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Travel to National Restaurant Association Show in Chicago and DC

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Trip Report

Market Development Reports

Agricultural Trade Office Activities

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Report Highlights:

ATO Japan continues to support the FAS-SRTG Collaboration Fund Program. The Food Export Association of the Midwest and Food Export U.S.A. Northeast (Food Export Group) hosted a reverse trade mission to the National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show from May 17 to May 20, 2014. ATO Japan recruited and supported buyers from a resort inn chain, Paipu-no-Kemuri, and a trading company, TCS Corporation. As a result, immediate sales were made at the ATO coordinated factory tour and samples were ordered at the NRA show site between the Japanese buyers and American companies. ATO estimate that these business meetings will result in more than \$520,000 in sales over the next twelve months. In addition, ATO supported a 58 person Japan Foodservice Association mission by organizing briefings and one-on-one meetings.

General Information:

Date: May 16 through 25, 2012

Traveler: Masayuki (Alex) Otsuka, Marketing Specialist, ATO Tokyo

Purpose:

ATO Marketing Specialist Masayuki Otsuka accompanied two Japanese buyers on a foreign buyer's mission to the National Restaurant Association (NRA) Show in Chicago from May 17 – 21, 2014. The foreign Buyers' mission project includes visiting prearranged food service-related sites, meetings with FAS and NASDA representatives, and assisting Japanese executive buyers in one-on-one business meetings organized by Food Export Group. Mr. Otsuka also aided a group of 58 Japanese buyers sponsored by Japan Foodservice Association in order to lead the buyers to NASDA hosted American Food Fair pavilion.

Otsuka also visited Washington D.C. for new trade lead system discussions and meet with FAS officials from May 22 – 23, 2014.

Project Background:

Profile of the two buyers;

1. Paipu no Kemuri Company is a private owned hotel chain which has 5 hotels located in well-known resort areas such as Nagano, Karuizawa, Atami and Hakone. Each hotel has a specialized buffet restaurant, and prepares more than 40 different menus for both dinner and breakfast. The buffet service became popular feature of the hotel chain and it drives continuous company growth. Mr. Koichi Ishida, President and owner of the company, started out as a chef working for a resort inn located in Nagano. Since Mr. Ishida established the hotel business, he's been offering a wide variety of tasty menus at his hotels while directly importing foods. This is unique in Japan, where a hotel owner takes risk of direct import in order to offer higher quality meals for customers at lower price. The Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Tokyo has developed a strong relationship with Mr. Ishida as a client of trade lead system.

Paipu-no-Kemuri sponsored Mr. Ishida's own airfare between Japan and Chicago for the NRA show.

Paipu-no-Kemuri Profile (English): <http://www.paipunokemuri.com/english/>

2. TCS Corporation is a small trading company specializing in trade between the U.S. and Japan. The company handles food, beverages, machinery, and sundries for food industry. ATO Tokyo has matched TCS and a Japanese company who was looking for a variety of U.S. beers for small quantity shipments. Mr. Ken Taguchi, President, has been flexible and worked out this small quantity shipments by periodic trades. TCS Corporation also sponsored own travel and lodging costs for Mr. Taguchi to the NRA in Chicago.

3. Japan Food Association (JF) is the Japanese counterpart of U.S. National Restaurant Association (NRA), and sent a trade mission to NRA show in Chicago. The mission for this year consisted of a 58 Japanese buyers from the food service industry. ATO Tokyo and JF held meetings before traveling to Chicago to help make the mission more efficient given the limited time available and prepared a briefing paper in Japanese that explained features of the American Food Pavilion hosted by National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) as the effective complex of export ready U.S. food suppliers. ATO Specialist distributed the paper to all mission members in advance, and also had a five minute-long briefing session for the buyer group at a NRA venue in the morning of May 18, 2014. At the show, ATO Tokyo supported JF buyers' interaction with U.S. food suppliers.

Achievements, Evaluation and Follow Up:

Company President, Mr. Ishida, participated in one-on-one meetings that Food Export Group coordinated. With steady support from the ATO, twenty-eight trade meetings were held between the Japanese buyer and American Companies during the NRA show. It was reported that this was a record high for meetings done by one foreign buyer in three days.

Overall, the NRA show proved to be a useful event for the Japanese buyers and the Food Export Group's nominated U.S. food suppliers. After the show ended, Mr. Ishida and Mr. Taguchi expressed their appreciation for participating in the ATO Japan's NRA buying mission, even though they tied up with the one-one-one meetings and couldn't have enough time for their own to explore the NRA show.

ATO Otsuka also escorted the buying team to the Food Export group hosted Culinary Demonstration which showcased food products from a dozen different U.S. companies. The event was held on the second night of NRA and provided an opportunity to foreign buyers to meet with U.S. suppliers at casual dinner setting. This event consolidated tasting opportunities of most of food products provided by one-on-one meetings, instead of tasting products at a meeting table. This was an efficient event though Japanese buyers wanted to taste food samples during business conversation, especially if food product does not require cooking.

During the NRA show, Mr. Ishida made actual sample orders with seven U.S. food suppliers out of a total of twenty-eight onsite. He committed to serve these samples as buffet menus at his hotels, hotel guests can taste and evaluate potential of the samples respectively. The products with the most potential for the buyer were cooked spare rib, frozen bakery and salad dressing. The buyer also showed interest in portion-packed peanuts butter, condiments, bagel (frozen), brownie (frozen) and dipped pretzel (ice-bar).

