

Summary of Specification



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

徳地やまのいも (transcription : Tokuji Yamanoimo), Tokuji Yamanoimo

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

Class 1: Agricultural product (Japanese Yam)

3. Applicant – name and address

Yamaguchi Prefecture Agricultural Cooperative (JA Yamaguchi)
2139 Ogorishimogo, Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi Prefecture 754-0002, Japan

4. Date of first Protection in the country of origin

November 18, 2020

5. Description of product

Tokuji Yamanoimo is a Japanese yam in Ichioimo Group produced in the former Tokuji Town, Saba County, Yamaguchi Prefecture (the current Tokuji District, Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi Prefecture). Generally, ichoimo is fan-shaped or plectrum-shaped with a long stem-end segment*. Tokuji Yamanoimo, meanwhile, is fist-shaped, with short stem-end segment, wide shoulder, and a scallop-like rim. The peel is smooth and has less fibrous roots on the surface of the edible portion. Grated Tokuji Yamanoimo has stronger viscosity and is more paste-like than ichoimo produced in the Kanto region, a major producer of ichoimo . The stem-end segment of ichoimo is generally cut off before shipping as they are not edible. Meanwhile, Tokuji Yamanoimo can be shipped without cutting the stem-end segment, since its portion is short. This enables the crops to have longer shelf life as they do not rot easily

from smaller cut end surface. For this reason, they are sold as gifts at the local farmers market. Of the yam family, nagaimo group and tsukuneimo group are popular in western Japan. Tokuji Yamamoto, being a yam in ichoimo group, is a rare crop in this regard.

*Stem-end segment is the portion near to the stem. With lower moisture content and being hard, they are not fit for eating and are usually discarded. They can be used as seed yams for the next year's crop.

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:

Tokuji Town, Saba County, Yamaguchi Prefecture (The administrative name of the area as of September 30, 2005)

(the current Tokuji District, Yamaguchi City, Yamaguchi Prefecture)

(2) Production method:

① Seed yam

Tokuji Yamanoimo is used.

② Cultivation method

Cultivated in paddy fields in the producing area in rotation with rice.

③ Shipping standards

Those that do not apply to the following can be shipped as Tokuji Yamanoimo.

- Rotten or deteriorated
- Damaged by insects and diseases

Crops that show minor symptoms of the two conditions above can be supplied to vegetable processing operators.

7. Link with the Geographical Area

While general ichoimo requires deep plowed soil so as not to hinder yam development, high-quality Tokuji Yamanoimo can be grown in a shallow paddy field with limited amount of plowed soil, since yams with a shorter stem-end segment have been selectively bred during the long history of cultivation at the producing area. Selection of yams with a shorter stem-end enabled shipping without cutting off the segment, which brought about Tokuji Yamanoimo's characteristic of the long shelf life.

Ichoimo favors fertile organic-rich loam or sandy-loam soil and continuous cropping in the same field should be avoided. High-quality yams are considered to grow only in areas with low groundwater level, and which do not dry during the growing season. In Tokuji District, the crops are cultivated as a rotational crop to rice in paddy fields that use the water of the Saba River system. Through this, not only replant failure and damage by insects and diseases were prevented but also enabled to maintain the necessary soil humidity through supply of water between the ridges when the soils dry, resulting in stabilization of production.

8. History / confirmations of on-going production

Japanese Yam cultivation in Tokuji area, Yamaguchi City has a long history. A document from the Edo Period shows that Japanese yam cultivation was in place by the late Edo Period. During and after the World War II, cropping was hindered by the nation's policy to boost agricultural production, and in 1951, the great flood of the Saba River devastated the planting area. Despite these challenges, Japanese yams in Tokuji continued to be cultivated through concerted efforts with the agricultural cooperative, as an alternative crop of rice

associated with the rice production adjustment. This was decided considering competition with other producing areas. (Source: History of Tokuji Town)

A material published in 1979, Cultivation of Leafy and Root Vegetables and Management Skills (Chugoku chiiki yasai gijutsu kenkyukai) refers to the Japanese yams produced in Tokuji Town as “it has a shape of hands put together with a scalloped rim.”

Japanese Yams produced before 1985 presented irregular shapes and many of them were not appropriate for commercial sales. Therefore, their profitability was unstable. To address this, in 1988, the producing area, in collaboration with Yamaguchi Prefecture Agricultural Experiment Station (the current Yamaguchi Prefecture Integrated Agricultural Research Center), began selection of a superior lineage having thick flesh and the shape characteristic of the indigenous variety. The selected yam was made virus-free and vaccinated, then established as a seed yam. These seed yams are propagated in a netted house at JA Tokuji Town (the current JA Yamaguchi), Yamaguchi Prefecture Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries Office, Hofu Branch (the current Yamaguchi Prefecture Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Office), and Tokuji Town Office (the current Yamaguchi City Tokuji Integrated Office). The propagated seed yams are further increased at designated farmers and distributed to producers.

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 Yamaguchi.

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

11. Outline of the quality control plan

JA Yamaguchi will check (1) producing area, (2) seed yam, (3) cultivation method, (4) shipping standard and final products. If a producer fails to abide by the specification, JA Yamaguchi will issue a warning and request a correction of his/her production. If the producer does not follow the warning, JA Yamaguchi may prohibit the shipment of the product and/or the distribution of Tokuji Yamanoimo’s seed yams. In addition, JA Yamaguchi 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