish "Report on Inspection of Radioactive Materials in Fishery Products" based on results of three years of inspections for radioactive materials (May 30, 2014)




- Hold seminars to train people like school personnel, dietitians, counselors, and health officers of local governments to be "communicators" who can provide accurate information in the community.

(Source) Reconstruction Agency, "Guidelines for Strengthening Harmful Rumor Countermeasures: examples of main efforts" (June 2014) https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-4/20140623_fuhvogaiyo.pdf (browsed November 16, 2022)

Figure 7-4-13 Guidelines for Strengthening Harmful Rumor Countermeasures: examples of main efforts

Guidelines for Strengthening Rumor Countermeasures: examples of main efforts

Strengthening Guideline 3 Support industries damaged by rumors

Expand sales channels for products from disaster-affected area, develop new products, etc.

- Promote sales through "Let's Eat to Show Our Support!" campaign, exhibitions in Kasumigaseki, and farmers markets held in private companies.
 - In the three years since the disaster, a total of 920 such events have been held
 - Utilization of foods as ingredients in company cafeterias: 166 cases
 - Food fairs, etc.: 666 cases
 - Seminars and symposiums: 88 cases




- Conduct strategic PR, using people who are involved in production and distribution in Fukushima, as well as people who have great affection for Fukushima, to foster empathy among consumers.
- TVCM broadcasts featuring TOKIO were shown in six regions, including the Greater Tokyo Area, to promote vegetables, beef, and shitake mushrooms (spring), peaches (summer), rice (autumn), and Ten no Tsubu rice (winter)

Other: advertisements on trains, advertisements in various information magazines, tours of production areas, and dispatch of promotional caravan tours

- This fiscal year, the same questionnaire survey as last year will be conducted.

[Example of results of last year's questionnaire, etc.]

Percentage of people in the Tohoku Metropolitan Area who are reluctant to buy Fukushima products (vegetables, beef, and other TV commercial)	27.4% (May 2012)	→	17.6% (Nov 2013)
Percentage of people in the Tohoku Metropolitan Area who are interested in purchasing products from Fukushima Prefecture	75.9%	↑	54.4%
Favorability ranking of the CV commercial in the Tohoku Metropolitan Area	Third place in the public and corporate image category		

Promotions to attract visitors from within Japan and overseas to disaster-affected area

- Strengthen efforts to revive educational trips to Fukushima Prefecture. Conduct a questionnaire survey of schools outside the prefecture. Establish 20 model courses in Fukushima Prefecture and present them to schools. Before the earthquake: Approximately 700,000 people stayed overnight in hotels in Fukushima, but in 2012 (after the earthquake), this number was down to approximately 240,000
- Invite people from overseas media and travel agencies to visit Japan to aid in the creation of tourism products.
 - Invitations to media
 - South Korea, 10 people (October 9 to 13)
 - Hong Kong, 14 people (October 6 to 10)
 - China 4 people (August 2 to 7)
 - Invitations to travel agencies
 - South Korea, 4 people (October 9 to 13)



Observation tours by travel agencies and newspapers from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan (Miharu Takizakura (ancient cherry tree in Fukushima))

- Hold public relations and reconstruction events in partnership with the mass media.



Tokyo Girls Collection in Fukushima (Koriyama City, Fukushima Prefecture)

(Source) Reconstruction Agency, "Guidelines for Strengthening Harmful Rumor Countermeasures: examples of main efforts" (June 2014) https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-4/20140623_fuhvogaiyo.pdf (browsed November 16, 2022)

Chapter 7

Response Specific to the Nuclear Disaster

7-103

4) Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication

In 2017, the evacuation orders were lifted in most areas, with the exception of the difficult-to-return zone, and the reconstruction and revitalization of Fukushima Prefecture began in earnest. Although efforts to eliminate harmful rumors had achieved a certain degree of success, rumors did persist, reflected in the gap between the national average prices and the prices of agriculture, forestry and fishery products produced in Fukushima Prefecture, and in the slump in the tourism industry, including school trips. In addition, prejudice and discrimination stemming from the nuclear disaster had occurred, such as bullying of evacuated students in schools. Because these attitudes are thought to mainly reflect a lack of awareness of the current situation in Fukushima Prefecture, as well as a lack of accurate information about radiation and insufficient public knowledge of the results of tests on radioactive materials in food in Fukushima Prefecture, a decision was made to emphasize risk communication, not only for the disaster victims but for the general public as well. This would entail making an all-out effort to foster understanding and sympathy for Fukushima in every person in Japan by “letting them know about Fukushima,” “having them try foods from Fukushima,” and “having them come to visit Fukushima.” Accordingly, when evaluating health effects, it would be necessary to foster a sense of security in individuals by getting out the message that ① radiation should be considered quantitatively, not in terms of absolute presence or absence, ② radiation safety is currently secured in Fukushima Prefecture, and ③ the safety of food and drinking water produced in Fukushima Prefecture has been ensured through the establishment of the world’s strictest standards for radioactive materials and through rigorous inspections.

