

The Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas

(Provisional Translation)

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Chapter I General Provisions

(Objective)

Article 1

The objective of this Law is to stabilize and improve people's lifestyle and to develop the national economy through comprehensively and systematically implementing policies on food, agriculture and rural areas by means of establishing basic principles and basic matters for realizing them and clarifying the responsibilities of the state and local governments.

(Securing Stable Food Supply)

Article 2

1 In consideration of the fact that food is indispensable in maintaining human life and important as a basis for healthy and fulfilled living, a stable supply of good-quality food at reasonable prices shall be secured for the future.

2 In consideration of the fact that there are certain unstable factors in the world food trade and supply/demand, this stable food supply to the people shall be secured with increase of domestic agricultural production as a basis, together with an appropriate combination with imports and stockpiles.

3 Food supply shall be managed in such a way as to improve agricultural productivity and to comprehensively promote the sound development of agriculture and food industries, in response to the more sophisticated and diversified public demand.

4 Even in the case that domestic supply is insufficient to meet demand or is likely to be for a certain period, due to unexpected situations such as a bad harvest or interrupted imports, the minimum food supply required for the people shall be secured in order not to be a hindrance to the stability of peoples' lives and smooth operation of the national economy.

(Fulfillment of Multifunctional Roles)

Article 3

In consideration of the importance of maintaining the stability of the people's lives and the national economy, the multiple roles that agriculture plays through stable production in rural areas, from the conservation of national land, water resources, and the natural environment to the formation of a good landscape and maintenance of cultural tradition, in addition to its conventional role as a primary food supplier (hereinafter referred to as 'multifunctional roles'), shall be fulfilled sufficiently for the future.

(Sustainable Agricultural Development)

Article 4

In consideration of the importance of its conventional role as a primary food supplier and its multifunctional roles, the sustainable development of agriculture shall be promoted by securing agricultural facilities including the necessary farmlands and irrigation/drainage, and a workforce, establishing a desirable agricultural structure with an effective combination of the above elements, based on regional characteristics, maintaining and improving the natural cyclical function of agriculture. (The latter term means the function of agriculture in stimulating the biological and physical cycle in nature while being influenced strongly by the cycle. This is the meaning referred to hereinafter.)

(Development of Rural Areas)

Article 5

In consideration of the fact that rural areas play important roles as the bases for sustainable agricultural development, where farming is operated in the place of living for local residents including farmers, rural areas shall be developed through improvements in agricultural production conditions and rural welfare including living infrastructure so that the conventional role as primary food supplier and the multifunctional roles can be fulfilled sufficiently.

(Proper Consideration to Fisheries and Forestry Industries)

Article 6

In taking measures on food, agriculture and rural areas, adequate consideration shall be given to the development of the fisheries and forestry industries in view of their close relationship with agriculture.

(Responsibility of the State)

Article 7

1 The State is responsible for formulating and implementing comprehensive policies with regard to food, agriculture and rural areas, pursuant to the basic principles on policies for food, agriculture and rural areas prescribed in articles 2-5 (hereinafter referred to as the "basic principles").

2 The State shall make efforts to obtain a better understanding of the basic principles among the people by providing relevant information on food, agriculture and rural areas.

(Responsibility of Local Governments)

Article 8

The local governments are responsible, in pursuant with the basic principles, and based on an appropriate sharing of roles with the State, for formulating and implementing policies that suit their natural and socioeconomic characteristics with regard to food, agriculture and rural areas.

(Efforts of Farmers etc.)

Article 9

Farmers and farmers' organizations shall make voluntary efforts to realize the basic principles in operating farming and other relevant activities.

(Efforts of the Food Industry)

Article 10

Operators in the food industry shall make efforts in operating their business, pursuant to the basic principles, in order to secure a stable food supply to the people.

(Support Provided to the Efforts of Farmers etc.)

Article 11

In taking measures on food, agriculture and rural areas, the state and local governments shall aim to provide support to the voluntary efforts of farmers, farmers' organizations and food industry operators.

(Consumers' Role)

Article 12

Consumers shall be encouraged to have a better understanding of food, agriculture and rural areas and be more positive in improving their dietary patterns.

(Legislative Measures etc.)

Article 13

The Government shall take legislative, fiscal and financial measures required to implement policies with regard to food, agriculture and rural areas.

(Annual Report)

Article 14

1 The Government shall annually submit to the Diet a report on the state of food, agriculture and rural areas and on the policies implemented with regard to food, agriculture and rural areas.

2 The Government shall annually prepare and submit to the Diet a document explaining policies the Government is going to implement in consideration of the state of food, agriculture and rural areas described in the report in the preceding paragraph.

