

## **Revision of Test Methods and Specifications for Containers/Packages for Retort Pouch Foods**

### Purpose and Background

This activity is to develop the specifications for containers and packages for retort pouch foods.\*

Based on Article 18 of the Japanese Food Sanitation Law, apparatus and containers/packages for foods shall meet the specifications and standards (specified in Part 3 “Apparatus and Containers/Packages” of the Specifications and Standards for Food and Food Additives: originally published in Ministry of Health and Welfare No. 370, 1959). Specifically, they shall pass the heat-sealing strength test as well as other required tests.

The heat-sealing strength test was established in 1977, targeted at pouch-type containers. In the recent years, various types of containers have been developed besides the pouch-type, such as the cup-type, tray-type, and box-type, along with advances in technology. The test, however, is not appropriate to examine the strength of containers of other types than the box-type. Given such a situation, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has decided to establish an additional strength test.

\* Retort pouch foods refer to products which are packed in containers or packages and which are pasteurized under pressure, except for canned foods and glass-bottled foods.

### **Outline of Revision**

The internal pressure strength test will be established as an additional strength test, and a requirement will be added to specifications for containers and packages for retort pouch foods. For details, see the attachment 1.

## Attachment 1

### Part 3 Apparatus and Containers/Packages

#### B. General Tests

##### 2. Strength Tests

###### Internal pressure strength

Stick an air needle through the sample container which is filled with intended food or water and tightly sealed, and fasten the needle so that the inner air cannot leak. Connect a pressure gauge and a compressor to the needle. Send air through the needle into the container at a rate of  $1 \pm 0.2$  L/min. Read the maximum pressure applied when it is burst. (Refer to the test apparatus below.)

#### E. Specifications for Apparatus and Containers/Packages According to Use

##### 1. Containers and Packages for Retort Pouch Foods

(4) The measured value shall be 23N or more when the container is subjected to heat-sealing strength test. For the box-type containers and packages (including cup and tray-types), the internal pressure strength test may replace the heat-sealing strength test; the maximum pressure applied when it is burst shall be 20 kPa or more.\*

Note: The underlined part is newly added requirement.

###### Apparatus

The test apparatus must consist of a metallic air needle to supply air into the test container, a hose to introduce air, a pressure gauge, and air source such as an air compressor. It must be of a structure that is able to read the pressure inside the test container when the container is burst due to the air introduced into it.