Based on an awareness of these issues, the ministries and agencies involved in the “Project Team for Formulating Strategies to Eliminate Harmful Rumors and Strengthen Risk Communication” established by the “Task Force on the Nuclear Hazard’s Influence Including the Negative Reputation Impact” under the leadership of the Minister of Reconstruction conducted a comprehensive review of the risk communication measures that had been taken thus far and, after seeking the opinions of experts, compiled the “Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication” based on the latest scientific knowledge shared among experts, and published it on December 12, 2017.

Based on these strategies, information is being disseminated through a media mix utilizing television and the Internet from the three perspectives of “making people aware of the current status of Fukushima reconstruction,” “having people eat foods produced in Fukushima Prefecture,” and “having people visit Fukushima Prefecture.”

Figure 7-4-14 Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication

Reconstruction Agency
Efforts toward Reconstruction and Revitalization of Fukushima

Countermeasures against harmful rumors

① "Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication"

- In Fukushima, unfounded rumors, prejudice, and discrimination still persist.
- Under the direction of the Minister for Reconstruction, meetings of the **Task Force on the Nuclear Hazard's Influence Including the Negative Reputation Impact (hereinafter referred to as the "Task Force")** were held (from March 2013 onward), attended by members of the related ministries and agencies.
- At a Task Force meeting held in December 2017, the "**Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication**" were adopted and announced as the **government-wide policy for promoting dissemination of more specific information**.
- Under this strategy, the relevant ministries and agencies **disseminate information in a creative way** from the three perspectives of "**letting people know**," "**having people try the food**," and "**having people come**," with ongoing **follow-up** from the Task Force.

Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication

Simply, and in order of importance, clarify what should be conveyed, who should be told (target audience), and how to craft the message from the perspective of the three goals of "letting people know," "having people try the food," and "having people come."

	I. Letting people know	II. Having people try the food	III. Having people come
Target audience	① Students and educators ② Expectant mothers and guardians of babies and small children, etc. ③ The general public	① Retailers and distributors ② Consumers ③ Embassies in Tokyo, foreign dignitaries and the press ④ Foreign residents and tourists from overseas	① Teachers, PTA officials, travel agents ② Tourists from overseas, foreign press and foreign residents ③ Tourists from outside the prefecture
Details	① Fundamentals facts and health effects of radiation ② Food and drinking-water safety ③ Appearance of the disaster-affected area where reconstruction is progressing • Devising expressions that leave an impression from the recipient's point of view • Use of media mix, etc.	① "Attractiveness" and "deliciousness" of Fukushima products ② Mechanisms to protect food and drinking-water safety and standards for radioactive materials ③ Management system at the production stage • Ideas on how to make safety understood • Disseminate information that makes international comparisons to present Fukushima Prefecture in relative perspective	① "Attractions" of Fukushima Prefecture as a travel destination ② Air dose rate and food safety in Fukushima Prefecture ③ Support measures for educational trips, etc. • Disseminate information on 'hope tourism' • Disseminate information from grassroots sources

Following the adoption of the policy on disposal of ALPS treated water in April 2021, the **Rumor Countermeasures Task Force** met on August 20 of the same year to consider the measures that the related ministries and agencies should take to counter the harmful rumors that accompanied the disposal of ALPS treated water, and "**Measure Package for Information Provision to Increase Understanding of ALPS Treated Water**" was compiled and announced.

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Source) Reconstruction Agency, "Efforts toward Reconstruction and Revitalization of Fukushima" (July 2022)
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/sozai/20220701_fukushima-hukko-torikumi.pdf (browsed November 16, 2022)

5) 2020 Initiative for the Elimination of Harmful Rumors

As the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games approached and Japan attracted more attention from overseas, the Reconstruction Agency prepared "2020 Initiative for the Elimination of Harmful Rumors" to actively eliminate unfounded rumors, and announced it at a meeting of the Harmful Rumors Countermeasures Task Force on November 1, 2019.

