

# JAPAN SESAME MARKET TREND

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# 2021 Japanese import statistics

Import volume in 2021: **151K MT**

70% for crushing and 30% for edible

As a reaction to 2020, the quantity decreased largely.

Import volume in 2020: **205K MT**, record high quantity

Japan bought more sesame seeds than usual because of the low price and anxieties about stable supply caused by Covid 19.



|              | TOTAL (A)      |     | (JAN)        | (FEB)        | (MAR)         | (APR)        | (MAY)         | (JUN)         | (JUL)         | (AUG)         | (SEP)         | (OCT)         | (NOV)         | (DEC)         | Rough unit price<br>\$/MT | 2020 (B)       | (A)-(B)      |
|--------------|----------------|-----|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>150,975</b> |     | <b>8,793</b> | <b>8,216</b> | <b>10,216</b> | <b>9,311</b> | <b>13,907</b> | <b>15,788</b> | <b>10,757</b> | <b>12,964</b> | <b>15,362</b> | <b>14,740</b> | <b>17,391</b> | <b>13,530</b> |                           | <b>204,864</b> | △ 53,889     |
| NIGERIA      | 58,889         | 39% | 3,429        | 1,593        | 2,695         | 4,489        | 7,582         | 6,410         | 6,371         | 6,321         | 7,132         | 4,522         | 4,675         | 3,670         | 1,258                     | 76,208         | 37% △ 17,319 |
| TANZANIA     | 17,322         | 11% | 303          |              |               |              |               | 359           |               | 302           | 4,135         | 4,959         | 5,530         | 1,734         | 1,273                     | 18,296         | 9% △ 974     |
| PARAGUAY     | 11,350         | 8%  | 1,237        | 1,018        | 1,525         | 1,139        | 622           | 411           |               | 799           | 386           | 1,061         | 1,551         | 1,601         | 1,704                     | 15,019         | 7% △ 3,669   |
| MOZAMBIQUE   | 10,120         | 7%  | 2,264        | 3,061        | 677           | 299          | 303           | 95            | 312           | 559           | 395           |               | 709           | 1,446         | 1,307                     | 15,585         | 8% △ 5,465   |
| BURKINA FASO | 8,749          | 6%  |              | 500          |               | 274          | 187           | 1,934         | 517           | 1,310         | 1,078         | 983           | 1,352         | 614           | 1,236                     | 25,925         | 13% △ 17,176 |
| GUATEMALA    | 8,596          | 6%  | 66           | 455          | 1,054         | 1,066        | 1,811         | 2,398         | 413           | 281           |               | 242           | 135           | 675           | 1,639                     | 6,116          | 3% 2,480     |
| SUDAN        | 4,654          | 3%  |              |              |               |              | 105           | 755           | 1,073         | 664           | 305           | 1,035         | 358           | 359           | 1,130                     | 2,042          | 1% 2,612     |
| PAKISTAN     | 4,040          | 3%  | 107          | 53           | 800           | 297          | 127           | 54            | 90            | 806           | 197           | 582           | 652           | 275           | 1,296                     | 1,278          | 1% 2,762     |
| MEXICO       | 3,635          | 2%  | 127          | 24           | 98            | 212          | 271           | 474           | 418           | 186           | 493           | 221           | 828           | 283           | 2,261                     | 2,454          | 1% 1,181     |
| MYANMAR      | 3,520          | 2%  | 187          | 579          | 602           | 154          | 400           | 169           | 24            | 223           | 203           | 53            | 283           | 643           | 2,266                     | 6,206          | 3% △ 2,686   |
| MALI         | 3,356          | 2%  |              |              |               |              | 1,578         | 794           | 493           |               | 491           |               |               |               | 1,210                     | 2,957          | 1% 399       |
| ETHIOPIA     | 2,553          | 2%  | 188          | 150          |               |              | 410           | 454           | 114           | 372           | 131           |               |               | 734           | 1,566                     | 11,419         | 6% △ 8,866   |
| BOLIVIA      | 2,362          | 2%  | 239          | 174          | 178           | 103          |               |               |               | 160           | 178           | 485           | 585           | 260           | 2,133                     | 2,087          | 1% 275       |
| SOMALIA      | 2,269          | 2%  |              |              | 1,081         | 303          |               | 411           | 179           |               |               |               | 295           |               | 1,248                     | 3,850          | 2% △ 1,581   |
| EGYPT        | 1,765          | 1%  | 193          | 287          | 202           | 95           |               | 61            | 94            | 78            | 94            | 351           |               | 310           | 1,784                     | 2,873          | 1% △ 1,108   |
| NICARAGUA    | 1,713          | 1%  | 206          | 114          | 568           | 465          | 205           | 155           |               |               |               |               |               |               | 1,595                     | 2,102          | 1% △ 389     |
| NIGER        | 1,305          | 1%  |              |              |               |              |               | 284           | 260           |               |               |               |               | 761           | 1,316                     | 190            | 0% 1,115     |
| TURKEY       | 1,248          | 1%  | 213          | 152          | 337           |              |               | 19            | 38            | 112           | 143           |               | 86            | 148           | 2,740                     | 1,486          | 1% △ 238     |
| Others       | 3,529          | 2%  | 34           | 56           | 399           | 415          | 306           | 551           | 361           | 791           | 1             | 246           | 352           | 17            |                           | 8,771          | 4% △ 5,242   |

