

Summary of Specification



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

伊吹そば (transcription : Ibuki Soba), Ibuki Soba

伊吹在来そば (transcription : Ibuki Zairaisoba), Ibuki Zairaisoba

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

Class 1 : Agricultural product (Buckwheat)

3. Applicant – name and address

Ibuki Soba Production Association

1760 Ibuki, Maibara City, Shiga Prefecture 521-0311, Japan

4. Date of first Protection in the country of origin

September 9, 2019

5. Description of product

Ibuki Soba is indigenous buckwheat (brown buckwheat) cultivated on the mountainside of Mount Ibuki situated in Maibara City, Shiga Prefecture from the old times.

Ibuki Soba's grain is 4.5 mm or smaller in diameter, which is smaller than other buckwheat grown widely in Japan.

Because of the small grain size, the testa comprises greater part of the grain. Accordingly, Ibuki Soba flour or noodle has a light green tint and distinct buckwheat flavor, both derived from the testa's color and flavor, respectively.

These qualities, namely, greenish color, distinct flavor and good taste, of Ibuki Soba are highly appreciated by flour milling companies and *soba* noodle restaurants.

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

Maibara City, Shiga Prefecture

(2) Production method

① Cultivar

Use the variety indigenous to Maibara (“*Ibuki Soba*”).

② Cultivation method

Cultivate the variety in ①, “*Ibuki Soba*”, in the producing area.

③ Shipment standard

Grains of 4.5 mm or smaller in diameter should make up more than 70% of the total.

7. Link with the Geographical Area

It is assumed that buckwheat production on Mount Ibuki started at the Taihei-gokokuji (Temple), which was established on the mountainside of Mount Ibuki between the late Heian Period (794-1185) and the Kamakura Period (1185-1333).

The documents written during the Edo Period (1663-1867) state that “*Ibuki Soba*” (Mount Ibuki’s buckwheat) is of high quality. Historically, Mount Ibuki has been known as a producing area of quality buckwheat.

In 1995, Shiga Prefecture Kohoku Agricultural Extension Center began a seed multiplication initiative of the indigenous variety (*Ibuki Soba*). Taiheiji area as the original producer of the indigenous variety (*Ibuki Soba*) is located along the upstream of the Ane River that runs to the south on the west side of Mount Ibuki. Upstream of the Ane River is surrounded by mountains, where crossing with other varieties hardly occurs. Farmers in this area cooperated with Shiga Prefecture Kohoku Agricultural Extension Center to preserve the indigenous variety (*Ibuki Soba*) and continue test growing. As a result, in 2001, the production scale increased, and the area was designated as the field for seed production. The designation of seed production field has led to the establishment of today’s system for securing stable production and preserve the indigenous variety (*Ibuki Soba*).

The upstream of the Ane River, including Taiheiji area where Ibuki Soba production began, drains well and is suitable for buckwheat cultivation. Even along the downstream in Maibara City, there are fields on a well-drained alluvial fan and andosol fields. Therefore, as seed supply stabilized, the areas of production expanded.

8. History / confirmations of on-going production

Ibukiyamanozu (picture of the Mount Ibuki) dated December 1739 depicts buckwheat fields on upper mountainside of Mount Ibuki. According to *Ibukicho shi* (Ibuki Town History), there were 298 buckwheat fields in Taiheiji Village during the Meiji Era (1868-1912). It implies that buckwheat was an important agricultural product that supported the village in those times. After 1995, farmers along the upstream of the Ane River continued test growing Ibuki Soba through cooperation with Shiga Prefecture Kohoku Agricultural Extension Center. In 2001, they expanded the production scale so that the area became the site of seed production. Today, Ibuki Soba is cultivated in greater areas, not only areas along the valley of the Ane River but also areas that spread from the entrance of the valley in Maibara City.

Between 2014 and 2018, average production area of Ibuki Soba was about 40 ha, yielding about 24 tons. Shipped Ibuki Soba is mainly processed into buckwheat flour for noodle making during the distribution process.

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 Ibuki Soba Production Association.

In addition, MAFF regularly monitors the condition of quality control in the process of production, through the examination of annual report submitted by Ibuki Soba Production Association.

11. Outline of the quality control plan

Ibuki Soba Production Association will check (1) producing area; (2) cultivar; (3) cultivation method; (4) shipment standard and final products. If a producer fails to abide by the specification, Ibuki Soba Production Association will issue a warning and request a correction of his/her production. In case the producer does not follow the warning, Ibuki Soba Production Association may expel the producer from the association. In addition, Ibuki

Soba Production Association 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