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科目名	受験番号：	採点欄
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Price hikes in October will affect nearly 3,000 food products, the highest monthly figure this year, as well as other daily necessities including mail, pharmaceuticals, electricity and gas, due to the weak yen and an increase in costs for various materials and expenses.

Prices of 2,911 products from 195 major food and beverage manufacturers will be raised in October, surpassing April's figure — the previous largest amount in 2024 — by 0.5%, according to a survey by research firm Teikoku Databank.

A rise in raw material costs is the main factor behind the increase, being at least in part responsible for the price increases for 92.7% of the products. Other factors such as freight expenses (68.6%), packaging materials (66.8%), energy bills (61.1%) and personnel expenses (26.7%) also contributed to the price hikes, the survey released on Monday showed.

By category, alcoholic beverages and drinks will account for the largest number of price hikes in October, at 1,362 items, followed by processed foods such as ham and sausages (673), seasoning (301), cooking ingredients such as flour (238), snacks (237) and dairy products (100).

Asahi Soft Drinks will raise prices for 90% of its products. At the same time, ham and sausage producers including NH Foods, Itoham Foods and Marudai Food will raise prices by up to 20%.

In the snacks category, more than half of the 237 items affected by price hikes in October use chocolate — cacao has surged in price due to extreme heat and droughts in what is known as a bean shock. Meiji's popular Kinoko no Yama and Takenoko no Sato biscuit products with chocolate topping will increase in price for the second time this year.

Teikoku Databank forecasts the average price hike for the year will be 17%, affecting a total of 12,401 products — down from 32,396 items last year.

For mail, the price of sending a sealed letter (25 grams or less, standard size) will rise from ¥84 (about \$0.60) to ¥110, and the price of sending a postcard will rise from ¥63 to ¥85. This marks the first price hike for sealed letters in 30 years except for when the consumption tax rate was revised. Post offices are now selling stamps for the new rates and the difference between those and the current rates.

Among pharmaceuticals, over-the-counter payments for brand-name drugs with patents that have expired will be raised. This applies to 1,096 products, including Hirudoid, a moisturizer prescribed for infants and young children, and Mohrus Paps, a poultice medicine.

As the government will reduce subsidies for electricity and gas that were implemented amid extreme heat over the summer, a standard household with a monthly power consumption of 260 kilowatt-hours in the Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings service area will have to pay ¥396 more in October.

(The Japan Times, Sep 30, 2024)

1. What is the highest monthly figure of price hikes in 2024?

- a) April
- b) October
- c) January
- d) December

2. According to the passage, how many food products will be affected by price hikes in October?

- a) 2,000
- b) 2,500
- c) 2,911
- d) 3,200

3. What percentage of the products will experience price hikes due to an increase in raw material costs?

- a) 61.1%
- b) 92.7%
- c) 68.6%
- d) 66.8%

4. Which category will see the largest number of price hikes in October?

- a) Snacks
- b) Processed foods
- c) Dairy products
- d) Alcoholic beverages and drinks

5. What is the maximum price increase percentage for ham and sausage products by NH Foods, Itoham Foods, and Marudai Food?

- a) 10%
- b) 15%
- c) 20%
- d) 25%

6. What is the reason behind the price hike of more than half of the snacks affected in October?

- a) Increase in packaging costs
- b) Rise in raw material costs
- c) Bean shock due to extreme heat and droughts
- d) Increase in personnel expenses

(裏面に続く)

7. How much will the price to send a sealed letter weighing 25 grams or less rise to in October?
- ¥85
 - ¥84
 - ¥110
 - ¥120
8. How many pharmaceutical products will experience price hikes due to expired patents?
- 1,096
 - 2,911
 - 12,401
 - 673
9. What is the forecasted average price hike percentage for the year according to Teikoku Databank?
- 15%
 - 17%
 - 20%
 - 25%
10. What specific change will occur for postal services in October, and how does this compare to historical changes in pricing?
- The price of sending sealed letters will increase for the first time in 30 years, excluding consumption tax changes
 - The price of sending sealed letters will increase for the second time this year due to the weak yen
 - Postal rates will increase as a result of higher personnel costs and packaging expenses
 - The price increase for postcards is higher than that for sealed letters, marking a historic first
11. How does Teikoku Databank's forecast for the total number of products affected by price hikes in 2024 compare to last year's figure, and what is the implication of this?
- 2024 will see fewer price hikes, with a total of 12,401 products, implying stabilization in product pricing
 - 2024 will surpass last year's figure of 32,396 products, indicating continued inflation
 - The 2024 figure matches last year's total, showing no change in market conditions
 - There will be a larger variety of products affected this year compared to 2023, indicating broad market instability
12. What underlying factors contributed to the 61.1% of products affected by energy bill increases, and what additional factors are related to this change?
- The government's reduction in electricity and gas subsidies and the rise in raw material costs
 - Increased packaging material expenses and personnel costs
 - Freight expenses and fluctuations in the global energy market
 - A combination of weakened yen and reduced government energy subsidies
13. Given that Asahi Soft Drinks will raise prices for 90% of its products, what is the likely impact on the beverages market, and how might competitors respond?
- Competitors will follow suit, raising prices to offset increased production costs
 - Competitors will lower prices to attract consumers, potentially causing Asahi to lose market share
 - The beverages market will stabilize as competitors maintain current prices to avoid upsetting consumers
 - The price increase will cause a reduction in demand, leading to a shift towards alternative products
14. Which word in the passage is closest in meaning to "responsible for"?
- Accountable for
 - Associated with
 - Resistant to
 - Dependent on
15. What is the meaning of "contributed to" in the phrase "packaging materials... contributed to the price hikes"?
- Led to
 - Benefited
 - Decreased
 - Opposed
16. In the sentence "freight expenses... also contributed to the price hikes," what is the best synonym for "freight"?
- Packaging
 - Shipping
 - Labor
 - Marketing
17. What does the word "account for" in the phrase "alcoholic beverages and drinks will account for the largest number of price hikes" most nearly mean?
- Justify
 - Make up
 - Pay for
 - Explain
18. In the passage, the word "implemented" in "subsidies... implemented amid extreme heat" most likely means:
- Removed
 - Put into effect
 - Proposed
 - Studied
19. What is the meaning of the word "revised" in "when the consumption tax rate was revised"?
- Lowered
 - Abolished
 - Adjusted
 - Frozen