

Russia lifts import ban on Japanese seafood from six Fukushima-affected prefectures

By Chris Loew

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Russia's Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance on 23 March lifted its ban on imports of Japanese seafood imports from the six prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi, Yamagata, Ibaraki, Chiba and Niigata. The restrictions had been imposed in response to the 11 March, 2011, Fukushima nuclear disaster. Russia will also accept products from Fukushima Prefecture that are accompanied by documentation showing they are free of contamination.

Russia partially relaxed its initial ban in July 2015, following a study carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), by allowing imports of mackerel from Aomori Prefecture, which had been included in the original ban.

The change comes just a few weeks after the World Trade Organization (WTO) ruled that a South Korean ban violates its rules. In principle, such bans should be scientifically justified, and not just a response to consumer fears. According to Japan's Fisheries Agency, more than 20 countries, including China, Taiwan, and South Korea as well as those of the European Union, still ban or partially ban imports of Japanese seafood products.



Chris Loew

Contributing Editor reporting from Osaka, Japan

✉ je5c-loew@asahi-net.or.jp