Figure 7-4-15 2020 Initiative for the Elimination of Harmful Rumors



Attachment

2020 Initiative for the Elimination of Harmful Rumors

With the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games looming and the eyes of the world on Japan, there is a need to step up efforts to combat harmful rumors. To this end, the Reconstruction Agency will proactively take the following measures.

Efforts directed toward foreign countries

- **Efforts to encourage the abolishment of import restrictions**

Details of efforts

- ① Visits by ministers to embassies in Tokyo
- ② Conducted a tour of the disaster-affected area for overseas media (November 10 to 16, with 14 members of media from China and Hong Kong)
- ③ Panel exhibition at international conference and provision of lists of ingredients from the disaster-affected area (November 22 and 23 Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the Group of 20)

Make government officials and the media in countries and regions with remaining import restrictions aware of the appearance and attractiveness of the recovering disaster-affected area so as to eliminate harmful rumors and encourage people to eat the local products.

- **Disseminating information at the Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games**

Details of efforts

- ① Improvement of Reconstruction Agency website and dissemination of reconstruction-related information, photos, and videos in English, including through SNS with hashtag Fukushima
- ② Utilizing all opportunities related to the Olympics and Paralympics to provide information on the strictness of Japan's food safety standards and the status of inspections based on those standards

Improve the website and make the content multilingual in order to make it easier for people overseas to obtain the information they want to know, and utilize various opportunities to disseminate accurate information on food safety and other issues.



Exhibition at the Group of 20 Tourism Ministers Meeting (October 2019, Hokkaido)



Reconstruction Agency website (English version)



Dishes made with ingredients grown in the disaster-affected area, served at the World Press Briefing Reception

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Attachment

2020 Initiative for the Elimination of Harmful Rumors

Efforts directed toward foreign countries

- **Support for sales channel development overseas**

Details of efforts

Provide support by dispatching experts in the development of overseas sales channels by enterprises in the disaster-affected areas (including agriculture, forestry and fisheries)

Promote market development based on local business practices through the dispatch of experts.

- **Promotion of inbound tourism to Fukushima Prefecture**

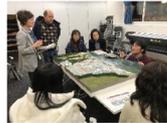
Details of efforts

Support the development and sale of travel products for foreign visitors in Japan that will help eliminate rumors and convey the appeal of the region, such as "Hope Tourism," a study tour for the disaster-affected area

Strive to continuously expand the number of foreigners visiting the region so as to eliminate harmful rumors and prevent people from forgetting the lessons of Fukushima.



Test marketing events in Southeast Asia



Scene of "Hope Tourism" (at Naraha CANvas)

Efforts directed toward the Japanese public

- **Strengthening communication of basic knowledge on the current situation of Fukushima reconstruction and radiation**

Details of efforts

Make full use of various media to get more information out through radio programs, manga, and SNSs to inform as many people as possible about the current situation of reconstruction in Fukushima and basic facts about radiation

Rumors that are not based on scientific evidence are considered to be mainly caused by insufficient awareness of the current situation of reconstruction in Fukushima Prefecture and accurate knowledge of radiation. The Reconstruction Agency will use innovative means to make these matters easier to understand and more widely known to more people.



Manga "Let's eat Fukushima-grown."

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Source) Reconstruction Agency, "2020 Initiative for the Elimination of Harmful Rumors"
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-4/fuhyou/20191101-02_fuhyou-fusshoku-initiative-for-2020.pdf
 (browsed November 16, 2022)

(2) Efforts by ministries and agencies

1) Efforts by the Cabinet Office

The Office of Public Relations, Minister's Secretariat, Cabinet Office, in cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies, has utilized media such as television, newspapers, and the Internet to effectively disseminate information on the current situation and the reconstruction efforts, including accurate information on radiation, both in Japan and abroad, while also making efforts to eliminate damage caused by harmful rumors.

Specifically, TV commercials have been used to convey the appeal of Fukushima-grown agricultural products and tourist spots in the Tohoku Region, and Broadcast Satellite television programs, radio programs, newspaper advertisements, and Internet advertisements have described the current state of reconstruction and ongoing efforts, while videos and articles posted on the government's public relations website have explained the efforts being made in food testing and the standard limits for radioactive materials in food.

In addition, advertisements containing correct information on radiation explained simply in cartoon form were carried in children's newspapers for elementary school, junior high and high school students, advertisements on Hope Tourism were carried in specialized national newspapers for educators, and descriptions of efforts to eliminate harmful rumors were published in Braille and large print in the public relations magazine *Fureai Rashinban* and made into audio recordings on the public relations CD *Asu e no Koe* to enable persons with disabilities to obtain information smoothly.

