

## Retailers urged to check Japanese products

By Carolyn Khew in Singapore/The Straits Times/09 November 2013

9 November 2013

ANN Asia News Network

Singapore (The Straits Times/ANN) - The Consumers Association of Singapore (Case) yesterday urged retailers of Japanese products to do stock checks for mislabelled products. This comes after a food scandal in Japan earlier this week widened, with more well-known names owning up to mislabelling.

Case executive director Seah Seng Choon said such checks are necessary to ensure that consumers will not be misled: "It's important that businesses maintain their integrity and ensure that the product content matches the descriptions on labels and menus."

Japanese department stores such as Takashimaya and Isetan admitted to making false claims about food quality in Japan, but the Singapore stores said their products are not affected.

A spokesman for Takashimaya Singapore yesterday said the department store has conducted checks on all its food products. To date, it has not found any "problems".

In response to media queries, Isetan Singapore also said on Thursday that it is "confident" its products are not affected, after initial checks.

There have been no reported cases of mislabelled food items from Japan here, said the Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority and Case. AVA said it routinely checks food products for safety and authenticity, and verifies claims on product labels as part of its food safety surveillance programme.

"When alerted, AVA also investigates alleged cases of false or misleading representations on food labels and advertisements," said its spokesman.

High-end restaurants in Japan have also reportedly admitted to using low-priced items, though their menus featured more expensive varieties.

A spokesman for the Les Amis Group, which runs Japanese restaurants Aoki and Shabu Shabu Gen, said its chefs openly tell customers about the origin of their products.

Associate professor of marketing Seshan Ramaswami, of the **Singapore Management University**, said Japanese food retailers here will likely be affected in the short term.