

April 17, 2012

***Lactobacillus casei* Strain Shirota Granted GRAS Status
in the United States**

Yakult Honsha Co., Ltd. (President: Takashige Negishi) hereby announces that the company's *Lactobacillus casei* strain Shirota has attained GRAS (Generally Recognized as Safe) status in the United States.

The GRAS status that was obtained is self-affirmed GRAS, which required a rigorous review by a panel of renowned experts on toxicology, nutrition, and molecular biology. The successful achievement of GRAS status shows that the safety of *L. casei* strain Shirota, which is used in our dairy products including Yakult fermented milk drink, is recognized highly in the United States.

Following this self-affirmation, we will notify the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) of our GRAS status. If we can obtain the FDA's approval for our GRAS affirmation, we will be able to gain wide recognition for the safety of *L. casei* strain Shirota through the FDA's website and other means. We intend to obtain FDA approval to enhance public awareness of the safety of *L. casei* strain Shirota, thereby accelerating the promotion of Yakult and other products not only in the United States, but also in many other countries across the world.

GRAS is a certification system for food safety unique to the United States. Substances affirmed as GRAS are widely recognized, not only in the United States but also internationally, as food or food ingredients that have been certified safe after rigorous review. It is considered desirable for food and food ingredients for sale to be recognized as GRAS substances. Since 1997, a notification system under which manufacturers notify the FDA of their self-affirmed GRAS declarations has been implemented.

Yakult Honsha has been making strong efforts to expand international operations. Today, we have 28 business bases overseas and operate in 32 countries and regions including Japan, selling approximately 29 million bottles of Yakult and other dairy products per day (as of December 31, 2011).

In the United States, Yakult U.S.A. Inc. has been promoting the health effects of *L. casei* strain Shirota through the sales of the Yakult fermented milk drink since 1999, achieving good sales performance.