

Summary of Specification



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

八代生姜 (transcription :Yatsushiro Shoga), Yatsushiro Shoga, Yatsushiro Ginger

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

Class 1: Agricultural product (Ginger)

3. Applicant – name and address

Yatsushiro Region Agricultural Cooperative (JA Yatsushiro)
2690 Furushiro Town, Yatsushiro City, Kumamoto Prefecture, 866-0043, Japan

4. Date of first Protection in the country of origin

March 30, 2020

5. Description of product

Yatsushiro Shoga is a ginger characterized by its particularly smooth surface free of damage caused by diseases and pests, glowing beautiful appearance and the fresh flavor low in pungency, achieved by delicately trimming large tubers to get a good shape and complying with the strict shipping standard.

Appropriate storage after harvesting has also enabled year-around shipping of gingers that have superior appearance quality with good color and gloss.

The quality of Yatsushiro Shoga has obtained reputation from market participants and it has been traded at a price more than 30% higher than the general gingers.

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:

Yatsushiro City; Hikawa Town, Yatsushiro County; Kaito District, Ogawa Town, Uki City; Chuo District, Misato Town, Shimomashiki County (All are situated in Yatsushiro Region in Kumamoto Prefecture.)

(2) Production method:

① Cultivar

Use the variety of high quality line of Oshoga (Large ginger).

② Cultivation method

Use the healthy and superior seed rhizomes harvested in the producing area.

Seed rhizomes are planted at wider intervals considering tuber development and storage ability according to the cultivation environment including the amount of sunlight.

Crops must be kept in a storage where temperature and humidity are appropriately controlled, after harvesting.

③ Shipping standard

Gingers free of damage caused by diseases, pests and scratches, washed, and trimmed into a good shape.

7. Link with the Geographical Area

Major cultivation area of Yatsushiro Shoga is located in a hilly and mountainous district surrounded by mountain forests with an altitude exceeding 500 to 1,000 m. Gingers are cultivated on terraced fields scattered along the valley-shaped contour lines along the Hikawa River system. Farming on valley-shaped terrain sites typically lacks in sunlight. Therefore, gingers in this area are cultivated considering tuber development and storage ability, taking into account the cultivation environment including the amount of sunlight. This led to the development of the cultivation method unique to Yatsushiro area, which is characterized by sparse planting and the use of larger seed rhizomes than those used in other producing areas.

Rhizomes grow slowly when cultivated in this way. This prevents too many tubers to develop, consequently allowing each tuber to develop into large ones. As a result, fresh and juicy gingers low in pungency grow. Furthermore, the thick flesh is suitable for trimming, which prompted all the producers in the area to carry out the delicate trimming process to produce well shaped gingers.

Since smaller fields are more advantageous in preventing pests and diseases from spreading, they are suitable for cultivating high-quality gingers free of damage caused by pests and diseases.

For storage of gingers and quality seed rhizomes, a storage with appropriately controlled temperature and humidity is necessary. An excellent storage with an average temperature of 12 to 16°C and the average humidity of 80 to 90% can be easily obtained by digging a cave in the tuff which is prevalent in Yatsushiro area. This allowed the year-around shipping of gingers with good color and glossy appearance, which facilitated ginger cultivation to take root in Yatsushiro area.

8. History / confirmations of on-going production

Ginger cultivation in the area began in the 1920s. In 1931, ginger was introduced to the entire area as a new farming product. Cultivation of ginger expanded in 1970 as an alternative crop of rice, triggered by the nation's policy of rice production adjustment, which began at the time.

However, owing to weather conditions and soil borne diseases, annual yield fluctuated significantly, and stabilization of farm management was an issue. To address this, seed rhizome farm fields were developed on a hill to secure superior seed rhizomes, and wells for watering

and irrigation facilities were established.

In terms of cultivation guidance, related parties including prefectural and municipal bodies, and the JA (Japan Agricultural cooperative) have made efforts to develop the area into a producer of high-quality gingers, by helping raise farmers' skills through face-to-face individual interviews, on-site guidance, and farm field inspection before harvesting.

In 1991, new attempts including the pre-washing process before shipping, unique product selection at the collection and shipping stages and the trimming process started. Gingers treated in this way were sold as "Hikawa Shoga." In 1997, the stable storage facility was expanded, and a storage and precooling facilities were established in Toyo Town, Yatsushiro City, which is in proximity to the farm fields with an aim to increase shipping of pre-washed gingers. In 2005, the brand name was changed to "Yatsushiro Shoga," in response to the municipality merger. Ever since, gingers have been supplied under this name mainly to the markets in large-scale consumption area around Tokyo and Osaka.

As of 2018, the number of Yatsushiro Shoga producers is 111, and the shipping volume is 605 tons.

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 Yatsushiro.

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

11. Outline of the quality control plan

JA Yatsushiro will check (1)producing area, (2)cultivar, (3)cultivation method, (4)shipping standard and final products. If a producer fails to abide by the specification, JA Yatsushiro will issue a warning and request a correction of his/her production. If the producer does not follow the warning, JA Yatsushiro may prohibit the shipment of the product as "Yatsushiro Shoga" until the producer corrects of the production. In addition, JA Yatsushiro 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