

Mission of the Consumer Affairs Agency

As the organization that steers and leads the nation's consumer administration, the Consumer Affairs Agency strives to realize a society where every consumer as a leading player can live a safe, worry-free and affluent life.

The latter half of 2000s saw a large number of serious consumer issues come about in Japan, epitomizing the era that can aptly be called a historical milestone triggering a rethinking of the roles of the national government. In those days, various problems that posed a threat to the people's safe and secure lives and caused damage to consumers properties came to light one after another as can be seen in significant social problems such as Chinese-made frozen dumpling problems, illegal distribution of contaminated rice, carbon monoxide poisoning accidents caused by gas-fired water heaters and elevator accidents, a flurry of food mislabeling cases and rampant occurrences of scams targeting elderly people.

What is behind the occurrence of such social issues is the fact that since the Meiji period (1868-1912) the national government had been working to achieve a growth in the nation's economy by protecting and fostering businesses in the ministries and agencies, which led to section-by-section approaches toward consumer protection, deeming it as a less important challenge merely derived from missions for industrial promotion.

However, those systems were reviewed and as a result of market-focused measures that have been taken in recent years, including deregulations, there have been a growing demand for a "safe and worry-free market" and "market of good quality." Under such circumstances, the national government has been required to strive to satisfy such a demand and bring about a "paradigm shift" in the government by reviewing the policy measures that have been taken so far and the roles of the administrative organs so that it can realize society where every consumer as a leading player can live a safe, worry-free and affluent life.

Thus, an idea of creating a brand new organization equipped with powerful authority and staffed with sufficient personnel was deliberated with the aim of eliminating the section-by-section approaches in the past and integrating the existing organizations engaged in the consumer administration. Relevant laws for a new organization dedicated to the nation's consumer administration were enacted and promulgated in June 2009, after the nation-wide discussion among government officials including then-Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, Diet members, consumers (organization), business operators (organization), intellectuals, and bar associations; the Consumer Affairs Agency was officially established on September 1, 2009.

The Consumer Affairs agency marks its 10th anniversary in September 2019. Always adhering to the philosophy that dates back to the founding day, the Consumer Affairs Agency works hard to fulfill the mission to further meet the expectations of the people as the organization steering and leading the nation's consumer administration in the government while focusing on various social economic changes and challenges.

About the Consumer Affairs Agency

Overview of the Consumer Affairs Agency

Addressing advanced consumer policy

- Developing a basic plan for consumer policy to promote consumer policy of the entire government in a planned and integrated manner scrutinizing and assessing the plan every year
- Taking necessary measures for the prevention of the occurrence and expansion of financial consumer detriment
- Preventing the occurrence and expansion of consumer damage by online transactions
- Striving for reduction of food loss and waste so that the food good enough to eat is not wasted
- Strengthening international cooperation to address globalized consumer issues

Creating systems and environments for consumer activities

- Building basic systems related to consumer affairs such as rules for consumer contracts and systems for redress of consumer damage
- Striving to spread and promote whistleblower protection system

Aiming to create a consumer civil society

- Promoting consumer education in an integrated and consistent manner in collaboration with the Consumer Education Promotion Council established based on the Act on Promotion of Consumer Education

Supporting local consumer administration

- Helping consumers with problems by supporting the consultation service counter that plays frontline role in consumer affairs
- Supporting the local governments in creating a community to protect elderly consumers from consumer damage by sharing the information collected through consumer consultations

Checking commodity price movements

- Conducting discussions with the relevant ministries and agencies from the viewpoint of defending consumer benefits when public utility charges are to be revised
- Researching and disseminating information regarding price trends

Toward safe consumer life

- Collecting information concerning consumer accidents from consumers, business operators, and administrative organs and then registering such information in the Consumer Accident Information Databank
- Taking necessary measures for preventing the occurrence and expansion of damage affecting the life and/or health of consumers
- Promoting the project to protect children from accidents
- Promoting consumers understanding of food safety

Preventing a recurrence of an accident based on lessons learned

- Identifying the causes of consumer accidents affecting life and/or health by the Consumer Safety Investigation Commission established within the Consumer Affairs Agency to prevent the recurrence of accidents and expansion of consumer damage

Protecting consumers from scams

- Strictly enforcing the Act on Specified Commercial Transactions against fraudulent business practices

Establishing trusted representation for consumers informed decisions with proper labeling

- Strictly enforcing the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations against false labeling
- Establishing legal systems that encourage business operators to implement proper labeling
- Taking corrective actions for any labels impeding the pass-on of consumption tax

