USDA Foreign Agricultural Service
GAIN Report
Global Agricultural Information Network

Voluntary - Public

Clearance Office: All - FAS

Date: 6/10/2009
GAIN Report Number: JA9515

Japan

Post: Tokyo ATO

Success Story - American Food Fair at Akasaka Sacas

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

Approved By:
Michael Conlon, Director, Agricultural Trade Office
Prepared By:
Thomas Aoki, Senior Marketing Specialist, Ian McCain, Intern

Report Highlights:
The America Study Abroad Expo 2009, held on May 16 in Tokyo, provided a fun and festive atmosphere for the Japanese public to explore all aspects of studying in the United States as well as an opportunity to promote American-style food to a Japanese audience. Taking advantage of the large crowds, the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) provided a platform for it's cooperators to promote food and beverages to over 18,000 visitors.

Executive Summary:
The U.S. Embassy in Tokyo sponsored "America Study Abroad Expo 2009" to provide Japanese students and parents with a fun atmosphere to learn about all aspects of studying in the United States. American study abroad alumni, ranging from a former sumo wrestler to a rap artist, spoke of their experiences in America. Additional entertainment was provided in the form of musical performances and food.

Food and beverage originally wasn't planned for the event. However, the ATO worked with the Public Affairs Section (PAS) to coordinate with cooperators and local venders to create a more

lively experience for the attendees as well as promote American food products.

Cooperators and businesses responded favorably to the opportunity to sell and sample their food to large crowds. For example, an American juice manufacturer, working with a local restaurant, sold and sampled grapefruit juice made from Florida grown grapefruit. At the same time, the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) worked with a local restaurant to serve clam chowder and salmon sandwiches. U.S. wine and craft beer vendors sold beverages, which also complemented the foods served.

Kitchen vans were setup by two local American-affiliated restaurants, which served hamburgers and roast beef sandwiches made with American beef. Both restaurants were pleased with the event. As one of the chefs commented: "We appreciate the opportunity to promote our restaurants along side the U.S. Embassy. We hope to continue these projects in the future." Several local businesses, including trading companies, constructed booths to promote their respective American products. Other companies that promoted their products at the event were U.S. ice cream and jellybean vendors, who were happy with the opportunity to promote their products at a large scale event.

There were a number of value added aspects of the event, including internet videos, interviews and articles run in magazines, and an excellent showing in front of an audience of over 18,000 visitors. There was also coverage by a major Tokyo media outlet that is viewed by 3.8 million people a day (roughly one out of every ten in Tokyo's 33 million strong metropolitan population).

Snap Shots:

1

Charge Jim Zumwalt speaks about studying in America.

2

A company representative distributing oranges to the crowd.

3

Food court

4

Children at the event

ATO's Role: Keys to Success

- Proactively coordinated with the Public Affairs Section of the U.S. Embassy to provide cooperators with a platform to promote their products.
- Partnered with a number of U.S. cooperators and companies so that Japanese attendees could sample American culture through food and beverages.
- Developed new exhibition tools such as posters (picture 3), hanging lanterns (picture 4), and the 12 sided die known as clippers (picture 4).