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GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Report Highlights:

ATO Tokyo Helps AEON Retail Celebrate U.S. Lobster and Alaska Seafood; U. S. Soybean Conference Attracts over 250 Attendees; U.S. Softwood Trade Mission Celebrates 25 Years!; ATO Tokyo Expands Promotion Reach to Northeastern Japan

General Information:

The Wasabi

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ATO Tokyo Helps AEON Retail Celebrate U.S. Lobster and Alaska Seafood: On December 11, 2013, AEON Retail kicked-off their special celebration of Maine lobster which was a success. This event was part of a 10-week promotional campaign called, “Special 10 Weeks at AEON,” where the supermarket chain is highlighting recipes, fine food items, wines and lobster for the holiday season. The 10-week event began on November 1 and will continue through January 13, during which, AEON will highlight a recipe each week that uses specific products sold in their stores. The featured item in week eight was lobster and U.S. Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Tokyo helped celebrate the event along with two comedians who were stealing samples from each other on stage. AEON also featured

Alaskan salmon, cod, cod roe, and a salmon hamburger patty. For more details on the event, please go to: http://www.myfood.jp/special/event1312_04.html (Japanese language only).

U. S. Soybean Conference Attracts over 250 Attendees: On December 9 and 10, the U. S. Soybean Export Council held its 29th Annual Soybean Outlook Conference at the Tokyo American Club. The U.S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) has operated an office in Japan since 1956, symbolic of the long and enduring relationship between these two trade partners. The first day of the conference was for the oil and feed industry and the second day was for the food soybean industry, including a press conference and mini trade show. The U.S. Embassy’s Agricultural Minister-Counselor, David Miller, and Agricultural Senior Attaché, Elizabeth Autry, gave opening remarks and participated in related activities. Speakers at the conference noted that the 2013 U.S. soybean crop is both 7% higher in oil content than the 2012 crop. And of particular importance to the Japanese soy food industry, was news that U.S. non-GMO soybean production is trending upward on increased acreage and greater yielding varieties.

U.S. Softwood Trade Mission Celebrates 25 Years!: The U.S. softwood industry reached an important milestone as it held its 25th annual trade mission to Japan from December 2 to 4. The largest delegation (about 36) in recent memory had many opportunities to hear from and meet with Japanese buyers of U.S. softwood products over their three days in and around Tokyo. In addition to briefing by the Office of Agricultural Affairs, the delegation met with officials from the Forestry Agency and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism, which discussed ongoing efforts to change housing construction patterns in Japan. Did you know that the average single family home in Japan has a lifespan of only 25 – 30 years? The group also met with the Japan Federation of Housing Organizations (Jyudanren) and Japan Lumber Importers’ Association (JLIA) to discuss trends in the Japanese housing market, which is rebounding from a recent slump. Delegation members’ final visit was to a state-of-the-art glulam mill in Kashima, Ibaraki. This recently opened mill is producing a unique and innovative product, using U.S. Douglas fir and Japanese cedar to make strong, durable beams for residential housing and larger buildings.

ATO Tokyo Expands Promotion Reach to Northeastern

On November 7-9, 2013, FoodMesse Niigata, the largest trade show in northeastern Japan, was held attracting over local visitors. International exhibitors included countries Australia, Brazil, and the United States. U.S. ATO Japan managed a pavilion for the third straight year which included Swiss Miss, Hershey's, Planter's, Menehune (Hawaii Water), Florida grapefruit, and a variety of artisanal cheeses. The Florida Department of Citrus displayed grapefruit and a juicer machine in cooperation with a Japanese juicer machinery company in Nagano Prefecture. Fresh aroma of grapefruit juice attracted visitors at the show. In total, USA Pavilion exhibitors reported projected sales of over \$60,000.



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