# 2022 Japanese import statistics as of June

Import volume in the first half (Jan.-Jun.) of 2022:

**95K MT (+29K MT year on year)**

The import is progressing at high speed compared with last year.

However, Japanese edible players have skipped the purchases of central and south American sesame seeds like Paraguay and Guatemala due to the high price.



|              | TOTAL as of June (A) |     | (JAN)         | (FEB)         | (MAR)         | (APR)         | (MAY)         | (JUN)         | Rough unit price \$/MT | The first half of 2021 (B) |     | (A)-(B) |
|--------------|----------------------|-----|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|------------------------|----------------------------|-----|---------|
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>95,324</b>        |     | <b>10,641</b> | <b>12,454</b> | <b>22,205</b> | <b>15,717</b> | <b>17,092</b> | <b>17,215</b> |                        | <b>66,231</b>              |     | 29,093  |
| NIGERIA      | 39,069               | 41% | 2,616         | 4,428         | 10,840        | 8,126         | 5,373         | 7,686         | 1,404                  | 26,198                     | 40% | 12,871  |
| BURKINA FASO | 15,097               | 16% | 569           |               | 1,198         | 2,777         | 5,935         | 4,618         | 1,521                  | 2,895                      | 4%  | 12,202  |
| MOZAMBIQUE   | 9,033                | 9%  | 1,346         | 1,937         | 2,913         | 689           | 1,327         | 821           | 1,467                  | 6,699                      | 10% | 2,334   |
| MYANMAR      | 4,352                | 5%  | 411           | 1,057         | 1,091         | 546           | 632           | 615           | 1,958                  | 2,091                      | 3%  | 2,261   |
| PARAGUAY     | 3,081                | 3%  | 971           | 826           | 333           | 102           | 488           | 361           | 1,924                  | 5,952                      | 9%  | △ 2,871 |
| PAKISTAN     | 3,057                | 3%  | 786           | 677           | 904           | 485           | 152           | 53            | 1,407                  | 1,438                      | 2%  | 1,619   |
| TANZANIA     | 2,773                | 3%  | 2,042         | 674           | 57            |               |               |               | 1,320                  | 662                        | 1%  | 2,111   |
| ETHIOPIA     | 2,731                | 3%  | 76            | 72            | 585           | 884           | 585           | 529           | 1,910                  | 1,202                      | 2%  | 1,529   |
| MALI         | 2,392                | 3%  |               |               | 303           | 493           | 797           | 799           | 1,534                  | 2,372                      | 4%  | 20      |
| MALAWI       | 2,057                | 2%  |               | 448           | 1,430         | 179           |               |               | 1,366                  |                            |     | 2,057   |
| GUATEMALA    | 1,890                | 2%  |               | 639           | 516           | 171           | 126           | 438           | 2,293                  | 6,850                      | 10% | △ 4,960 |
| SRI LANKA    | 1,646                | 2%  | 664           | 2             | 151           | 490           | 226           | 113           | 1,524                  | 2                          | 0%  | 1,644   |
| SUDAN        | 1,262                | 1%  |               | 143           | 188           | 333           | 409           | 189           | 1,706                  | 860                        | 1%  | 402     |
| BOLIVIA      | 1,218                | 1%  | 234           | 530           | 454           |               |               |               | 2,162                  | 694                        | 1%  | 524     |
| TOGO         | 1,216                | 1%  |               | 128           | 186           | 36            | 554           | 312           | 1,574                  | 17                         | 0%  | 1,199   |
| TURKEY       | 923                  | 1%  | 175           | 222           | 423           | 77            | 26            |               | 2,688                  | 721                        | 1%  | 202     |
| EGYPT        | 912                  | 1%  | 438           | 320           | 136           | 18            |               |               | 2,125                  | 838                        | 1%  | 74      |
| MEXICO       | 665                  | 1%  |               | 113           | 112           | 73            | 54            | 313           | 2,582                  | 1,206                      | 2%  | △ 541   |
| Others       | 1,950                |     | 313           | 238           | 385           | 238           | 408           | 368           |                        | 1,761                      | 3%  | 189     |