In addition to the one-on-one meetings with U.S. food suppliers, ATO scheduled a factory tour and several business meetings in Chicago. With steady encouragement from the ATO, Mr. Ishida purchased over 2,000 kilograms of spiral ham from an Illinois based producer, and 1,000 kilograms of roasted regular coffee from an Ohio based company.

Mr. Ishida and Mr. Taguchi were so pleased with the results that they have continued business conversations with several U.S. suppliers since their trip to the NRA. ATO estimates that the buying teams should result in more than US\$520,000 in sales over the next twelve months.

Table 1. The Food Export Group Nominated U.S. Companies:

#	Company Name	Products	State	Sample
1	Muldoon Dairy Inc.	Cheese spread	WI	requested
2	The Pantry Shelf/Thaniel's	Bakery mix	KS	-
3	Woodstock Farms, Blue Marble brand	Nuts, dry fruits	NJ	-
4	Marathon Ginseng International	Ginseng root	WI	requested
5	World Trade Direct, Ltd.	Shrimp Burger	OH	-
6	Accord Foods Inc.	Dressing, wine	NY	requested
7	Rosina Foods Products	Meat balls	IL	requested
8	Olympia Foods	Greek food kebab	IL	-
9	Lil' Orbits	Auto-cooking	MN	-
10	Ray's New York Bagles (Famous Foods Express Corp. dba)	Frozen Bagels	MA	requested
11	Original Juan Specialty Foods	Hot sauce	KS	requested
12	Columbus Brands, LLC	Peanut butter	NY	requested
13	NORPAC	Frozen food	OR	-
14	Artisan Square / Flatcracker Inc	Flat cracker	NY	-
15	Dot Foods	Distributor	MO	-
16	Sweetie Beans,	Bakery mix	NY	-
17	Total Health Advanced Nutrition	Milk powders	MN	-
18	Premier Proteins, IIC	Cooked pork rib	MO, IA	requested
19	Colby International, LLC	Cheese, agent	CO	-
20	Distinctive Foods LLC	Frozen Cake	IL	requested
21	Farmington Foods, Inc.	Smoked pork, Roast chicken	IL	requested
22	New Composite Partners	Packing material	WI	-
23	Love and Quiches Desserts, Ltd.	Frozen cake	NY	requested
24	David's Cookies	Frozen cookies	NJ	-
25	Instantwhip Chicago, Inc.	Canned whip cream	IL	-
26	Pinnacle Food/Source One Foods Int'l	Frozen vegetable	NJ	-
27	Chicago Specialty Bakers	Frozen bread	IL	requested
28	Flatout Bread, Inc.	Flat bread, tortilla	MI	-

Table 2. Other U.S. Companies the Buyers Had a Meeting:

#	Company Name	Products	State	Sample
1	Rose Packing Company	Spiral ham	IL	requested
2	Olympia Foods	Greek food kebab	IL	-
3	Lir Orbits	Auto-cooking	MN	-
4	Restaurant Depo	Variety of food	IL	-

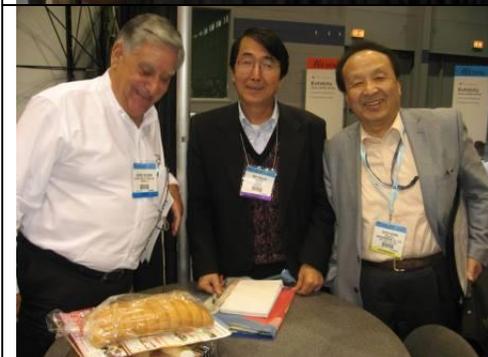
This reverse trade mission encouraged Japanese executives to focus more directly trade with U.S. food suppliers. The lack of English can be problematical for Japanese buyers, particularly with key executives. However, Mr. Ishida assigned Mr. Taguchi in order to cover follow-up business communications with potential U.S. companies. This facilitation was the first for ATO Tokyo that created a continuous loop of conversation between the buyer and potential U.S. food suppliers. Meantime, ATO will also keep close contact with both companies to encourage their purchasing U.S. products.

JF also appreciated the NASDA information that ATO Tokyo prepared for their trip to NRA in advance. Most of mission members have stopped NASDA’s American Food Fair in their limited time for staying at the trade show.

Snap shots:



Mr. Ishida (center) and Mr. Taguchi (right) have one-on-one trade meetings which Food Export Group coordinated especially for selected international buyers. Mr. Ishida gave comments about market potential to the suppliers respectively. Mr. Ishida held 28 one-on-one meetings during his stay at NRA in Chicago.



A representative of Chicago based bakery appreciated the business meeting with Mr. Ishida. Mr. Ishida placed an order of samples that covered all variety of the U.S. bakery’s products.

	<p>The Food Export Group hosted a Culinary Demonstration at a cooking school. The buyers tasted all of samples and gave their comments to the U.S. companies.</p>
	<p>With FAS members and contractors for the new Trade Lead System project in Washington D.C.</p>

Itinerary:

- May 16 - Departed Tokyo for Chicago, met with the Japanese buyers in Chicago
- May 17 - NRA show site, supported one-on-one meetings
- May 18 - NRA show site, greeted JF buyers
Supported one-on-one meetings and met with NASDA/FAS representatives
- May 19 - Tour to ATO coordinated food factories & shop/restaurant in Chicago region
- May 20 - NRA show site, supported one-on-one meetings
- May 21 - Departed Chicago for Washington DC
- May 22 - USDA South building, met with trade lead system members and FAS officials
- May 23 - All day off
- May 24 - Departed Washington DC for Tokyo
- May 25 - Arrived Tokyo