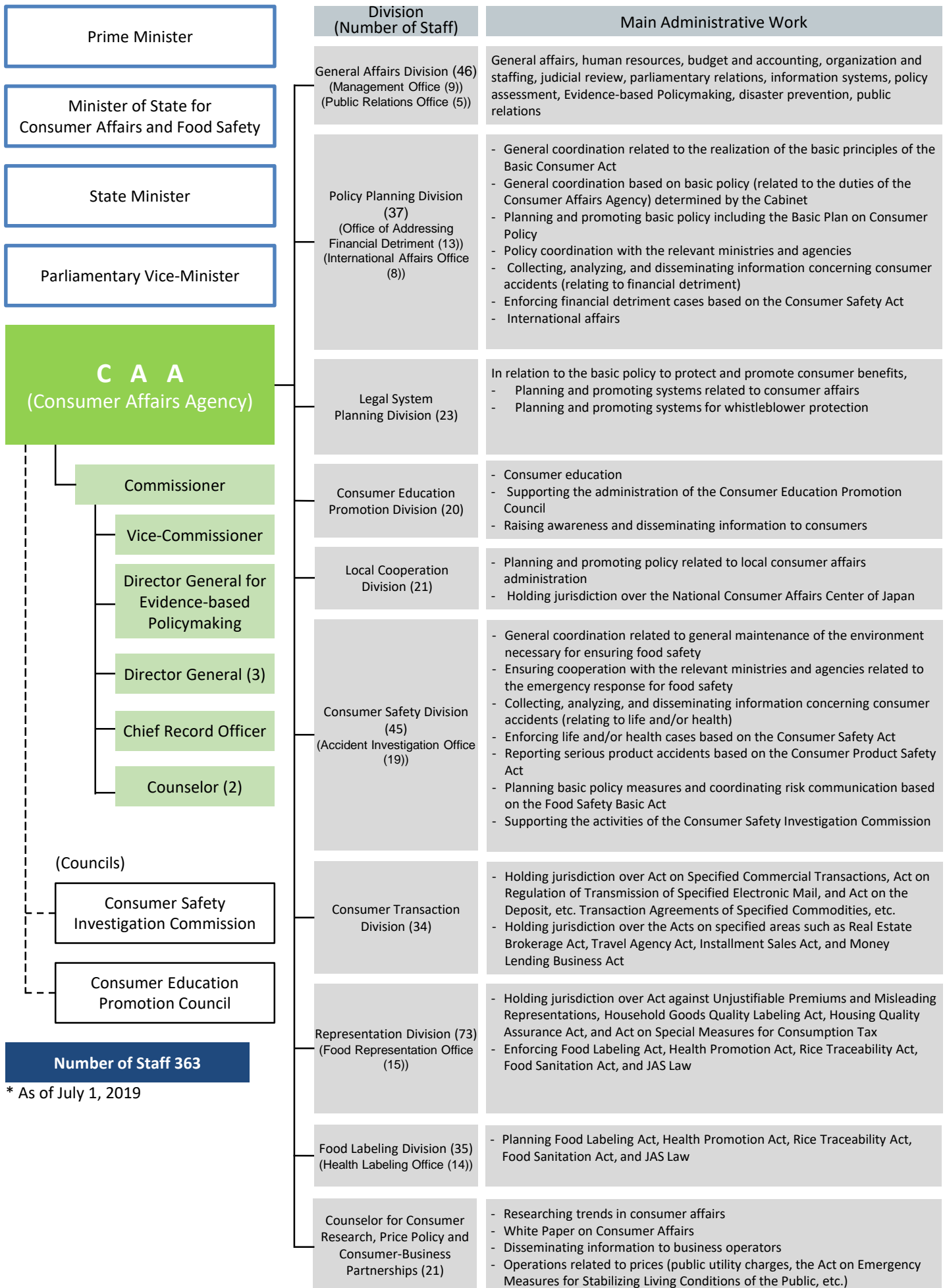
For informed food choices

- Striving to operate a food labeling system easily understandable and necessary for consumers