# 2022 Japanese import outlook

|              | The first half of 2022 | The last half of 2022 forecast | 2022 forecast  | 2021           | comparison    |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|
| <b>TOTAL</b> | <b>95,324</b>          | <b>87,100</b>                  | <b>182,424</b> | <b>150,975</b> | <b>31,449</b> |
| NIGERIA      | 39,069                 | 35,000                         | 74,069         | 58,889         | 15,180        |
| BURKINA FASO | 15,097                 | 10,000                         | 25,097         | 8,749          | 16,348        |
| MOZAMBIQUE   | 9,033                  | 5,000                          | 14,033         | 10,120         | 3,913         |
| MYANMAR      | 4,352                  | 1,000                          | 5,352          | 3,520          | 1,832         |
| PARAGUAY     | 3,081                  | 4,000                          | 7,081          | 11,350         | △ 4,269       |
| PAKISTAN     | 3,057                  | 800                            | 3,857          | 4,040          | △ 183         |
| TANZANIA     | 2,773                  | 14,000                         | 16,773         | 17,322         | △ 549         |
| ETHIOPIA     | 2,731                  | 1,500                          | 4,231          | 2,553          | 1,678         |
| MALI         | 2,392                  | 1,000                          | 3,392          | 3,356          | 36            |
| MALAWI       | 2,057                  | 1,000                          | 3,057          | 298            | 2,759         |
| GUATEMALA    | 1,890                  | 1,000                          | 2,890          | 8,596          | △ 5,706       |
| SRI LANKA    | 1,646                  | 1,000                          | 2,646          | 2              | 2,644         |
| SUDAN        | 1,262                  | 2,000                          | 3,262          | 4,654          | △ 1,392       |
| BOLIVIA      | 1,218                  | 1,800                          | 3,018          | 2,362          | 656           |
| TOGO         | 1,216                  | 1,000                          | 2,216          | 491            | 1,725         |
| TURKEY       | 923                    | 500                            | 1,423          | 1,248          | 175           |
| EGYPT        | 912                    | 900                            | 1,812          | 1,765          | 47            |
| MEXICO       | 665                    | 2,000                          | 2,665          | 3,635          | △ 970         |
| NICARAGUA    | 499                    | 100                            | 599            | 1,713          | △ 1,114       |
| SOMALIA      | 285                    | 1,000                          | 1,285          | 2,269          | △ 984         |
| NIGER        | 284                    | 500                            | 784            | 1,305          | △ 521         |
| Others       | 882                    | 2,000                          | 2,882          | 2,738          | 144           |

**Expected Import volume in 2022:**  
**180K MT (the average quantity of last 5 years)**



Although Japanese sesame players are a little bit negative to buy sesame now due to the depreciation of the Japanese yen and the relatively high price of sesame seeds, they are constantly buying because there is certain demand in Japan.

## Crushing:

When Japanese crushers buy sesame seeds from Africa, Any 5(Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Tanzania, Mozambique, and Uganda) with the seller's option is very common. Most sellers prefer to supply Nigeria sesame seeds because of the lower price. Unless Japan changes this way of purchase, the current situation that Japan heavily relies on Nigeria will not change.

## Edible:

Japan has bought Paraguay, Guatemala, Ethiopia, and Mozambique a lot. However, the price of Paraguay and Guatemala was high and there is not enough cargo from Ethiopia. Therefore, Japan has no choice but to rely on Mozambique. Japan has tried new supply sources like Pakistan, but faced a lot of quality issues. It's not easy to switch to a new source as of now.



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# Challenges Japan is facing

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## **Agrichemical residue Issues (Positive list)**

Japan is very strict on agrichemical residue. Therefore, in addition to Japanese government testing, each trading house and Sesame-related company voluntarily does agrichemical testing at the timing of arrival before import in Japan to confirm its safety. The number of detection has been increasing dramatically, especially over the last 3 years. From this kind of circumstance, the Sesame Importers Committee of the Japan Oil & Fat Importers & Exporters Association issued a letter regarding the increase of pesticide residue to each country's embassy and or stakeholders.

### [Our requests to suppliers](#)

**To Educate farmers and local traders on how to use pesticides correctly.**

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## **Quality Issues**

The number of the quality issue has been increasing over the last 3 years, especially from Nigeria and Pakistan. Most Japanese claim for compensation for the difference between contracted specification and actual result conducted in Japan. If FFA is too much, buyers cannot use it for sesame oil, so ship-back sometimes happens.

### [Our requests to suppliers](#)

**To pay more attention to quality control.**

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## **Color seeds Issues**

Detection of color seeds (coated seeds) is very big issue, especially for edible markers in Japan. Color seeds have been found from Tanzania, Mozambique, Nigeria, and Pakistan so far.

