

Summary of Specification



1. Name of the GI + transcription in Latin alphabet or in international phonetic alphabet

水戸の柔甘ねぎ (transcription: Mito no Yawaraka Negi)

2. Category of the product for which the name is protected

Class 1 : Agricultural product (Green onion)

3. Applicant – name and address

Mito Agricultural Cooperative (JA Mito)

2-27 Akatsuka, Mito City, Ibaraki Prefecture 311-4141, Japan

4. Date of first Protection in the country of origin

February 7, 2018

5. Description of product

Mito no Yawaraka Negi, meaning “Mito’s soft and sweet green onion” is a variety of *nebuka negi*, (literally, deep-rooted green onion), only white part of which is mainly consumed and has 25 to 30 centimeters long generally. However, Mito no Yawaraka Negi has 40 centimeters or longer white and straight part, and even its green leaves are eaten tasty.

Compared with general *nebuka negi* for which hilling with soil is used to increase the length of the white part, white part of Mito no Yawaraka Negi is covered with a light-blocking film so that it has following textural and palatable features: (1) low rupture strength as a hardness indicator, (2) high glucose content, and (3) low pyruvic acid content as a pungency indicator. Therefore, Mito no Yawaraka Negi is soft and sweet enough, and less pungent or acrid to be eaten raw.

Mito no Yawaraka Negi is highly regarded by consumers for its features of long white part, soft and sweet texture, so that market players recognize it as high-in-demand green onion. It is traded at high prices, about 1.7 times higher than general *nebuka negi*, in the market, and receives a lot of inquiries from retailers, primarily supermarkets in Tokyo.

6. Description/delimitation of the Geographical Area and of specific steps in production that must take place in the identified geographic area

(1) Producing area:

Mito City, and Shirosato Town and Ibaraki Town in Higashi-ibaraki County, Ibaraki Prefecture

(2) Production method:

① Cultivation method

Cultivate Mito no Yawaraka Negi in vinyl greenhouse facilities within the producing area. Every year, diagnose soil in each greenhouse before the start of the year's cultivation. Based on the diagnosis results, manage fertilization properly. Use blanching with light-blocking films and other techniques, instead of hilling for general *nebuka negi*, to increase the length of the white part without bending it.

② Preparation for shipping

Mito no Yawaraka Negi with soft long white part is easy to dry and easy to break. Therefore, carefully remove the outer skin using a peeler set to a low pressure, cut the roots, and wipe any dirt.

After the preparation, promptly put the product into freshness-keeping bags to prevent it from drying out.

③ Timing of shipment

Generally, ship Mito no Yawaraka Negi between November and July of the following year.

④ Shipment standard

Put all products that have white part of 40 cm or longer and are almost straight into freshness-keeping bags for shipment. Inspect whether or not the products have a crack (tear) at the border between the leaves and the white part, overcut roots, broken green leaves, dirt, disease or insect damage. Products that have any of these will not be shipped.

7. Link with the Geographical Area

Mito no Yawaraka Negi is produced in and around Ibaraki Prefecture's Mito City that is built on the fertile lowland as an alluvium deposit along the Naka River and the flat highland of Kanto loam layer in the southwest that features good water retention, air permeability, and good drainage. Anywhere in the producing area, it is possible to secure a plowed soil layer that is deep enough to allow the growth of the roots that support 140-cm-long Mito no Yawaraka Negi. Climate is stable with annual mean temperature of 13.6°C, annual rainfall of about 1,354 mm, and annual sunshine in hours of about 1,922 hours. The producing area is hardly affected by typhoon or snow and secures sunshine hours particularly in winter due to the location along the Pacific coast. The area with secured sunshine hours has appropriate environmental conditions even for greenhouse farming in which transmitted light attenuation caused by covering material is often an issue.

Green onion has been cultivated in and around Mito over the centuries. With such local color, some green

onion producers have voluntarily worked on community-based research on cultivation methods for blanching without hilling and on soil suitable for improving taste to produce high quality *nebuka negi* since 1981, and established the production techniques for Mito no Yawaraka Negi, which are different from those for general *nebuka negi*.

8. History / confirmations of on-going production

In 1981, greenhouse farming for blanching without hilling was introduced to produce high quality *nebuka negi*. However, the disproportionate production cost, including costs for facilities and materials, could not be covered by the selling price, so that the farms had to suspend the greenhouse farming in 1985.

With the widespread use of new low-cost, functional materials and the need for shipment of green onion that can compete with imported green onion, production was resumed in 1996. Thanks to the efforts for improving the cultivation method through trial and error, the production has continued.

Mito no Yawaraka Negi cultivation was also started in Shiroshiro Town in 2003, and in Ibaraki Town in the following year.

Since 1998, the producers have shipped the green onion under the unified name of Mito no Yawaraka Negi to enhance the brand. As the production volume increased (164 tons in 2016), the brand name became widely known.

9. Specific rules concerning labelling and using, if any

N/A

10. Control body / control authority responsible for checking the respect of the product specifications

Control body is JA Mito.

In addition, MAFF regularly monitors the condition of quality control in the process of production, through the examination of annual report submitted by JA Mito .

11. Outline of the quality control plan

JA Mito will check (1) producing area, (2) cultivation method, (3) preparation for shipping, (4) shipment standard and final products. If a producer fails to abide by the specification, JA Mito will issue a warning and request a correction of his/her production. In case the producer does not follow the warning, JA Mito may expel the producer from the producers group. In addition, JA Mito will prepare an annual performance report and submit it to the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

12. Information of registered trademark(s) identical or similar to the GI (if applied by the GI holder in other Party's territory)

N/A