

Summary of Specification



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

檜山海參 (transcription : Hiyama Haishen), Hiyama Haishen

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

Class 7: Processed marine product (Dried Sea cucumber)

3. Applicant – name and address

Hiyama Fisheries Cooperative

520 Aza Motomachi, Otobe Town, Nishi County, Hokkaido 043-0102, Japan

4. Date of first Protection in the country of origin

March 30, 2020

5. Description of product

Hiyama Haishen is a dried sea cucumber produced by sea cucumbers harvested in the adjacent sea to Hokkaido's Hiyama region (municipalities along the coast of Sea of Japan from Setana Town to Kaminokuni Town, and Okushiri Town) in the same area.

Hiyama Haishen has a spiny exterior covered with numerous spikes. It has an excellent appearance. Unlike the usual dried salted sea cucumber, its surface will not be damaged by salt crystallization. When rehydrated, Hiyama Haishen keeps its original shape and presents a solid and firm flesh that do not fall apart, with slimy and springy texture. Furthermore, there is no hassle of removing the salt, nor will its saltiness interfere with seasoning, resulting in the ease of handling when cooking.

In Chinese dishes, dried sea cucumbers are referred to as “haishen” which means sea ginseng, and are regarded as high-grade ingredient. In particular, the number of spikes and their shapes are important factors that determine the quality of the products. Prickly dried sea cucumbers are particularly highly valued and Hiyama Haishen fully meets these conditions. The excellent shape and quality flesh after rehydration, and easy-to-cook features are highly praised by users that handle Chinese ingredients.

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:

Setana Town, Kudo County; Yakumo Town, Futami County; Otobe Town, Nishi County; Esashi Town and Kaminokuni Town, Hiyama County; Okushiri Town, Okushiri County in Hokkaido Prefecture

(2) Production method:

①Raw Material

Sea cucumbers harvested without using fishing nets including drag and dredge nets (a spoon-net is allowed) in the sea adjacent to Hokkaido's Hiyama region, and are kept alive just before pretreatment.

②Pretreatment

Cut the abdominal side of the sea cucumber and scrap out guts and sand/mud. Wash with fresh water or sea water.

③Boiling

Boil the sea cucumber using fresh water. Leave the sea cucumber on a sieve after boiling to cool down and get rid of the remaining viscera and so on.

Boil again with fresh water.

The water temperature and time for boiling must be determined depending on the size and other features of each sea cucumber. The Sea cucumber will not be salted after boiling.

④Drying

When cooled down after boiling, place the sea cucumber on a drying rack and leave them to dry (either by sun drying, fan drying, or vacuum freeze drying) until the weight stops decreasing.

The sea cucumber can undergo the process of Anjo (in which the drying process is stopped and temporarily kept under a certain cool temperature, including repeat of this process) and second boil. These are done for the purpose of preventing freezing/drying irregularities and arranging the shape to create the beautiful appearance.

⑤Shipping standard

Dried sea cucumbers that are in the following state (a. to d.) will not be shipped as Hiyama Haishen.

- a. Those that are malleable when pressed with a finger due to inadequate drying
- b. Those that are moldy and give off foreign odor
- c. Those that have lost the spiky appearance
- d. Products with significantly bad appearance including over-cut products and those with deep wounds

7. Link with the Geographical Area

The coastal sea of Hokkaido's Hiyama area is home to many shore reefs and has adequate sand surfaces, making it an ideal habitat environment for sea cucumbers. Sea cucumbers harvested in the coastal sea of Hokkaido is particularly renowned for their abundant spikes. Sea cucumbers caught in the Hiyama area, dubbed "six-line needles," also have numerous spikes, presenting an outstanding appearance when they are dehydrated.

Furthermore, Hiyama area stands out among other fishing grounds in Hokkaido in that sea cucumbers there are rarely harvested using a fishing net (drag and dredge nets). Instead, most of them are collected by hand picking (This refers to harvesting by hand using tools, the likes of scissors and scoop nets, or by diving). By ratio (2007-2016 average), 96% of the sea

cucumbers are harvested by hand in Hiyama area whereas it is only 28% in Hokkaido as a whole. Care is taken to leave the undersized sea cucumbers in the sea and not to damage the body and the spikes when collecting. This enables the use of top-quality sea cucumbers with minimum defects such as scars made during fishing, which deteriorate product quality.

The outstanding quality of Hiyama Haishen can also be attributed to the fact that local sea cucumber fishers and their family members are involved in the entire production. They carefully dehydrate the extremely fresh sea cucumbers that were kept alive just before the preparation, without salting them or using sea water.

8. History / confirmations of on-going production

Dried sea cucumber production in Hiyama Area has a long history. There is already a record of Hiyama in the Edo Period (1604-1867) as a production area of dried sea cucumbers that were one of the marine products as luxury ingredients exported to the Qing Dynasty (current China). Traditionally, sea cucumbers were processed in small numbers by fishers individually. In 1985, a processing facility was established by the fisheries cooperative, where fishers were able to work together. The cooperative production was compelled to stop in 2004 due to the surge in the price of sea cucumbers in 2002. However, individual production by local fishers continued, though in small scale, to meet the demands from local consumers until 2013.

In 2014, fishers with an earnest desire to deliver to consumers dried sea cucumbers with clear indication of their place of origin and producers, as well as to solidify in the area the traditional processing skills of sea cucumbers that have been passed down for generations, began working on the relaunch of the cooperative production. Then in 2017, after three years of preparation period, full scale cooperative production and sales of Hiyama Haishen restarted.

Currently, Hiyama Haishen is produced in Otohe and Esashi Districts by collaborative work of sea cucumber fishers in those districts (total of 156 fishers for both districts as of 2019). In 2019, the production volume was roughly 100 kg (dried, as of November 30, 2019) and production value amounted to 23 million yen with a unit price of 24,000 yen per 100 g.

To protect the sea cucumber resource for sustainable use, local fishermen are making numerous organized efforts, such as imposing limitations on fishing methods, restriction on harvesting small sea cucumbers, propagation and release of sea cucumber seedlings, as well as monitoring of poaching.

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 Hiyama Fisheries Cooperative.

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

11. Outline of the quality control plan

Hiyama Fisheries Cooperative will check production method. If a producer fails to abide by the specification, Hiyama Fisheries Cooperative will issue a warning and request a correction of his/her production. In the case the producer does not follow the warning, Hiyama Fisheries

Cooperative will stop the shipment of the product he/she produced as Hiyama Haishen or may expel the fisher from the cooperative. In addition, Hiyama Fisheries Cooperative 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