### [Our requests to suppliers](#)

**To educate farmers not to mix color seeds (seeds for sowing) with the harvest.**

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## **PP bag Issues**

The Positive List System for Food Utensils, Containers, and Packaging has been enforced since 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020. The safest way is to use white plain PP bag without any design and color.

### [Our requests to suppliers](#)

**To use white plain PP bag.**

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## **Freight issues**

Many costs, like demurrage, detention, and container repayment & cleaning, are being charged to us from shipping lines.

### [Our requests to suppliers](#)

**To try to get free time for demurrage and detention as much as possible and use clean containers.**



# letter regarding the increase of pesticide residue

May 27, 2022

Embassy of Guatemala

Re: The increase of the pesticides residue on sesame imported to Japan

Dear Sirs,

We are writing this letter to advise you our serious concern on the risk of pesticides residue for sesame imported to Japan. Japan is the second largest importer of sesame in the world, and have a strong trade relationship with Guatemala through sesame as well as other products.

That being said, due to drastic increase in the number of detection of pesticides residue exceeding Japanese regulation from Guatemalan sesame, we, Sesame Importers Committee of the Japan Oil & Fat Importers & Exporters Association (JOFIEA), are strongly concerned about the future of the sesame trade with Guatemala, as well as other sesame exporting countries. We would highly appreciate if you could treat this problem seriously and discuss the corrective actions with Guatemalan sesame exporters.

In order to protect consumers, pesticide residues in foods are strictly controlled in Japan under positive list system, and sesame is not an exception.

More specifically, sesame firstly must go through (I)Pesticide Residue / Aflatoxin Inspection by the Japanese Government, when requested by Japanese Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW). Additionally, (II)Voluntary Inspections by processors / trading houses are always carried out before custom clearance and delivery to the processors.

## I. Pesticides Residue / Aflatoxin Inspection by the Japanese Government

Based on the Imported Foods Monitoring and Guidance Plan, the MHLW orders importers to carry out one of the following inspections of imported foods. Pesticides residue and Aflatoxin are subject to those inspections.

### (i) Inspection Order:

Inspection Order is an order that requires importers to have imported items (including sesame) with a high risk of violating the Food Sanitation Act (Act) inspected, each time of the import. Items can be subject to inspection order once the violation with the Act incurs, and will get excluded if they do not violate the Act for a certain period (most cases more than one year). The regulation differs by the origin country of the item, and sesame from Tanzania and Paraguay are subject to inspection order as of March 14, 2022.

Please refer to the following to see the detail.

<https://www.mhlw.go.jp/english/topics/importedfoods/21/appendix1.html>

### (ii) Monitoring Inspections:

Monitoring Inspections are implemented at random, not every time, for the purposes of monitoring safety conditions of various foods. Sesame of all origins are subject to monitoring inspections. In the case of any violation, necessary measures will be introduced such as enhanced inspections on importation (such as Inspection Order).

## II. Voluntary Pesticides Residue / Aflatoxin Inspection by user/importer

In addition to the inspection by the government, Voluntary Inspections of Pesticides Residue / Aflatoxin are implemented by processors (manufacturers of sesame products) and importers (trading houses). In Japan it is quite common that the pesticide residues of any processed foods are randomly inspected by local health care centers and retailers.

Since various kinds of pesticide residues that exceed Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) have been detected in the result of the random inspections on sesame products such as sesame oils, processors and importers of sesame have no choice but to conduct Voluntary Inspections on each shipment of sesame as a preventive action, in order to confirm the safety of imported sesame.

Unfortunately, it is confirmed that the excess of MRL from Guatemalan sesame has been increased. For reference, following is the latest MRL of pesticides on sesame : [https://db.ffcr.or.jp/front/food\\_group\\_detail?id=12100](https://db.ffcr.or.jp/front/food_group_detail?id=12100)

We would like to emphasize that, when excess of MRL is confirmed, the measures such as disposal and ship-back have to be taken for the sesame. If this trend continues, it may damage the reputation of Guatemalan sesame, and may also reduce the price competitiveness of Guatemalan sesame as pesticide risk can be considered as potential cost. In order to maintain the strong relationships with customers in Japan, we strongly ask you and Guatemalan sesame exporters to treat this problem seriously and to take necessary measures to improve the situation, such as investigations to determine the root cause of pesticide residues and enhanced inspections of sesame at Guatemala.

Sincerely,



Yoshitomo Yamada  
Chief of Sesame Importers Committee of JOFIEA  
(ITOCHU Corporation)



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Thank you so much for your attention.

360° business innovation.

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