

# Japanese Food Maker Downplayed Risk of Pesticide-Tainted Food

TOKYO, April 30 (Kyodo) — Food maker Maruha Nichiro Corp. underestimated the health risks posed by frozen food products laced with pesticide that eventually triggered a [massive recall](#) [1] and affected thousands of consumers in Japan, a third-party panel said Wednesday.

The panel, tasked with compiling measures to prevent a recurrence, released an interim report that was critical of Maruha Nichiro's handling of the food poisoning cases involving a factory operated by Aqlifoods Co., which was a subsidiary and is now integrated into the food company.

A member of the panel, which was set up by Maruha Nichiro, said at a press conference in Tokyo that the food maker was "slow" in responding to the situation when poisoning cases came to light late last year.

The panel is scheduled to announce by late May the final report of its probe containing preventive measures.

Panel members said the company detected malathion on Dec. 27 and 28 following complaints from customers since Nov. 13 that the products smelled unusual. But the company only announced a recall of the products on Dec. 29 and said that the pesticide's "toxicity was low."

[Prosecutors indicted Toshiki Abe](#) [2], a 49-year-old worker at the factory of Aqlifoods in Gunma Prefecture, north of Tokyo, in March for spraying pesticide on 22 kinds of products.

Abe said in a recent interview with Kyodo News that he wanted to take revenge on Aqlifoods as he was unhappy with his wages.

Maruha Nichiro President Shigeru Ito said, "We will take the points made (by the probe panel) seriously."

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<http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/04/japanese-food-maker-downplayed-risk-pesticide-tainted-food>

### Links:

[1] <http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/01/pesticide-tainted-food-sickens-more-200>

[2] <http://www.foodmanufacturing.com/news/2014/01/worker-arrested-japan-food->

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