

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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### **The Seoul Source - The sole provider of agricultural news in Korea**

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**Report Highlights:**

Welcome to the inaugural issue of The Seoul Source, the sole stop for information on agriculture-related news in Korea. We hope that you will find the articles contained herein both beneficial and enjoyable to read. Included in this first issue is news on the Great American Culinary Camp; Food Export USA "Specialty & Natural Products" Trade Delegation; Green tourism; Chuseok (Korean Thanksgiving); and the 12th International Organic & Natural Trade Fair.

## General Information:

### Great American Culinary Camp hosted by ATO on September 4, 2013



On September 4, the Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) and the Korean Alumni Association of the Culinary Institute of America (KACIA) hosted the "Great American Culinary Camp" at the Millennium Hilton hotel in Seoul. Since 2006, this annual event is organized to support the Korean restaurant industry by introducing creative menus made up of imported fresh American ingredients and facilitate further demand for these products. This year, the showcase of 17 new recipe ideas attracted 178 attendees from Korean food service sectors and successfully presented the value and quality of a wide variety of American products. Support from cooperators including the U.S. Meat Export Federation, USA Poultry & Egg Export Council, California Milk Advisory Board, Cranberry Marketing Commission and Sunkist

contributed to the success of the event. Cultural and economic ties between Korean and American food industries are strengthened as a result of sharing diverse recipes representing dining trends of both countries. For further information on the event, an electronic copy of the Culinary Camp Guidebook containing recipes and sponsor product information is now available on the ATO Seoul website ([www.atoseoul.com](http://www.atoseoul.com)) and cooking videos of selected recipes are updated on-line as well.

### Food Export USA 'Specialty & Natural Products' Trade Delegation visits Seoul

From August 29 to 30, Food Export Association of the Midwest-Northeast USA visited Seoul for a trade mission geared toward specialty and natural products. Through consultations and briefing sessions, the delegation shared information on entering the Korean market in order to assess market potential in Korea. The sessions covered topics ranging from general information on current trends in the Korean food market to policy related matters on Korean trade barriers. A presentation by the ATO touched upon how the Korean food industry now pays great attention to the health benefits of food products. The program included receptions for Korean and American industries to exchange ideas and build business networks. The rising interest of American exporters to the Korean market as a result of this event should spur trade even further.

### Green Tourism as a new plan to promote both agriculture and tourism industries



The Korean government created a new form of tourism with the purpose of promoting the agricultural economy as well as encourage the tourism sector through diversification. So called "Green Tourism," the initiative aims to integrate agricultural related programs into tour packages. Farmhouses in rural villages are provided as lodging and visitors can experience rural farm life by helping on the farm to plant, tend, and harvest locally produced food. This overall strategy increases farm income and supports the regional tourism industry. One of the international organizations which provides this type of tour worldwide is WWOOF(World-Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms). They encourage people of different nationalities to participate in experiencing rural lives and to work in the field together. By doing

so, they not only contribute to producing agricultural benefits, but they also make great vacation memories while staying on the farm.

As a ripple effect, this type of integrated industry is estimated to create 5000 job opportunities for women and the elderly. The industry's contribution to preservation of the environment is immeasurable as well. According to local media, the government plans to accommodate 1000 businesses by 2017 with 300 businesses currently operating. Overall, the model is considered to be an efficient and sustainable way to boost both industries and to preserve and promote distinctive characteristics of each region simultaneously.

### Chuseok, the largest Korean holiday, entails market volatility and price change

Chuseok, Korea's most significant and longest national holiday runs from September 18-20 and has greatly influenced supply and demand of agricultural products in the market. During Chuseok and prior to the actual holiday, consumption patterns show significant changes as people buy products to send as gifts to relatives and acquaintances as well as prepare ceremonial tables for ancestors. This particular culture has been urging people to consume large amounts of meat, fruits, and basic household items during this period. Overall, the price range of agricultural products related to Chuseok seems to be on a sharp rise,



higher than last year. According to Statistics Korea, it is estimated that consumer prices rose 1.3% and fresh vegetable prices increased to 12.9% compared to last year. Another notable phenomenon shown in the market is the rise of Hanwoo (beef) consumption compared to a decrease in sales income of marine products. This phenomenon is attributable to consumers' rising fear of possible radioactive contamination in products from Japan. Thus, consumers are more likely to purchase Hanwoo instead of fish as gifts to others. In order to stabilize the rising price and to relieve consumers' burden, the government decided to impose intensive price controls over some of the price-sensitive products like apple and pear.



### The 12th International Organic & Natural Trade Fair 2013



The 12<sup>th</sup> International Organic & Natural Trade Fair 2013 was held in COEX, Seoul from August 23 to 25. The event was hosted by the Korea Organic Food Association with exhibitors from each province exhibiting different kinds of organic food produced locally. Kevin Sage-EL, ATO Director, attended the fair to celebrate and deliver welcoming remarks. The fair invited buyers from 12 countries with booths exhibiting organic food products and processed goods advertising Korean organic products. Not only foreign buyers, but also public visitors paid great attention to products like organic cosmetics and organic gift sets for Chuseok. Local agricultural products were introduced by suppliers from each province to show the quality and competitiveness of Korean

organic products in the international market. Several contracts were made in the fair as well. This annual event will enhance public understanding of organic products, create added value for organic products and contribute to extending cooperation among nations in the organic food market. The Rural & Agricultural Life Exhibition and the Green Tourism Exhibition were held at the same time in the same venue creating synergies for more effective agricultural promotion.