

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary _ Public

Date: 3/18/2013

GAIN Report Number: JA3008

Japan

Post: Tokyo

The WASABI - Hot News from Japan Vol. 9 Issue 4

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

Approved By:

Jennifer Clever

Prepared By:

FAS Japan Staff

Report Highlights:

Expansion of U.S. Beef Exports Boosts the Japanese Food Market; FAS Tokyo Hosts All-Day Program for Young Japanese Farmers; ISAAA Reports Adoption of Biotech Crops in the World is Increasing; The U.S. Soybean Export Council participates in the 18th National Natto Competition; Hyogo Chefs Association Features Alaska Seafood in their Tasting Event; Ushiwaka Holds U.S. Beef Renaissance Event in Kyoto.

General Information:

The Wasabi

HOT News from Japan - Vol 9, Issue 4
March 15, 2013

Expansion of U.S. Beef Exports Boosts the Japanese Food Market: On February 1, 2013, Japan’s restriction over U.S. beef imports was relaxed. Major beef bowl restaurant chains and casual barbecue restaurants are aiming to accelerate opening new outlets within this year. Yoshinoya, a major beef bowl chain operator who uses U.S. beef for its signature beef bowl menus, plans to open 60 new outlets in 2013, of which number is more than twice than last year. Anrakutei, a Korean-style barbecue restaurant chain, plans to build 10 new outlets this year, which is 10 times more than the previous year. Meanwhile, soon after the relaxation, Ito-Yokado, a major retailer, conducted a sales campaign of U.S. beef at its major outlets in Tokyo. The beef was imported from the United States by air shipment and the company sold the beef at half price than before the restriction was eased. Some Japanese media report that easing the beef import restrictions helps boost Japan’s economy.

FAS Tokyo Hosts All-Day Program for Young Japanese Farmers: On March 3, U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Tokyo hosted an program for an audience of about 100 young Japanese farmers. These farmers were participants of an unprecedented gathering in called the “Agri-station festival,” a series of agricultural training events aimed at keeping farmers motivated and active in the Japanese agricultural sector. FAS Tokyo’s program included a presentation of the [FOOD2040](#) study followed by an active panel discussion featuring leaders in the Japanese food manufacturing sector. In addition, FAS Tokyo worked with the National Future Farmers of America (FFA) Organization and the Future Farmers of Japan, and as a result, a delegation representing the Colorado FFA was able to attend the event and exchange views with Japanese participants. This activity launches FAS Tokyo’s “AgXchange Initiative” seeking to increase bilateral exchanges among young American and Japanese farmers and thereby influence future Japanese leaders in the field of agriculture.



2013,
all-day
Tokyo
young



ISAAA Reports Adoption of Biotech Crops in the World is Increasing: On March 6, 2013, Dr. Clive James, Chairperson of the ISAAA, the International Service for the Acquisition of Agricultural Biotechnology, and his colleagues, visited U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Tokyo and shared the report on the latest status of biotech crops adoption in the world. The cultivation of biotech crops reached 170 million hectares in CY2012, 100-fold increase from 1.7 million hectares in 1996. The United States continued to be the lead country with 69.5 million hectares.

The U.S. Soybean Export Council participates in the 18th National Natto Competition: On February 27, 2013, the U.S. Soybean Export Council participated in the 18th National

Natto (fermented soybeans) Competition held in the Tochigi Prefecture. The event was organized and sponsored by the Japan Natto Cooperative Society Federation to demonstrate the commitment of the U.S. Soy Industry for the newly established Red River U.S. Award. The U.S. Soybean Export Council, in collaboration with the Northern Food Grade Soybean Association (NFGSA), established the U.S. Soybean Prize Category in the National Natto Competition in 2011. Since then, the Red River U.S. Award is presented to the best Natto produced using U.S. soybeans. This year's winner was "Hinodekko 4 packs" by Sato Shokuhin Kogyo located in the Kagoshima Prefecture. At the event's press meeting, the U.S. Embassy's Minister-Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, David Miller, highlighted the importance of agricultural trade between the United States and Japan, and reiterated American soybean grower's commitment to ensuring that the Japanese Natto industry continues to receive a constant supply of safe and high quality products. Currently, U.S. Soy growers provide 83 percent of Japan's natto.



Hyogo Chefs Association Features Alaska Seafood in their Tasting Event: On March 5 through 7, the Hyogo Chefs Association held a tasting event at the Takarazuka Hotel in Kobe, featuring Alaska seafood combined with local fresh produce. The association has been holding tasting events periodically in order to educate young chefs. The association cooperated with U.S. Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Osaka and the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) and agreed to use Alaska seafood in their tasting events. About 180 chefs attended the tasting over the three day period. An ATO Osaka staff member and an ASMI Japan staffer attended the event and thanked the association for their cooperation. The chefs who

attended the tasting showed strong interest in the combination of Alaska seafood and local food ingredients.



Ushiwaka Holds U.S. Beef Renaissance Event in Kyoto: On February 27, U.S. Minister-Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, David Miller, attended the "U.S. Beef Renaissance" in Kyoto, showing FAS Japan's strong support for U.S. beef. The event, consisting of an educational seminar and a reception, was organized by Ushiwaka Shoji Co., Ltd., a major distributor of U.S. beef to high-end restaurants and hotels in Western Japan, and cosponsored by the U.S. Meat Export Federation (USMEF). In his speech, Agricultural Minister-Counselor Miller reported the audience about the recent easing of beef import restrictions from the U.S. and appreciated the audience for their continuous support for U.S. beef over the years. About 700 people, mainly chefs from hotels from the Kansai region, attended the seminar. In the following reception, a wide variety of

dishes featuring U.S. beef were served, showing the extraordinary versatility of the usage of U.S. beef.

###