The government's public relations magazines for overseas readers, *We Are Tomodachi* (English-language, now published as *KIZUNA*) and *HIGHLIGHTING Japan* (English, Chinese and Japanese), carry articles on efforts such as reconstruction from the nuclear power station accident and food safety.

2) Efforts by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

In order to support education on radiation in schools, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (hereinafter referred to as "MEXT") provides training on radiation for teachers and provides visiting lectures on radiation for school children. Moreover, in order to enable school children to acquire scientific knowledge and deepen their understanding of radiation, a supplementary reader on radiation has been prepared and distributed to elementary, junior high, and high schools nationwide and posted on the MEXT website. In addition to deepening children's scientific knowledge of radiation and their understanding of the nuclear power station accident situation and the efforts toward reconstruction, the supplementary readers are enhanced with content to help prevent bullying and discrimination against disaster-affected school children.

Moreover, since FY 2011, MEXT has been supporting "Meetings to Answer Questions about Radiation" by the Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) for the parents, guardians, and teachers of children from nursery school and kindergarten through junior high school, and for the general public (neighborhood associations, etc.) in Fukushima Prefecture.

Support for the development of human resources capable of implementing appropriate risk communication has also been provided at the National Institutes for Quantum Science and Technology (QST).

3) Efforts by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is proactively making use of diplomatic opportunities to urge leading figures around the world to lift import restrictions introduced after the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Overseas Japanese embassies and consulates-general are taking the opportunity of various receptions held all over the world, to publicize agriculture, forestry and fishery products and foods, including those produced in the disaster-affected areas. In Japan, in July 2022, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hayashi and the Governor Uchibori of Fukushima Prefecture co-hosted the “Fukushima Reconstruction Reception: The Ongoing Challenge,” to which the diplomatic corps in Japan was invited, as part of a project to disseminate information outside of Japan in support of regional revitalization, and while asking for the understanding and cooperation of each country and region in disseminating accurate information, Minister Hayashi introduced information on the safety and appeal of foodstuffs produced in Fukushima. In November 2022, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs jointly organized observation tours with the Fukushima Prefecture for diplomatic corps in Japan under the theme of “reconstruction.”

In cooperation with Euronews, one of Europe’s leading multilingual news channels, programs were produced and broadcast on the themes of reconstruction, efforts to ensure the safety of food produced in Fukushima Prefecture, and moves to relax import regulations in various countries, and videos on ALPS treated water and the safety and appeal of foods produced in the disaster-affected areas are available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs YouTube channel in five languages, including Japanese. In November 2021 and at the end of October 2022, press tours of Fukushima Prefecture were held for foreign media in Tokyo. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs provides highly transparent and thorough information in response to news gathering by foreign media organizations, and when there are reports that differ from the facts, the Ministry provides explanations to foreign media, posts rebuttal articles, and takes other appropriate countermeasures based on the local situation.

Under the “The Youth-Exchange Project with Asia-Oceania and North America (Kizuna (bond) Project),” as of the end of March 2013, more than 10,000 people had participated in exchanges between Japan and 41 countries and regions in the Asia-Pacific region and North America, including invitation of young people to our country to participate in exchange programs, visit disaster-affected areas, and experience reconstruction support activities, as well as sending young people from the disaster-affected areas overseas to promote understanding of the revitalization of Japan in other countries and regions.

In various international cultural exchange programs conducted through the Japan Foundation, Japan has continued to conduct traveling exhibitions to convey the appeal of the Tohoku Region, and Japanese broadcast content based on the Tohoku Region was provided free of charge, mainly in countries and regions where Japanese content is difficult to broadcast, in order to deepen understanding of the revitalization of Japan and effectively disseminate information to counter harmful rumors.

4) Efforts by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

The index established by the Nuclear Safety Commission was set as the provisional regulatory limit (from March 17, 2011 onward), and subsequently, based on discussions in the Pharmaceutical Affairs and Food Sanitation Council of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, standard limits for radioactive materials in food (radioactive cesium, etc.) were set from a long-term perspective based on the international index, beginning on April 1, 2012. In addition, the Nuclear Emergency Response Headquarters established “Basic Considerations in the Establishment of Inspection Plans by Local Governments” and conducted tests for radioactive materials in food products mainly in 17 selected prefectures as well as surveys of food products at the stage of distribution, in which products were

purchased and tested.

