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GMO Papaya Reaches Out To Japanese Consumers

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Report Highlights:

On July 7 and 8, the first Rainbow (GMO) Papaya sales promotion targeting general consumers was held at the SPA Hawaiians Resort in Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture (about 135 miles north of Tokyo). Over 2,000 SPA guests viewed papaya promotion, and over 600 people sampled the fruit. This was the second Rainbow papaya sales in Japan since COSTCO Japan sold the papayas to their warehouse members in December last year. Deep rooted concerns on GMO food have still been running rampant in the market, but mainly from the large importers. However, all prepared Rainbow papayas were sold out during the promotion, much better sales results than expected.

General Information:

The ATO and the Hawaiian Papaya Industries Association (HPIA) sponsored a Rainbow (GMO) Papaya sales promotion targeting general consumers at the SPA Hawaiians Resort in Iwaki, Fukushima Prefecture on the weekend of July 7 and 8, 2012. This is the second Rainbow papaya sales promotion in Japan since COSTCO Japan promoted Rainbow to their warehouse members in December 2011.

Consumers are still unfamiliar with GMO foods and much misinformation is present in the market, ATO Japan and HPIA, along with the Japanese importer, believe that people will come to accept the product as they learn more about it.

ATO Japan managed the promotion in collaboration with Hawaii Papaya Industry Association (HPIA), Hawaiian papaya supplier, Japanese importer and the end user, Japan's biggest Hawaiian theme spa resort SPA Hawaiians. The buyers at SPA Hawaiians, who were first skeptical about GMO papaya sales, asked their sales staff to let their customers, especially families with small children, know they that are tasting a GMO product that has been approved the Japanese government.

During the sales promotion for two days, ATO Specialist Masayuki Otsuka noticed that there were a few mothers, out of around 600 SPA guests, who kept their children from tasting GMO papaya. However, almost all of the families and guests really enjoyed the tasting, and many bought Rainbow papaya as gifts for friends and relatives.

The buyers of the SPA were surprised by the sales results and appreciated seeing the delight of guests who sampled GMO papaya. All Rainbow papayas were sold out during the promotion, much better results than the sellers expected.

After this Rainbow Papaya sale promotion, HPIA was also satisfied with results of the event and offered a package of Papaya Day promotion to the SPA Hawaiian which will be held on August 8, 2012. ATO helped introduce the Papaya Day idea on behalf of HPIA and will provide official support. August 8 is known as papaya day as the Japanese phrase sounds like papaya.

Snap shots:



A promotion table and sales staff in the center of the biggest gift shop of SPA Hawaiians



Families enjoying tasting Rainbow Papaya samples



Sales staff give consumers information on Rainbow papaya, using ATO published pamphlets



Rainbow papayas were sold out quickly.

Spa Resort Hawaiians –

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spa_Resort_Hawaiians - is a huge Hawaiian themed, indoor, amusement park located in Iwaki, Fukushima prefecture. The place was made famous in a Japanese movie called Hula Girls. This Wikipedia entry tells the whole story if you don't know it already:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hula_Girls.

The resort was shutdown since March 11, 2011, due to an April 2011 aftershock that caused considerable damage. Several parts of the park sank and created over 1.6 meters gaps from the original level. The giant swimming pool fell 1 meter and developed cracks.

During the shutdown, the team of SPA Resort Hula Girls reformed and began a road-show throughout Japan. The performances became a symbol of Iwaki city recovery from the earthquake.

They re-opened the facility in February, 2012. Before the earthquake, ATO had established good

relationships with SPA because its pro-American concepts. Prior to the grand opening, ATO offered help for their re-opening as a part of the Tomodachi (Friendship) initiative that U.S. Ambassador John Roos created to help Japan recover.