

# Controversies at Japan joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade negotiations

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## **TPP/Japan: Noda to declare participation in Pacific FTA talks at APEC**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda plans to declare Japan will join the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade negotiations at a meeting with his Singaporean counterpart on the occasion of an upcoming Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum summit, sources close to the matter said Saturday.

In a move making it an international commitment, Noda intends to convey the stance to Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong during their bilateral meeting currently being arranged to take place possibly Nov. 12, the first day of the two-day regional summit in Hawaii, the sources said.

Noda is also planning to convey the same message when he meets with other leaders including U.S. President Barack Obama, they said.

Noda's move comes amid heightened concerns among Japanese manufacturers that they will be in a disadvantageous position against their South Korean counterparts when South Korea has already concluded free trade agreements with the European Union and the United States.

But numerous agricultural cooperatives and other organizations have voiced opposition to joining the framework, which includes the United States and Australia as major farm exporters, out of fear an influx of cheap produce would damage Japan's highly protected farm market.

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<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/10/30/20111030p2g00m0dm024000c.html>

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## **TPP/Japan: Only six governors favor joining TPP trade talks — 31 prefectural chiefs fear pact would devastate local farm sector**

Only six of the 47 prefectural governors believe Japan should join negotiations on the Trans-Pacific Partnership free-trade pact, while 14 are opposed and 27 said they neither favor nor oppose participation, a survey showed.

The administration of Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda aims to decide whether to take part in the TPP talks before an Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum summit convenes Nov. 12 in Honolulu. The proposed trade deal seeks the elimination in principle of import tariffs on all goods.

Among those in favor of joining the negotiations are the governors of Osaka and Oita prefectures. The governors of Shizuoka and Aichi prefectures, each home to major manufacturing centers, were also supportive.

Asked how the agricultural sector will be affected by participation in the TPP, 31 governors said the free-trade accord would have a devastating or largely negative impact on their farmers. Many of these governors are from major farming regions, including Hokkaido, the Tohoku region, Shikoku and Kyushu.

Only two governors were dismissive of the potential impact on the agricultural sector. Shizuoka Gov. Heita Kawakatsu said Japanese produce can compete with foreign farm products because of its high quality, while Nara Gov. Shogo Arai said that the TPP would not adversely impact the farm industry overall.

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<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/text/nn20111030a2.html>

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### **TPP/Japan: Farm cooperative body to lobby against Japan joining Pacific trade talks**

TOKYO (Kyodo) — The national federation of agricultural cooperatives said Monday it plans to submit a petition to parliament against Japan joining the Trans-Pacific Partnership free trade negotiations, saying that at least 350 members of the 722-seat Diet are supporting the move.

The announcement by the Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives, also known as JA-Zenchu, was followed by a meeting between Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and senior ruling party lawmakers, where they confirmed plans to come up with a conclusion on whether to join the talks before a regional summit starts Nov. 12.

The farm body, which has opposed joining the trade talks on the grounds that the elimination of tariffs would destroy the country's farming sector with an influx of cheap imports, will disclose a list of such lawmakers on Tuesday. It is expected to submit the petition as early as Wednesday.

Earlier in the day, Foreign Minister Koichiro Gamba said the government will decide on its stance at an early date. The remark came during a meeting with Hiromasa Yonekura, chairman of the country's most powerful business lobby known as Keidanren, who sought strong political leadership on the matter.

The TPP originated in a free trade pact that took effect in 2006 among Brunei, Chile, New Zealand and Singapore, and negotiations to expand it are under way among the four plus five Asia-Pacific economies, including major agricultural exporters Australia and the United States.

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<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/10/25/20111025p2g00m0dm010000c.html>

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