5) Efforts by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

As support for radioactive materials testing of food by local governments and as technical support, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (hereinafter referred to as “MAFF”) provided scientific support for inspection methods, support for development of a system for inspection of rice by Fukushima Prefecture (inspection of all bags of rice produced in Fukushima Prefecture up to 2019 and monitoring (sampling) inspection of rice produced in 2020 or later, except for rice from Tamura City, Minamisoma City, Town of Hirono, Town of Naraha, Town of Tomioka, Village of Kawauchi, Town of Okuma, Town of Futaba, Town of Namie, Village of Katsurao, Village of Iitate, and Town of Kawamata (former Village of Yamakiya), which are former areas under evacuation orders, and support for development of an inspection system for fishery products. In addition, MAFF has assisted local governments with the introduction of testing equipment and, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, accepts requests for inspections from local governments, under which program more than 75,000 inspections were conducted at quarantine stations, national research institutes, and contract testing institutes nationwide by the end of September 2020.

In 2012, exhibits began to be held in the Consumers’ Room every March. Thus far, lectures by researchers, panel exhibitions, and food tastings have been held (Exhibits in the Consumers’ Room were discontinued in 2021 when a state of emergency was declared because of the spread of novel coronavirus infections). Since 2021, MAFF has also been working on the distribution of videos introducing the efforts made by production areas to promote reconstruction.

A video was made to publicize the safety of fishery products ensured through testing for radioactive materials, along with a recipe video using fishery products from the disaster-affected area, both of which were posted on the website of the Fisheries Agency.

6) Efforts by the Consumer Affairs Agency

The Consumer Affairs Agency lent testing equipment to local governments to support testing from the consumption side (392 units distributed nationwide by September 2020) and has held training sessions on inspection methods for local government employees (As of September 2020, 32 workshops were held nationwide, with a total of approximately 2,000 participants). In addition, financial support was provided through grants that can be used by local governments to contract out testing from the consumption side, hire inspection experts, and install and maintain testing equipment. Moreover, accurate information on radioactive materials is being disseminated through support for programs such as the “Information Sessions on Food and Radioactivity,” organized by Fukushima Prefecture and presented by experts to consumers in the prefecture, and “Let’s Start with Fukushima: A Project for Dispatching People Outside the Prefecture to Talk About the Present in Fukushima,” in which producers from Fukushima relate their own experiences and thoughts on the future to consumers nationwide.

A pamphlet entitled “Food and Radiation Q&A,” which provides easy-to-understand explanations from the consumer’s perspective, was revised (16th Edition) and published on the website of the Consumer Affairs Agency. Approx. 940,000 copies were distributed, including to all households in Fukushima Prefecture. The pamphlet “Food and Radiation Q&A Mini,” based on the “Food and Radiation Q&A,” with more organized points for better understanding and reduced in handy pocket size, was revised (8th Edition) and was posted on the Consumer Affairs Agency website, and released with approximately 160,000 copies distributed so far. “Food and Radiation Q&A Mini” (7th Edition) has been

posted on the website in English, Chinese and Korean.

7) Efforts by the Ministry of the Environment

In order to promote the securing and development of the specialized human resources necessary for the long-term health management of Fukushima Prefecture residents, support is being provided for the establishment of courses at Fukushima Medical University in “Disaster Mental Health,” “Radiation Health Management,” “Thyroid Endocrinology,” and “Health Risk Communication Science.” In addition, 17 training sessions were held in FY 2022 for local government employees and healthcare professionals to develop human resources who can counsel residents about radiation anxiety and health concerns, mainly in Fukushima Prefecture and neighboring prefectures.

In order to systematically and continuously support the activities of counselors from the standpoint of science and technology, the “Radiation Risk Communication Counselor Support Center” holds training sessions for counselors and provides support such as dispatching experts when counselors alone cannot handle the situation. In addition, to strengthen cooperation among relevant ministries, agencies and local governments, a “Working Level Meeting of Counselors” was held in August 2017, and Workshops for the Sharing of Examples of Success and Failure by Radiation Counselors and Livelihood Support Counselors (Joint Workshops of Counselors) are being held on an ongoing basis (December 2017, August 2018, March 2019, August 2019, November 2019, December 2022) in collaboration with the Cabinet Office’s Nuclear Sufferers Life Support Team and the Ministry of the Environment. Moreover, the Radiation Risk Communication Counselor Support Center held Joint Meetings for the Exchange of Opinions (March 2021, February 2022, January 2023, March 2023) in which the people in charge from several towns participated.

