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Voluntary - Public

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## **Japan**

**Post:** Tokyo ATO

### **FAS Holds Food Safety Seminars in Major Japanese Cities**

**Report Categories:**

Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

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**Report Highlights:**

**Executive Summary:**

The Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Japan, the California Agricultural Export Council (CAEC), and the Western Growers Association (WGA) held a series of five trade seminars in November and December, 2008. In November, two seminars were held in Tokyo and Osaka for Daiei executives. Daiei is the fourth largest nationwide supermarket chain in Japan. In December, three seminars were held in the major Japanese cities of Osaka, Nagoya, and Tokyo. Over 330 fruit and vegetable retailers, importers, food service executives, and members of the media attended these five seminars.

## **General Information**

### **Introduction**

FAS Japan is in the midst of initiating a new era of market development in Japan, in which we are showcasing American food and agriculture to the Japanese public and food sector by educating them on the reliability, safety, and high quality of American food products and by promoting the United States as the most dynamic food culture in the world.

With these objectives in mind, FAS Japan arranged a series of seminars in November and December, 2008. The primary objectives of the seminars were for the audience to gain an appreciation for the safety and quality of U.S. foods, with an emphasis on vegetables, and accept the U.S. food safety system as being at least equal to the food safety system and quality control in Japan. We also wanted to showcase our new V5 Healthy Eating Campaign. The major aim of the campaign is to promote healthy and delicious V5 original recipes that appeal to Japanese tastes while also promoting U.S. food ingredients. Many of these recipes feature U.S. vegetables.

### **The Seminars**

Representatives from FAS Japan and WGA participated in the Daiei Produce Conference on November 21 in Tokyo and November 28 in Osaka. Daiei is the fourth largest nationwide supermarket chain in Japan with annual sales of \$10 billion and 207 stores throughout Japan. The WGA representative gave presentations on U.S. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) to 250 Daiei executives.

FAS Japan, CAEC and WGA organized trade seminars in Osaka on December 2, Nagoya on December 3, and Tokyo on December 4. CAEC and WGA arranged for Dr. Marita Cantwell from UC Davis and Hank Giclas from WGA to speak at the seminars. Dr. Cantwell spoke about the proper temperature controls needed to keep vegetables fresh and Mr. Giclas spoke about GAP. Steve Wixom, the Agricultural Attaché at the U.S. Embassy, Tokyo talked about maximum residue levels (MRLs) and Tommy Aoki, the Senior Marketing Specialist at the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Tokyo, gave a presentation on the V5 Healthy Eating Campaign.



The seminar in Osaka was attended by twenty-five guests representing major retailers, importers, and food service companies. Thirteen people attended the seminar in Nagoya, including importers, the largest and second largest retailers in the Nagoya region, and the largest produce wholesaler. The seminar in Tokyo was attended by forty-seven people from diverse backgrounds including major retailers, importers, wholesalers, food service and media.



Through these seminars, FAS reached a number of people in the industry in a very cost-effective way. The attendee questionnaire responses were also very positive. Most commented that the seminars were very worthwhile, and that following the event they now understood the safety of U.S. food products and GAP. About 33% of the attendees would like to increase their volume of U.S. vegetable imports in the future. Some participants wanted to know about promotional plans in 2009. Many attendees thought that promotional tools such as a U.S. vegetable recipe book would be very useful in our efforts to promote U.S. vegetables in Japan. Most attendees answered that they would attend similar seminars again.

## Food Safety Seminar Questionnaire Responses

	Tokyo	Osaka	Nagoya
<b>Content of the seminar</b>	67%		
<b>Good</b>	33	65%	63%
<b>Fair</b>	0	35	27
<b>No good</b>		0	0
<b>Impression of the seminar</b>			
<b>Good</b>	75%	95%	72%
<b>Fair</b>	2	5	18
<b>No good</b>	0	0	0
<b>No answer</b>	5	0	10
<b>Do you trust the safety of U.S. vegetables?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>	65%	65%	40%
<b>No change</b>	30	30	55
<b>No</b>	0	0	0
<b>No answer</b>	5	5	5
<b>Are you going to increase imports of U.S. vegetables?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>	38%	35%	18%
<b>No change</b>	29	45	72
<b>Decrease</b>	0	0	0
<b>No answer</b>	33	20	10
<b>Do you now understand US GAP?</b>			
<b>Yes</b>	79%	80%	60%
<b>Not clear</b>	4	10	22
<b>Doubt</b>	0	0	0
<b>No answer</b>	27	10	18
<b>Were the seminars done smoothly?</b>	Very good and good: 100%	Same	Same
<b>Length of seminars</b>	75% OK 25% too long	95% good 5% no answer	80% OK 20% too long
<b>Would you like to attend next time?</b>	91% positive 9% no answer	91% positive 9% no answer	81% positive 19% no answer

<b>Do you need promotional tools, recipe books of U.S. vegetables, and brochures on safety?</b>	Mostly yes	Mostly yes	Mostly yes
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