3 The Government shall seek opinions from the Council of Food, Agriculture and Rural Area Policies, in preparing a document explaining policies the Government is going to implement as referred to in the preceding paragraph.

Chapter II Basic Policies

Section 1 Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas

Article 15

1 The Government shall establish a basic plan for food, agriculture and rural areas (hereinafter referred to as the 'basic plan') for the promotion of the comprehensive and systematic implementation of policies on food, agriculture and rural areas.

2 The basic plan shall stipulate the following matters:

- (1) Basic direction in formulating policies on food, agriculture and rural areas
- (2) Target for food self-sufficiency ratio
- (3) Policies implemented comprehensively and systematically by the Government with regard to food, agriculture and rural areas
- (4) Besides the preceding matters, matters required to comprehensively and systematically promote policies on food, agriculture and rural areas.

3 Target for food self-sufficiency ratio as referred to in the second item of the preceding paragraph above shall be established in view of improving the ratio and as a guideline for domestic agricultural production and food consumption, while identifying issues which farmers and other relevant parties should address.

4 Policies in the basic plan related to rural areas shall be developed in harmony with the national plan of comprehensive use, development and conservation of national land.

5 The Government shall seek opinions from the Council of Food, Agriculture and Rural Area Policies in establishing the basic plan, under the provision of paragraph 1.

6 The Government shall, without delay, submit to the Diet and promulgate the basic plan when established under the provision of paragraph 1.

7 The Government shall revise the basic plan approximately every 5 years, in consideration of changes in circumstances surrounding food, agriculture and rural areas and also the result of policy evaluation on food, agriculture and rural areas.

8 Provisions of paragraphs 5 and 6 above shall apply mutatis mutandis to changes of the basic plan.

Section 2 Policies for Securing a Stable Food Supply

(Improvement of food consumption policies)

Article 16

1 The State shall take necessary measures such as improving the management of food hygiene and quality as well as proper food labeling, in order to secure food safety, improve food quality, and help consumers make proper selections.

2 The State shall take necessary measures such as developing guidelines for a healthy dietary pattern, broadening the people's knowledge of food consumption, and providing relevant information, in order to promote better dietary patterns and the effective use of agricultural resources.

(Sound Development of the Food Industry)

Article 17

The State shall take necessary measures such as reinforcing the management base, encouraging closer cooperation with agriculture, and streamlining its distribution system, in order to promote the sound development of the food industry in view of the importance of its role as a stable food supply and with proper consideration given to reducing the adverse effects of its business operations on the environment and ensuring effective use of resources.

(Policies on Imports/Exports of Farm Products)

Article 18

1 The State shall take necessary measures for securing stable imports of farm products for which domestic production cannot meet demand; and shall take necessary measures such as tariff rate adjustments and import restrictions, where urgently required, when certain imports have or are likely to have a significant adverse effect on the production of domestic farm products competing against such imports.

2 The State shall take necessary measures such as enhancing the competitiveness of domestic farm products, promoting market research, providing relevant information, and encouraging dissemination activities, in order to increase exports.

(Food Security for Emergencies)

Article 19

The State shall take necessary measures such as production increases and distribution restrictions, should these be deemed necessary in order to secure the minimum food required by the people in the events prescribed in paragraph 4 of Article 2.

(Promotion of International Cooperation)

Article 20

The State shall endeavor to promote international cooperation including technical and financial cooperation for the development of agriculture and rural areas as well as food aid to developing regions, in order to help the long-term stability of the world's food supply/demand.

Section 3 Policies for Sustainable Agricultural Development

(Establishment of Desired Agricultural Structure)

Article 21

The State shall promote a better agricultural production infrastructure, expand the scale of farm management, and take other necessary measures for improving farmers' management structure, according to the type of management and the regional characteristics, in order to encourage efficient and stable farm management and to construct an agricultural structure in which such management can play a major part.

(Farming Operations by Full-time Farmers etc.)

Article 22

In consideration of the fact that it is important to enable full-time farmers and other motivated farmers to use their originality and creativity in their farm management, the State shall take necessary measures for revitalizing family farming by means of bringing about conditions for better farmers' management such as more rationalized business

administration and smooth business succession, and to promote the incorporation of farm management.

(Securing and Effectively Utilizing Farmland)

Article 23

The State shall take necessary measures such as securing the agricultural use of land suitable for farming, promoting the intensive use of farmland by those farmers whose management structure is efficient and stable, and promoting effective use of farmland in order to secure and efficiently utilize the farmland for domestic agricultural production.

(Improvement of Agricultural Production Infrastructure)

Article 24

The State shall take necessary measures for improving the agricultural production infrastructure including field division enlargement, the creation of multipurpose paddy fields, maintenance of better functions of irrigation and drainage facilities, according to regional characteristics, in consideration of harmony with the environment and with the view of efficient operation, in order to encourage the improvement of agricultural productivity by maintaining farmland with good conditions and agricultural water facilities and promoting their effective use.