“Unified Basic Data on Health Effects of Radiation” was prepared by the relevant ministries and agencies together with experts and distributed in Fukushima Prefecture and other prefectures.

8) Efforts by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

In order to stimulate demand for travel to the disaster-affected areas, including Fukushima Prefecture, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (hereinafter referred to as “MLIT”) has provided support for efforts to disseminate accurate information and publicize the attractions of this region, such as the establishment of the “Tohoku Monogatari (“Tohoku Story”)” portal site, on which not only tourism industry professionals but also local residents discuss seasonal topics keyed to local reconstruction, and MLIT has also provided training for earthquake storytellers and guides.

In addition, to encourage people from overseas to visit the disaster-affected areas, MLIT supported a homegrown promotion project in which foreign media representatives and leading influencers were invited to the Tohoku Region to interest foreign tourists in visiting parts of the region, and the attractions of the Tohoku Region were advertised through an intensive “Visit Japan” promotion that spotlighted the Tohoku Region and was aimed at major overseas markets.

MLIT continues to support tourism-related projects that help Fukushima Prefecture counter harmful rumors and contribute to earthquake reconstruction, such as the promotion of “Hope Tourism,” a learning journey in the form of field trips to the areas affected by the earthquake and nuclear power station accident.

9) Efforts by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

Based on the “Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication,” the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (hereinafter referred to as “METI”) is disseminating information to dispel the harmful influence of rumors by informing many people in Japan and overseas about the decommissioning of TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi NPS and the current situation of reconstruction. Specifically, these efforts employ methods such as creating video and book content on Fukushima reconstruction, disseminating information through websites and SNSs, and deepening understanding of decommissioning through visits by influencers who can reach a lot of people, while simultaneously appealing to national governments collectively and individually to help spread information broadly, and disseminating information to overseas media in a highly transparent manner in cooperation with international organizations.

Furthermore, METI is supporting the efforts of private companies to contribute to eliminating harmful rumors, as well as efforts to hand down the oral history of the Great East Japan Earthquake and the nuclear power station accident at TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi NPS as multiple disasters. Moreover, in response to requests from companies in Fukushima Prefecture and elsewhere, METI has performed measurement of radiation dose for industrial products, etc. (154,822 measurements by FY 2021) and provided guidance and advice (896 consultations by FY 2021).

10) Efforts by Nuclear Regulation Authority

In light of the problem with leakage of contaminated water at TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi NPS, the Nuclear Regulation Authority (hereinafter referred to as “NRA”) has continued to monitor the sea area, and has compiled and published the results of the monitoring of the sea area by the relevant organizations. Furthermore, in collaboration with the IAEA, the results of the collection and analysis of marine samples from the sea area near the TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi NPS are being compared to evaluate the reliability of the obtained data.

In addition, a system for radiation monitoring, chiefly in Fukushima Prefecture, has been constructed, and the NRA will continue to steadily measure and disclose radiation levels in the environment as the situation evolves at TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi NPS.

11) Efforts by the Reconstruction Agency

Based on the “Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication,” the Reconstruction Agency has made efforts to ① implement risk communication related to radiation, ② disseminate information related to radiation, ③ expand sales channels for products produced in the disaster-affected areas, ④ encourage customers in Japan and overseas to visit the disaster-affected areas, and ⑤ encourage other countries to relax or abolish import restrictions.

Examples of information dissemination by the Reconstruction Agency

- Dissemination of accurate information based on scientific evidence
- Progress reports on reconstruction and communication of the attractions of the region

