

## **Functional Food and Foods for Specified Health Uses - Private Opinion**

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### **< Summary >**

Functional foods confer health benefits on us by affecting our immune system, gastrointestinal secretions, and nervous system.

The concept of functional foods was first established in Japan and has since spread throughout the world.

Functional foods are characterized by their beneficial health effects, which have been demonstrated by scientific research on the subject.

The Japanese government, conscious of the amount of research being carried out on functional foods, set up a novel system of specifying foods for specified health uses. Producers of these foods are permitted to indicate the health benefits of the foods on packaging, the effect of which has been an enormous increase in the sales of these products.

At present, advanced scientific methods are being developed for discovering novel functions of foods and precisely evaluating their effects. In addition, research on the safety of the functional foods is also performed.

This review includes my personal thoughts on the above issues related to functional foods.