

## Summary of Specification



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

大竹いちじく (transcription : Otake Ichijiku), Otake Ichijiku

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

Class 1: Agricultural product (Fig)

### 3. Applicant – name and address

Otake Ichijiku Association

24 Aza Shimogo, Otake, Nikaho City, Akita Prefecture 018-0322, Japan

### 4. Date of first Protection in the country of origin

March 30, 2020

### 5. Description of product

Otake Ichijiku is a small-sized fig produced in Nikaho City, Akita Prefecture. The fruit peel maintains its greenness instead of turning purple even when it is mature and can be eaten without peeling the skin. They are typically shipped for processing and are harvested a few days before they reach full maturity when the fruit is still hard, so as not to lose shape. They are weighed one by one, sorted by size and shipped.

Some farmers in other producing areas spray hormones on the fruits to accelerate ripening, while on the other hand, hormones are never used with Otake Ichijiku. Thanks to keeping the fruits stiff on the branch for a substantial period of time before harvesting, this enables stable

supply in September and October, which are their peak season. The stable supply of reliable amount of high-quality fruits throughout the season has earned high reputation from market participants for the ease of developing sales strategies. As an indication of this, they are traded at a price 20% higher than that of figs produced in other areas for processing.

End-consumers praise the fruits citing several qualities, which includes good color, strong aroma, elegant sweetness, appropriate hardness that does not fall apart when boiled, the uniform size, which is suitable for cooking and making confectionaries, as well as the small size, which is convenient for eating.

Otake Ichijiku is used for a variety of processed food such as Kanroni (fruits stewed in syrup), jam, compotes and sauce. A major bakery company in Akita Prefecture sells pastries using Otake Ichijiku at 900 supermarket stores, confirming its presence as a local specialty.

Thanks to the sale of “Frozen Ichijiku,” produced without using any additives by quick freezing after harvesting and washing, Otake Ichijiku is now available year around, resulting in expansion of sales channels.

## **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:

Nikaho City, Akita Prefecture

(2) Production method:

① Cultivar

Use the variety White Genoa.

② Cultivation method

Cultivate in the producing area using White Genoa. Harvest when the fruit is still stiff.

③ Shipping standard

Rotten fruits, and those deteriorated by a scratch/overripening will not be shipped.

Sort by size and ship.

## **7. Link with the Geographical Area**

In the areas south of central Akita Prefecture, there was a tradition of harvesting figs grown at home for self-consumption when they are still immature, and stew them in syrup to store them as winter preserves.

Nikaho City, located in the southern coast of Akita Prefecture, has relatively little snow in the prefecture. Taking advantage of this area’s relatively high annual average temperature and winter’s minimum temperature, the area worked to develop Otake Ichijiku producing area by selecting the cold resistant White Genoa cultivar among the fruits that generally do not tolerate cold, to meet the local demand for figs for processing purposes.

Related parties including producers, producer groups, administrative bodies, and processing operators collaborated to improve cultivation technique to maintain quality as a fig for processing purposes that does not fall apart when boiled, as well as to increase the production volume. Furthermore, they have ensured that the fruits are categorized by size to promote expansion of the sale channels.

## **8. History / confirmations of on-going production**

Figs were reportedly grown mainly around Otake District in the former Konoura Town in Akita Prefecture around 1935.

In 1975, prompted by the nation's policy of reducing the rice acreage, production of figs, which was considered a suitable agricultural product to Otake District, accelerated. In 1983, a 4 ha-fig orchard was created by removing volcanic rocks from eruption of Mount Chokaizan in Otake District. In the following year, a full-scale production started.

The fig cultivation calendar for the year 1985 at Honjo Agricultural Development and Extension Association describes that the base tree should be the variety and mentions technical guidance of fig cultivating. This confirms the fact that the variety were cultivated in the area and various efforts for cultivation of the variety and technical improvements were carried out.

In 1997 when fig growing reached its peak, the fig growing area increased to 11 ha. However, in 2004, the area decreased to 5 ha due to the damage on trees caused by longhorn beetles and the establishment of an express highway that divided the fig orchard. Thereafter, thanks to the efforts by producers, the fig growing area began to steadily increase to roughly 11 ha by 2014. By 2017, the figure leaped to 16 ha.

**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 Otake Ichijiku Association.

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

**11. Outline of the quality control plan**

Otake Ichijiku Association will check ① cultivar, ② cultivation method, ③ shipment standard and final products. To maintain the quality of Otake Ichijiku, pruning and disbudding workshops and a session to confirm shipping standards are conducted in March, June and September, respectively, at the initiative of Akita Shinsei Agricultural Cooperative. If a producer fails to abide by the specification, Otake Ichijiku Association will issue a warning and request a correction of his/her production. If the producer does not follow the warning, Otake Ichijiku Association may prohibit the producer from using the geographical indication and GI mark and shipping the product as "Otake Ichijiku" for a given period. In addition, Otake Ichijiku 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