

Summary of Specification



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

河北せり (transcription : Kahoku Seri), Kahoku Dropwort, Kahoku Seri

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

Class 1: Agricultural product (Water dropwort)

3. Applicant – name and address

Kahoku Dropwort Promotion Association
390 Aza Yamahata, Kofunakoshi, Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture 986-0132, Japan

4. Date of first Protection in the country of origin

N/A

5. Description of product

Kahoku Seri (Dropwort) has longer edible shoot length and remains fresh longer than water the normal dropworts in other producing areas. Those with a shoot length of more than 50 cm account for roughly 30% of the entire shipping volume (2015-2018 average).

In the local town of Isihnomaki, Kahoku Seri has been a popular ingredient for pickles and *ohitashi* (boiled and dipped in soy sauce and soup stock) for the crispy texture of the stem near the root. Therefore, Kahoku Seri has been highly rated by

market participants for its long and thick edible shoots. The careful preparation process before shipment and the beautiful appearance of fresh shoots also added to its reputation.

The production volume of spring dropwort is small, since it is difficult to keep fresh given that it requires longer cultivation period, and has shorter harvest season. Therefore, spring Kahoku Dropwort is a precious local product.

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:

Kahoku Town, Monou County, Miyagi Prefecture (the administrative name of the area as of March 31, 2005) (the current Ainoya, Nakajima, Saragai, Magura and Kofunakoshi of Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture)

(2) Production method:

① Variety

Native variety of Iinogawa river, Miyagi VWD-1, Shimane Midori

Other varieties having the equivalent characteristics of the three varieties above can be used.

② Cultivation method

Cultivate using underground water in a dedicated farm field with more than 30cm water depth.

③ Shipping standard

Dropworts with a shoot length of 30 cm or more, and are not markedly bruised or damaged by insects.

7. Link with the Geographical Area

The producing area lies around Kitakami mountain range, which comprises mountains about 300 to 400 meters high including Mount Omine and Mount Kuromori. With abundant supply of groundwater from the Kitakami mountain range, the area is suitable for water dropwort cultivation that requires vast amount of water, even in autumn and spring, when other producing areas face water scarcity. Even in winter, when paddy fields usually get frozen from severe coldness, those in Ishinomaki are prevented from freezing since ample water of about 11°C from underground circulates there throughout the year. Prompt shipping adjustment is implemented after harvesting, by washing the crops with vast amount of water with great care to ensure freshness, and shipping them in the evening of the same day.

In 1982, the shipping standard of shoot length was revised to 30 cm or longer, which is longer than those of the other producing areas. The characteristics of the Kahoku Seri to this day are maintained by these facts: cultivation on high ridges in paddy fields, an integrated cultivation techniques which took root in the producing area in 1984, improvements in harvesting and shipping which were achieved by establishing facilities in proximity to the farm fields, and the well-considered washing processes.

8. History / confirmations of on-going production

Cultivation using underground water in dedicated paddy fields began around 1935, and by 1960, the long-term shipping/cultivation system was established, which covers autumn to early spring in the following year.

Autumn/winter water dropwort refers to those harvested with roots mainly during October to mid-March. They are shipped to markets in and outside Miyagi Prefecture.

Spring water dropwort, for which only the native variety of Inogawa is cultivated, refers to those without roots, where only the stems and the leaves that burgeon in early spring are harvested, before they become stiff in mid-May. They are harvested from April to mid-May, when the leaves and stems are still soft with less bitterness and astringency, which are shipped only to the markets in Ishinomaki. Generally, the second harvest of water dropwort is shipped as the spring water dropwort in other producing areas. Meanwhile, in the producing area, those that were planted in autumn exclusively for the next spring harvest are shipped as spring water dropwort.

Dropwort was introduced in the producing area as an alternative crop of rice in 1971. Through 1973 to 1974, dedicated paddy fields were established for concentrated cultivation of dropworts for the purpose of underground water management and improving labor efficiency. In 1982, to maintain Kahoku Seri's feature including the beautiful appearance throughout its extended shipping season, optimum variety for each shipping season was determined.

Generally, a harvested dropwort curves when laid on its side, in response to gravity pulling on it, which results in deteriorated freshness and quality. This was apparent in the case of Kahoku Seri, which has a long shoot length. Efforts were made to improve packaging materials and shipping boxes from 1974 to expand sales channels outside the prefecture. With the development in 1985 of a unique vertical box in which crops can be stored upright, the problem of quality deterioration was solved. As a result of the use of the vertical box by all producers, the area obtained reputation as the producer of freshwater dropwort with excellent exterior appearance. This prompted shipment of Kahoku Dropwort to the market of Akita Prefecture. Kahoku Dropwort has enjoyed continued popularity in the market of Akita Prefecture since its first appearance in 2005, as an ingredient for the local specialty dish, *kiritanpo hot pot*. This is because shipment of Akita-grown water dropwort stops during winter due to heavy snow. It is also highly valued by the market as a gift due to its long shelf life.

The producing area (the former Kahoku Town), has been making community efforts to maintain and develop the area, by: positioning the crop as a local special promoting crop, as well as designating it as an eligible crop for a subsidy program to farmers in Business Income Stabilization Program. As of 2018, the number of farmer household involved in cooperative sales and shipment of Kahoku Dropwort is 25, and the shipping volume is 115 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 Kahoku Dropwort Promotion Association.

In addition, MAFF regularly monitors the condition of quality control in the process of production, through the examination of annual report submitted by Kahoku Dropwort Promotion Association.

11. Outline of the quality control plan

Kahoku Dropwort Promotion Association will check (1) producing area, (2) variety, (3) cultivation method, (4) shipping standard, and the final products.

If the producer in the group fails to abide by the specification, Kahoku Dropwort Promotion Association will conduct appropriate measures for preventing market distribution of illicit products such as instruction, advice and so on.

In addition, Kahoku Dropwort Promotion 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