(Securing and Fostering the Workforce)

Article 25

1 The State shall take necessary measures such as improving the technical and management skill of farmers, and encouraging recruitment of new farmers to acquire knowledge of agricultural technologies and management styles, in order to secure and foster a workforce to play a major role in effective and stable farm management.

2 The State shall take necessary measures such as the promotion of agricultural education so as to obtain a better understanding and interest of agriculture among the people.

(Promotion of Women's Involvement in Agriculture)

Article 26

In consideration of the importance of securing opportunities for both men and women to participate in all kinds of social activities as equal members of society, the State shall promote the creation of an environment in which women's roles in farming operations are fairly assessed and women can be provided with opportunities to become involved in farm management and other relevant activities on a voluntary basis.

(Promotion of Activities by Elderly Farmers)

Article 27

The State shall create an environment in which elderly farmers can be satisfied with their activities relevant to farming in accordance with their role in local farming and their skills and improve their welfare.

(Promotion of Activities of Agricultural Production Organizations)

Article 28

The State shall take necessary measures for promoting activities by cooperative organizations including those based on rural communities and organizations which operate commission farming, in order to contribute to secure effective agricultural production in local agriculture.

(Development and Promotion of Agricultural Technology)

Article 29

The State shall take necessary measures such as setting specific goals for the research and development of technology, encouraging closer cooperation among national and local research institutes, universities and private bodies, and promoting the dissemination of agricultural technologies that suit regional characteristics, in order to effectively promote Research and Development and dissemination activities of such technology in the fields of agriculture, food processing and distribution.

(Price Formation of Farm Products and Stabilization of Farm Management)

Article 30

1 The State shall take necessary measures for allowing the prices of farm products to form appropriately reflecting the real supply/demand situation and quality evaluation, in order to promote agricultural production responsive to consumer demands.

2 The State shall take necessary measures for mitigating the adverse effects of significant price changes of farm products on farm management supposed to be encouraged.

(Compensation for Disaster Losses)

Article 31

The State shall take necessary measures such as reasonable compensation for disaster losses, in order to prevent any possible hindrance to agricultural reproduction caused by disasters and to help the stabilization of farm management.

(Maintenance and Promotion of the Natural Cyclical Function of Agriculture)

Article 32

The State shall take necessary measures such as securing the proper use of agricultural chemicals and fertilizers and improving soil fertility through effective use of livestock manure, in order to maintain and promote the natural cyclical function of agriculture.

(Rationalization of Production and Distribution of Agricultural Materials)

Article 33

The State shall take necessary measures such as encouraging rationalized production and distribution systems of agricultural materials, in order to help with cost reduction of agricultural materials in farm management.

Section 4 Policies for Development of Rural Areas

(Comprehensive Development of Rural Areas)

Article 34

1 The State shall systematically promote measures on the comprehensive development of rural areas including agricultural development, giving proper consideration to the coordination of land use for agricultural and other purposes.

2 The State shall take necessary measures for comprehensively promoting improvements in agricultural production bases and rural welfare including living infrastructure such as transportation, telecommunications, public health, education and culture fitting in with regional characteristics, in order to promote the sound development of regional agriculture and create pleasant and resident-friendly rural areas surrounded with beautiful landscape.

(Development of Hilly and Mountainous Areas)

Article 35

1 The State shall take necessary measures, in areas with poor geographical conditions and disadvantages in agricultural production including mountainous areas (hereinafter referred to as "hilly and mountainous areas"), such as increasing job opportunities by promoting agricultural and other businesses through the introduction of new types of crops and the production/distribution of regional specialties, taking such regional characteristics into consideration and promoting the settlement of people through improved living conditions.

2 The State shall take specific measures for the fulfillment of the multifunctional roles of agriculture in hilly and mountainous areas, by providing support to compensate for disadvantages in agricultural production conditions so that such areas can maintain adequate production activities.

(Exchanges Between Urban Areas and Rural Areas)

Article 36

1 The State shall take necessary measures such as encouraging exchanges between urban areas and rural areas, and promoting the improvement of kitchen gardens, in order to obtain a better public understanding and awareness for agriculture and rural areas and to contribute to a healthy and comfortable life.

2 The State shall take necessary measures so that agriculture in and around urban areas can operate production activities responsive to the needs of urban residents, making use of the advantage of proximity to consumers.

Chapter III Administrative Bodies and Relevant Organizations

(Restructuring of Administrative Bodies)

Article 37

In taking measures on food, agriculture and rural areas, the State and local government shall endeavor to cooperate closely in their work to restructure administrative bodies and to improve their efficiency and transparency in administrative management.