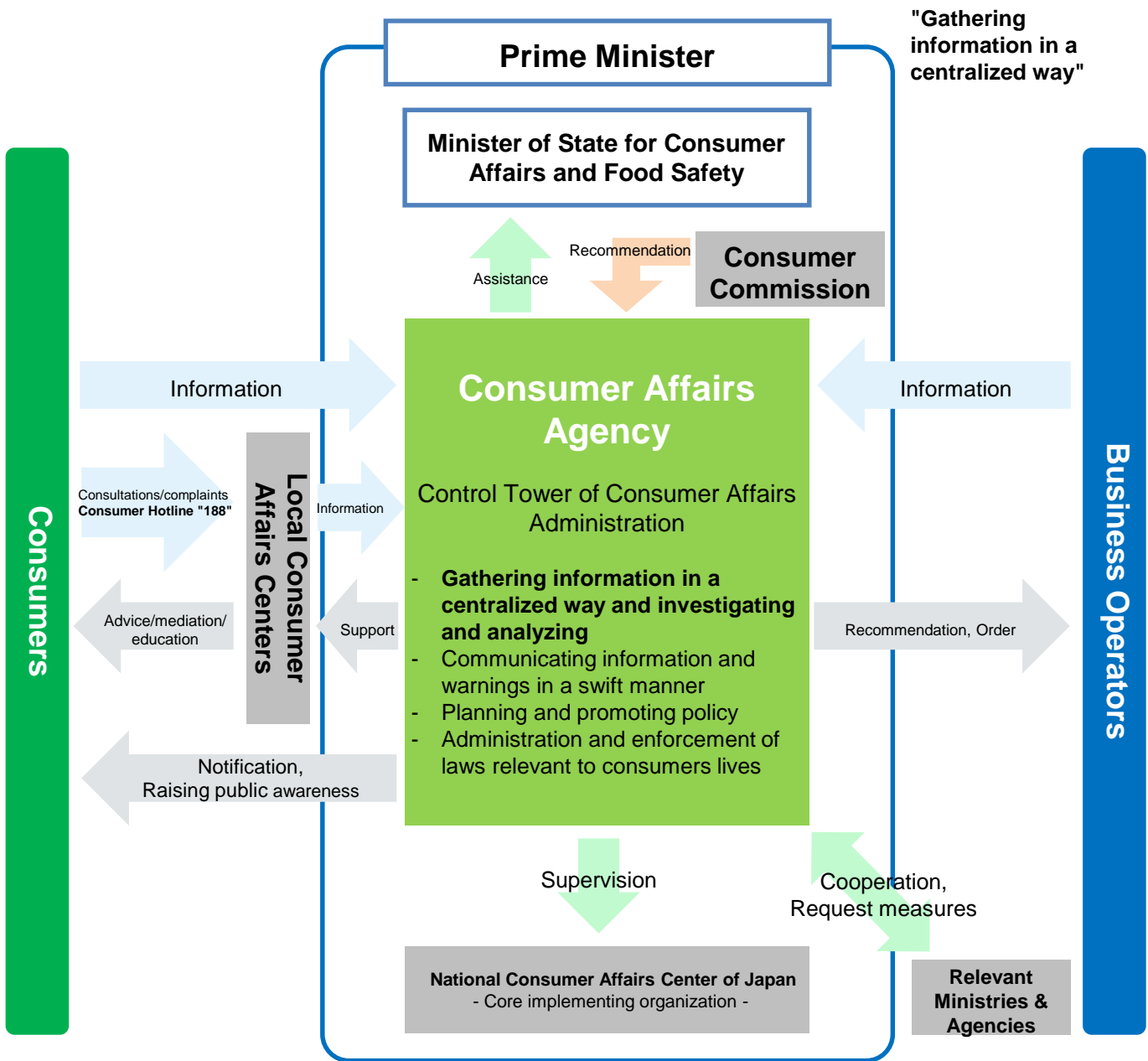
Various initiatives

- The Office of Consumer Policy Frontier
- Promoting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Conducting a survey on trends in consumer activities to plan more appropriate consumer policy
- Promoting consumer-oriented management (sustainable management)

Organization of Consumer Affairs Agency



Main functions of the Consumer Affairs Agency



Organizations associated with the Consumer Affairs Agency

[Consumer Commission]

The Consumer Commission was established on September 1, 2009 together with the Consumer Affairs Agency. As an independent, third-party organization, it investigates and deliberates different sorts of consumer-related problems and offers recommendations and opinions to the Prime Minister and the heads of relevant government ministries based on the investigation results as well as in response to their request for advice.

[National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan]

The National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan is an incorporated administrative agency supervised by the Consumer Affairs Agency and serves as a core institution on consumer affairs in cooperation with related organizations such as the national government and Consumer Affairs Centers located across Japan. Its main activities include the following:

- Advising related organizations such as Consumer Affairs Centers on how to handle difficult cases while providing consultation services to consumers who are unable to reach their nearest Consumer Affairs Centers.
- Collecting information on consultation cases at Consumer Affairs Centers and other organizations across the nation through the Practical Living Information Online Network System (PIO-NET).
- Analyzing the collected information on consumer consultation and conducting product tests to prevent the occurrence and expansion of consumer damage as well as utilizing the analysis and test results for educating and issuing alerts to consumers and making requests and providing information to related organization including administrative organs and business organizations.
- Providing upskill trainings to consumer affairs consultants and administrative officials handling consumer affairs in local governments, and organizing the qualification examination for consumer affairs consultants.
- Implementing ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution) procedures for any consumer dispute of which solution is significant nationwide.