Figure 7-4-16 Dissemination of accurate information based on scientific evidence

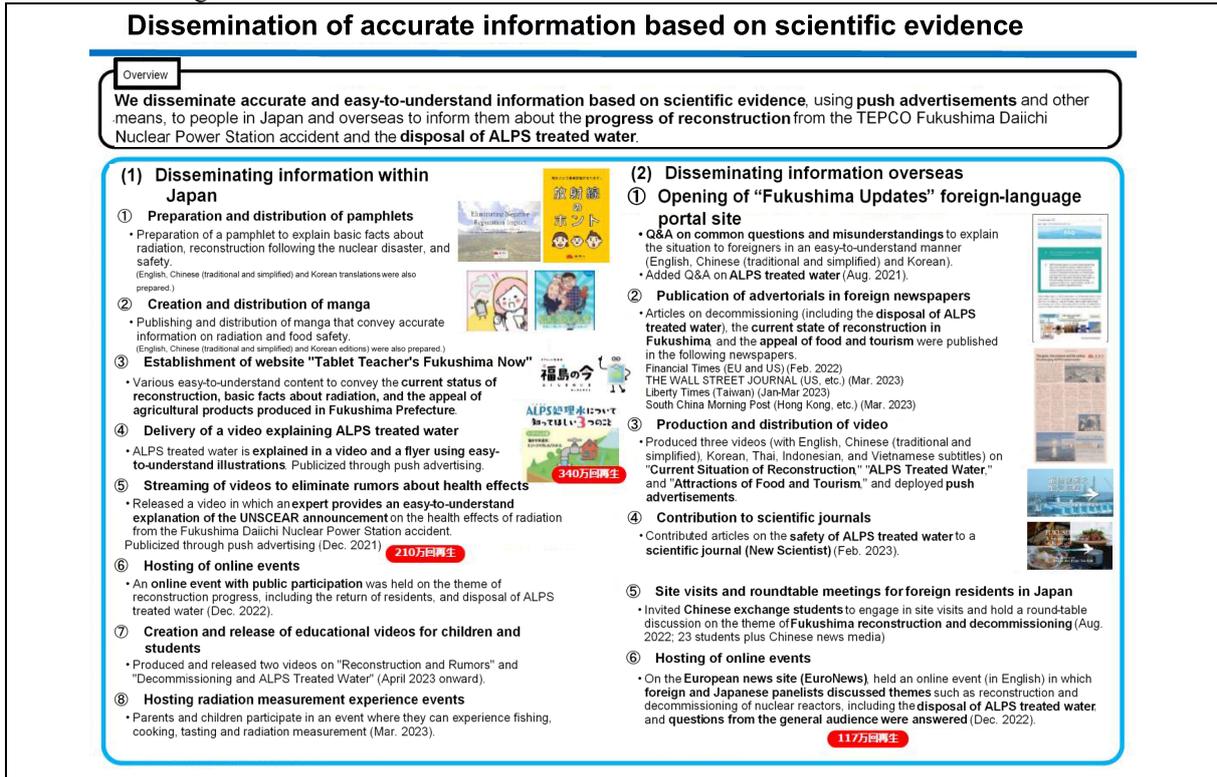


Figure 7-4-17 Progress reports on reconstruction and communication of the attractions of the region



12) Efforts made through collaboration among the Consumer Affairs Agency, Food Safety Commission, MHLW, and MAFF

Since FY 2011, meetings to exchange opinions with consumers have been held in major cities, etc., on the standard limits for radioactive materials in food and the health effects of radioactive materials, and an overview has been posted on the website.

Since FY 2016, these ministries and agencies have participated in events for consumers with children, who are highly interested in food safety, and since FY 2020, opportunities have been provided for university students who were children at the time of the earthquake to acquire a basic knowledge of radioactive materials and learn about the current status of radioactive materials in food and radioactivity countermeasures.

Figure 7-4-18 Efforts made through collaboration among the Consumer Affairs Agency, Food Safety Commission, MHLW, and MAFF



(Source) Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

(3) Package of Measures to Disseminate Information on ALPS Treated Water

Regarding the disposal of ALPS treated water, the “the Basic Policy on handling of ALPS treated water” was adopted in April 2021 at the 5th Inter-Ministerial Council on Measures for Decommissioning, Contaminated Water, and Treated Water, based on the February 2020 report of the “Subcommittee on the Handling of ALPS Treated Water” and the opinions received from local governments, the agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries, and a wide range of citizens.