(Reorganization/Restructuring of Relevant Bodies)

Article 38

The State shall take necessary measures for the effective restructuring of the relevant bodies for food, agriculture and rural areas, which contribute to the realization of the basic principles.

Chapter IV The Council of Food, Agriculture and Rural Area Policies

(Establishment)

Article 39

There is hereby established the Council of Food, Agriculture and Rural Area Policies (hereinafter referred to as the "Council") in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

(Authorization)

Article 40

1 The Council shall study and discuss the factors vital for implementing this Law, in response to consultations by the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries or other ministers concerned, in addition to dealing with the tasks authorized under this Law and other ordinances.

2 The Council may submit its opinions to the Prime Minister, the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries or other ministers concerned, with regard to the matters provided for in the preceding paragraph.

(Organization)

Article 41

1 The Council shall be comprised of no more than 15 members.

2 The Council members shall be appointed by the Prime Minister based on the proposals of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries from among academics or those having expertise or experience with regard to the matters provided for in the first paragraph of the preceding article.

3 The Council members shall serve on a part-time basis.

4 Besides those provided for in paragraph 2, the Council staff, as stipulated by Cabinet Order, shall be appointed by the Prime Minister based on the proposals of the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

(Request of Document Submission and others)

Article 42

The Council may request that the heads of relevant administrative bodies submit the appropriate documentation, and offer their opinions, explanations and other kinds of cooperation as deemed necessary for the execution of their designated tasks.

(Authorization Provision)

Article 43

Besides those provided for in this Law, the matters necessary for the organization and administration of the Council shall be stipulated by Cabinet Order.

Supplementary Provisions

(Effective Date)

Article 1

The Law shall enter into force on the day of its promulgation.

(Abrogation of the Agricultural Basic Law)

Article 2

The Agricultural Basic Law (Law No. 127, established in 1961) shall be abrogated.

(Transitional Application)

Article 3

1 If such a report as referred to under Paragraph 1 of Article 6 of the Agricultural Basic Law before abrogation, as stipulated in the preceding article (hereinafter referred to as the "old Agricultural Basic Law"), has not been submitted to the Diet for 1999 before the effective date of this Law, this report shall be submitted to the Diet as referred to in the former provisions.

2 If such a report as referred to in the first paragraph of Article 6 of the old Agricultural Basic Law was submitted before the effective date of this Law, or if such a report as referred to in the first paragraph of Article 6 of the old Agricultural Basic Law as stipulated in the preceding paragraph was submitted to the Diet, such reports shall be deemed to have been submitted as reports as referred to in the first paragraph of Article 14 under that paragraph.

3 If such a document as referred to in Article 7 of the old Agricultural Basic Law has not been submitted to the Diet for 1999 on the effective date of this Law, such a document shall be submitted to the Diet as referred to in that article.

4 If such a document as referred to in Article 7 of the old Agricultural Basic Law was submitted before the effective date of this Law, or if such a document as referred to in the first paragraph of Article 7 of the old Agricultural Basic Law which is prescribed to be submitted as stipulated in the preceding paragraph was submitted to the Diet, such documents shall be deemed to have been submitted as documents as referred to in the second paragraph of Article 14 under that paragraph.

(Partial Amendment of the Land Improvement Law)

Article 4

Parts of the Land Improvement Law (Law No. 195, established in 1949) are amended as follows:

The phrase "The Council of Food, Agriculture and Rural Area Policies" shall be inserted instead of the phrase "The Council of Agricultural Policies" in Article 4(2)1, and the word "kiite" in hiragana shall be amended to "kiite" in kanji characters.

(Partial Amendment of the Sweetening Resources Special Measure Law)

Article 5

Parts of the Sweetening Resources Special Measure Law (Law No. 41, established in 1964) are amended as follows:

Article 3 is amended as follows:

Article 3 Elimination

The phrase "Estimated by the long-term prospects and other relevant data on crops for sweetening resources published under Article 3 of this Law and paragraph 1 of Article 8 of the Agricultural Basic Law" in Article 13(2)1 shall be eliminated.

(Partial Amendment of the Law concerning the Active Use of National Forests)

Article 6

Parts of the Law concerning the Active Use of National Forests (Law No. 108, established in 1971) are amended as follows:

The phrase "Improvement of the agricultural structure means scale expansion of farming operations, transition into collective farming operations, introduction of livestock, mechanization, farmland holding rationalization, and farming modernization" shall be inserted instead of the phrase "'Improvement of the agricultural structure' and" in the second paragraph of Article 2, and the phrase "'Improvement of the agricultural structure' and as provided for in Article 2 (1) 3 of the Agricultural Basic Law (Law No. 127, established in 1961) respectively" shall be eliminated.

(end)