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V5 Food Education Event in Osaka

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Report Highlights:

This report describes and evaluates the V5 Campaign Food Education event held on October 31, 2010.

General Information:

Introduction

The V5 Campaign has developed an educational program for fifth and sixth grade children and their parents to promote vegetable consumption and to increase the awareness for quality U.S. vegetables. ATO Japan targets these grades as we think they are old enough to not only become keen on learning about nutritious benefits of vegetables but also about U.S. food culture in general. The program is designed to provide Japanese consumers the opportunity to experience American cuisine and learn about the importance of eating vegetables, especially V5 vegetables, and a variety of recipes featuring U.S. agricultural products. The event in Osaka on October 31 followed the success of the similar programs held in Tokyo and Hokkaido earlier this year.

Background:

Japanese families have traditionally had well-balanced meals, eating a variety of vegetables along with rice and protein. However, vegetable consumption in Japan has been declining over the years due largely to the diversification of the Japanese diet. Today, annual per capita consumption in Japan is said to be even lower than in the U.S. On the back of the worrying trend coupled with the 2005 Food Education Law, the local governments and various voluntary groups have been implementing a series of food education programs here to encourage consumers to regularly eat more fruits and vegetables. While their focus is generally on eating locally produced agricultural products, our V5 Campaign Food Education is suitable for both meeting the needs of consumers and complementing the existing programs.

The Event

The food education class in Osaka was held at the Cooking Classroom inside the Osaka Central Wholesale Market on October 31 from 10 am to 1 pm. The venue was chosen for its up-to-date and complete kitchen facilities, which are built for a cooking class of 40 to 50 students. The spacious room also allowed for Halloween decoration, which added to the American ambience for the occasion. As scheduled, eighteen Families of 5th and 6th graders and their parents from Osaka and Kobe attended.

Program Details

1. Greetings by Steve Shnitzler, ATO director
2. Lecture “The Power of Vegetables: Importance of Eating Vegetables” by Yasuko Iritani, executive director of Five-A-Day Association in Japan: The talk focused on the importance of eating vegetables, nutritious benefits of different vegetables, and how much volume to consume per day.
3. Lecture “Let’s Eat (more) Vegetables” by Akiko Kashiwagi, ATO Osaka: The session explained nutritious and health benefits of vegetables promoted under V5 campaign and introduced innovative recipes using these vegetables by referring to myfood.jp.



The children learning about U.S. vegetables and taking a quiz

4. Cooking class conducted by Yoshiaki Fujita, a cooking instructor: ATO Osaka used Chef Ema Koeda's recipe, American beef on Broccoli and Celery Rice, to promote V5 vegetables and other U.S. agricultural products. We also demonstrated Sunkist Classic Lemonade, a recipe easy to make, but unfamiliar to most Japanese families. (It is not common for Japanese families to make lemonade at home.)



The participants cooking broccoli and celery rice for beef steak bowl.



5. Eating together

6. Doing dishes and cleaning the kitchen (considered part of food education in Japan)

7. Closing remarks by the ATO director



Achievements:

--The event successfully promoted U.S. agricultural products (V5 vegetables including Western Growers' broccoli and celery, U.S. beef, and Sunkist lemons). Participants learned new and innovative ways of eating broccoli and celery and greatly enjoyed the dishes. Based on the survey and interviews, we were able to verify that combining presentation on the nutritious benefits of eating vegetables and

cooking demonstration using innovative recipes was a highly effective way to promote consumption of vegetables. Tasty American sirloin steak added to their appetite for the U.S. vegetables.

--The event provided a good opportunity for Japanese consumers to deepen their understanding of U.S. agricultural products, their quality and quality control and importance of eating vegetables (according to the survey).

--The event also provided an ideal opportunity to try and enjoy American celery to people who ordinarily eat locally produced celery of a different breed. (Reaction was very positive.) Most participants said they would try the recipes again “immediately.”

--The event also proved a perfect occasion to introduce a popular American tradition. Most participants made fresh lemonade for the first time and said they would like to make the “delicious” drink again at home. .

--Some participants said they enjoyed “American atmosphere” as much as they did the food education program itself.

--The event received very positive feedback. (Please see Appendix for the details.)

Appendix: Summary of Survey Answers for the V5 Food Education on October 31, 2010

1. Are you satisfied with the food education program?
4.8 (The average of 36 answers, Scale of 5 Satisfactory to 1 Unsatisfactory)
2. Were the lectures/presentation easy to understand? Did they meet your expectations?
4.5 (The average of 15 parents, Scale of 5 Excellent to 1 Very unsatisfactory)
3. Was the cooking demonstration easy to understand?
Unanimously Yes
4. Would you cook the recipes at home?
All but three parents said “Yes, immediately” and the others said “Yes, sometime later.”
5. Comments
From the parents
“The class was well-designed to get kids interested in the benefits of [eating] vegetables.”
“I would like to cook the recipe at home because it’s delicious and uses a lot of vegetables.”
“The recipe will be added to our routine menu at home.”

From the children
“I’ve learned a lot about broccoli and celery [through the lecture and the quiz].” (Several said)
“I’m really surprised that celery is this good.” (Many said)
“The recipe makes me enjoy [those vegetables] I normally don’t care for.”
“Combined with rice, celery and broccoli were much more appetizing.”