EXECUTIVE BRIEF / 01

Japan: what changed

The finding

Japan has developed an industry-led control pathway linking laboratory methods, purchasing recommendations and retailer requests for evidence. The reviewed record does not establish a new universal government authenticity test for every Chinese honey shipment. [01] [04] [10]

The documented sequence

- **July 2024:** the Japan Honey Fair Trade Council recommended foreign-amylase testing to members and supporting members, following work with Japan Food Research Laboratories (JFRL). [01] [02]
- **January 2025:** the Council recommended diastase activity testing after a negative foreign-amylase result, recognising that syrup without added microbial enzyme can escape that targeted test. [02]
- **July 2025:** the Council referred suspicions concerning Chinese bottled-honey products from 14 non-member companies to the Consumer Affairs Agency. Its account describes changed analytical patterns, not a final official determination. [03]
- **September 2025:** the National Supermarket Association of Japan encouraged retailers to obtain relevant supplier test results alongside product specifications. This documents a practical route into purchasing controls. [04]
- **June 2026:** MAFF's latest located progress sheet, dated 30 June, still placed the Native-PAGE JAS proposal at stage 1: preparation, before consultation and adoption. [09]

Why the combination matters

Native-PAGE screens enzyme activity patterns; LC-QTOF/MS can confirm the identity and biological source of foreign amylase. Adding microbial enzyme can raise activity lowered by dilution. A foreign-enzyme test addresses that concealment, while diastase and additional chemical evidence address different questions. Botanical origin, heating and storage remain relevant to interpretation. [05] [06]

The Council reported an altered pattern in its suspect series: most products had no detectable foreign amylase, undetectable diastase and elevated mannose. This is consistent with an adaptive response to testing; the public record does not establish causation, national coverage or an elimination of fraud. [03]

Read the originals: Council recommendations [01] [02]; retailer bulletin [04]; JFRL method scope [06]; official JAS status [09]. Source numbers are active links.

EXECUTIVE BRIEF / 02

Decisions for European buyers

Japan's experience suggests a useful operational question: does a buyer's evidence address the actual authenticity risk, and what happens when a credible concern arises? European authorities and operators must act under their applicable product and official-control rules. The actions below are GHIC proposals. [23] [25]

Evidence position	Proportionate next step
Credible indication	Identify the product and lot; preserve original reports and retained material; name the person responsible for the investigation.
Positive or unclear screen	Obtain suitable confirmation within the method's validated scope. Check sample identity, botanical exceptions and laboratory performance.
Low activity or negative enzyme test	Assess honey type, processing and storage. Consider complementary chemistry and traceability; neither result alone resolves every authenticity question.
Methods disagree	Compare analytical targets, sensitivity, versions and the samples tested. Resolve the substantive difference rather than counting negative results.
Non-compliance established	Record the finding, legal or contractual basis and product decision. Implement appropriate measures and verify corrective action before any subsequent release.

Start with a defined assurance pilot

- Select named suppliers, products and lots using a documented risk rationale. Arrange representative sampling, sealed portions, traceable transport and retained material.
- Agree the analytical questions, suitable methods, confirmation criteria and dispute process with qualified laboratories before testing. Document interim product status while a material suspicion remains unresolved.
- Request production and origin records tied to the sampled lot. Set a review date, collect implementation evidence and assess whether the programme changes supplier performance.

The reviewed Japanese sources do not establish official approval of Eurofins THPP1. A technical catalogue listing and a commercial laboratory recommendation must be assessed on their own terms. Method identity, validation and regulatory status require separate verification. [16] [30]

Evidence limits: there is no public denominator establishing the programme's national reach. A negative foreign-amylase test is not a general certificate of authenticity. [03] [06]

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Read with the full GHIC Japan report, evidence cut-off 10 October 2026.