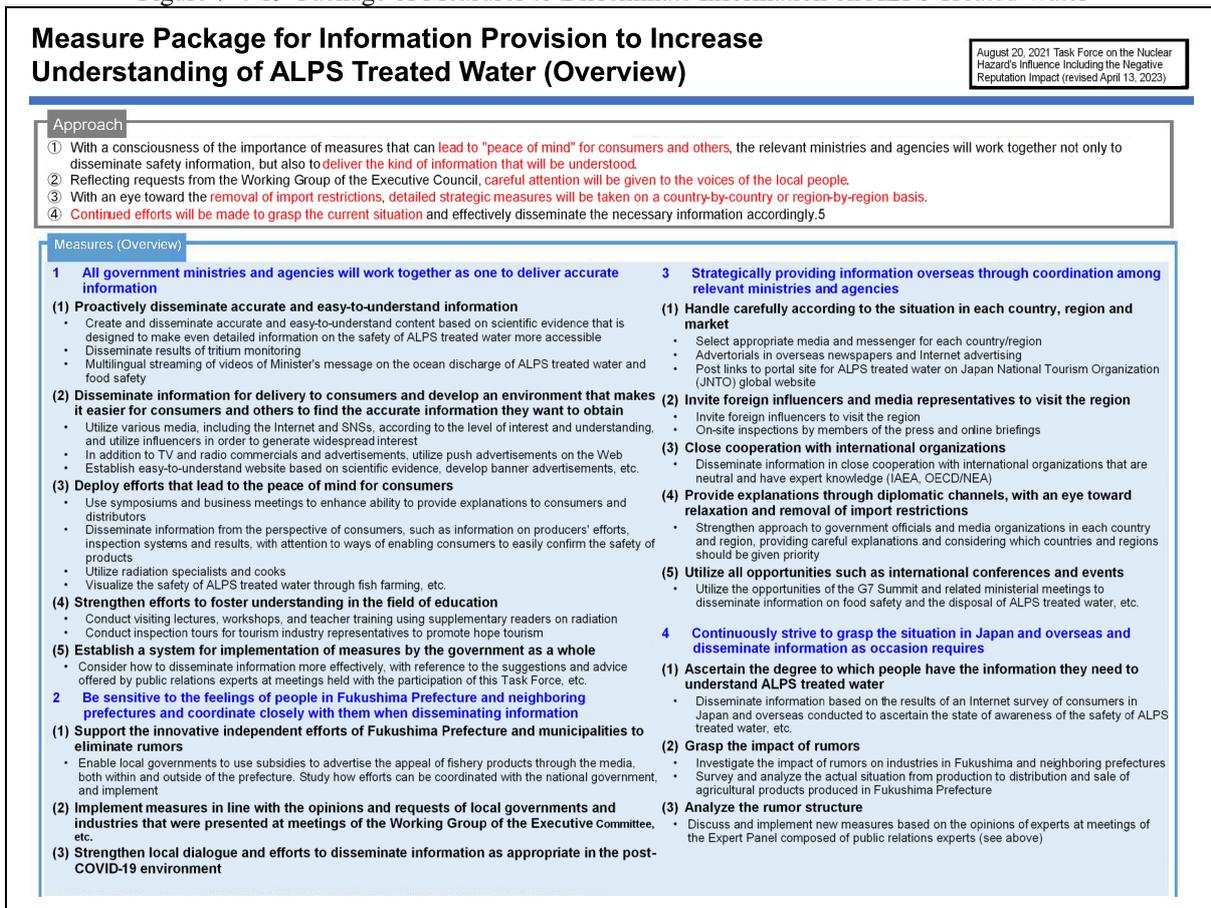
Because accurate information based on scientific evidence must be disseminated in an easy-to-understand manner both in Japan and overseas in order to prevent the harmful effects of rumors, the related ministries and government agencies worked together to coordinate the opinions and requests received from local governments and industry through the Working Group of the “Inter-Ministerial Council for Steady Implementation of the Basic Policy on handling of ALPS Treated Water” (hereinafter referred to as “Executive Council”), and a “Package of Measures for the Dissemination of Information to Foster an Understanding of ALPS Treated Water” was formulated by the Harmful Rumors Countermeasures Task Force on August 20, 2021.

Since it was imperative that the Package of Measures not only strive to foster understanding by delivering accurate information based on scientific evidence in an easy-to-understand manner to a large

number of people in Japan and overseas but also devise more thoroughgoing information dissemination efforts that went beyond the measures based on the “Strategies for Eliminating Harmful Rumors and Strengthening Risk Communication,” the Package of Measures was compiled based on the following concept of information dissemination, whereby the relevant ministries and agencies would work together to contribute to the steady implementation of the Basic Policy, based on the opinions and requests expressed by the relevant local governments and industries at meetings of the Working Group of the Executive Council.

- ① The relevant ministries and agencies will work together not only to disseminate safety information, but also to deliver the kind of information that will be understood, being conscious of its ability to lead to “peace of mind” for consumers and others.
 - ② Careful attention will be given to the opinions and requests of the people involved, including those from the Working Group of the Executive Council.
 - ③ Detailed and strategic measures will be taken on each country/region, with an eye toward the removal of import restrictions.
 - ④ Continued efforts will be made to grasp the status of rumors and effectively disseminate the necessary information accordingly.
- This package of measures is intended to be followed up in a timely and appropriate manner with continued review and addition of measures.

Figure 7-4-19 Package of Measures to Disseminate Information on ALPS Treated Water



Source) Reconstruction Agency