

## Japan's stance on dolphins

1. Japan, being mountainous and surrounded by ocean, has since time immemorial regarded fish and other marine animals, including dolphins, as bounty from the sea. In some small parts of our country, we have a long tradition of consuming dolphin meat.
2. In reflecting about this kind of issue, it is very important to take into account the fact that eating habits have been established in history, based on each region's environment and tradition. We cannot impose a certain kind of culture on any group of people when they already have their own.
3. Dolphins are some of the precious renewable marine resources. Based on the results of scientific surveys, the Japanese Government has set quotas by species for hunting small cetaceans in coastal waters, and catching only those that have enough stock is permitted, thereby ensuring sustainable use. The annual catch by Japanese fishermen has remained within these quotas.
4. With regard to cruelty, as happens in the case of eating farm animals, having to kill them first is unfortunately cruel. However, Japanese fishermen are careful to minimize suffering as much as possible and cause as little pain to the dolphins as possible. The method used at Taiji in Japan is the same one that is being used in Denmark's Faroe Islands. This method, as applied at the waterside, consists in cutting the cervical spinal cord and the blood vessels surrounding the cervical vertebra of the dolphin. In this way, the dolphin almost instantly meets its end (within a maximum of 30 seconds) and does not suffer any pain.
5. The table below shows how many animal lives are slaughtered annually in Switzerland and Japan. It should be noted that Japan's population is 130,000,000 while that of Switzerland is 7,500,000 (17 : 1).

### Number of animal lives slaughtered

	Switzerland		Japan	
	Total (Thousand head)	Per thousand people (head)	Total (Thousand head)	Per thousand people (head)
Cattle	633	84	1,266	9.7
Sheep	336	45	4	0.03
Pigs	2,818	376	16,596	127
Dolphins	-	-	16	0.12
Whales	-	-	0.5	0.004

Sources: OFS (Switzerland, 2006), MAFF (Japan, 2004)