

## FUKUSHIMA BOTTLED WATER WINS GOLD QUALITY AWARD IN MONDE SELECTION

At a press conference on April 8, Fukushima City representatives announced that the bottled tap water produced in the city has won a Gold Quality Award in the 2015 Monde Selection, a prestigious international competition designed to test the quality of various consumer products. By winning this award, the city hopes to dispel negative rumors about lingering radioactive contamination following the meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant in 2011.

Founded in 1961 with its current headquarters in Belgium, the Monde Selection is also known by the moniker of International Institute for Quality Selections. According to the site's official English website, its mission is to test consumer products and grant them a bronze, silver, gold or grand gold quality award. This quality label, awarded by a totally independent professional jury, offers the consumer and the producer numerous advantages. No less than 3,160 products, coming from over 82 different countries, are tested each year.

The city of Fukushima announced that their own brand of bottled tap water, collected from the Surikamigawa Dam and known simply as Fukushima no Mizu ["Fukushima Water"], has joined the ranks of Osaka and Kawasaki by winning a prestigious Monde Selection Gold Quality Award, the second-highest prize offered.

This is the first time that any bottled tap water from the Tohoku region of northern Japan has won a Gold Quality Award, and only the 7th time for the entire country (Toyama City bottled water has won the Grand Gold Quality Award in the past). The Fukushima no Mizu brand has been manufactured since 2006; each 500 ml bottle of water sells for 100 yen.

In addition, the mayor of Fukushima City, Kaoru Kobayashi, has also expressed his wish to share this result, made by a respectable panel of international judges, with the rest of Japan and the world in an effort to put people's fears regarding abnormal levels of radioactivity in Fukushima's water to rest. Since April 2011, the month following the Tohoku earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear disaster, the radioactive substance caesium iodide has not been detected during routine inspections above any typical levels comparable to any other water in the country.