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**1 Million Japanese Say NO to GM Wheat**  
*Japanese coalition presents petition to Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson*

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**Bismarck, ND** – A coalition of Japanese consumer and food industry groups declared today that Japanese consumers would not buy wheat from the United States if it introduces genetically modified (GM) wheat.

The Japanese coalition presented a petition to North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner Roger Johnson and state agriculture groups. Signed by over 400 consumer groups and food manufacturing companies, the petition represents over 1 million Japanese who are concerned about the potential introduction of GM wheat in North America.

“Wheat is our staple food after rice. It appears on our kitchen tables almost every meal in the form of noodles, bread, desserts, and so on,” said Keisuke Amagasa of the No! GMO Campaign, a Japanese association of consumers, producers, and distributors. “Japan is almost entirely dependant on North America, specifically the United States, for our wheat. But, Japanese consumers will not buy GM foods, so if US wheat is GM or could be contaminated by GM products, we’ll have to look elsewhere to meet our needs.”

Japan is the largest foreign importer of US wheat, purchasing, on average, 3 million tons of wheat a year. This includes 1.3 million tons of Hard Red Spring wheat from Northern Plains states.

“Our Japanese customers are telling us we will lose their business if we introduce Monsanto’s GM wheat,” said Wayne Fisher, a Dickinson area farmer and Dakota Resource Council spokesperson. “This could really hurt North Dakota if Monsanto doesn’t market its wheat in Canada, as suggested in a recent meeting with US wheat groups. We are not interested in handing Canada our valuable wheat contracts with Japan.”

The US Department of Agriculture is currently reviewing Monsanto’s recently resubmitted application for Roundup Ready wheat deregulation. Deregulation is the last federal hurdle to Monsanto’s commercial introduction of their wheat.

“Introduction of GM wheat,” said Fisher, “Could leave US farmers selling their wheat for 33 to 50% less per bushel, costing North Dakota farmers as much as \$500 million at today’s prices. We need policies in place similar to those proposed by Senators Bill Bowman (R-Bowman) and April Fairfield (D-Eldridge) last session giving North Dakotans the decision to let it in the state.”