

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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### **The WASABI - Hot News from Japan Vol. 11 Issue 6**

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**Report Highlights:**

Advancement of Science and Technology has Helped Women to Play More Active Roles in Farming; American Food Seminar in Osaka; ATO Japan visits Saitama-based Pickle-maker Using U.S. Celery; ATO Japan holds its first Virtual American Fair; FAS Administrator Karsting Greets Japanese Restaurant Owners Delegation at NRA; FAS Japan Helps Open 20th International Food Ingredients and Additives Tradeshow; FAS Japan Welcomes Agricultural Attaché Jess Paulson

**General Information:**

# The Wasabi

*HOT News from Japan - Vol 11, Issue 6*  
October 5, 2015

**Advancement of Science and Technology has Helped Women to Play More Active Roles in Farming:**

During the first week of September 2015, FAS Tokyo organized seminars under the theme of “Women and Agriculture” in Tokyo, Sapporo, and Osaka. Ms. Pam Johnson, former President of the U.S. Corn Growers Association, delivered the keynote speech. Ms. Johnson is the first woman President of the Association and has mentored many women and young people. In discussing the challenges that women face in agriculture, Ms. Johnson noted that reaching leadership positions can be particularly difficult in the United States, as in Japan. Ms. Johnson highlighted the encouragement and support from her family and the importance of mentors as essential elements of her professional success.



Ms. Johnson also noted that the advancement of science and technology has helped women to play more active roles in farming. Her family has been farming for six generations, and in that time, advancements in machinery and technology (such as GPS and biotechnology) have contributed to remarkable improvements in productivity and quality of life as well as a wider range of active roles for women on the farm. As a farmer of corn and soybeans, Ms. Johnson emphasized the benefits of biotech crops, which have provided environmental benefits and improved both the productivity and sustainability of the farm. She concluded her speech by saying that farmers have a responsibility to feed the world, and they should have the tools (including biotechnology) to meet that obligation. Ms. Johnson’s speech was followed by a panel discussion, which generated a lively exchange of views.



A total of 120 people participated in the seminars, which were held in three cities across Japan. FAS Tokyo received many positive comments and feedback from seminar participants.

**American Food Seminar in Osaka:** ATO Osaka an “American Food Seminar & Reception” on September 24, 2015 at Rihga Royal Hotel in Osaka, targeting chefs at restaurants and hotels in the Kansai region. The goals of the event were to introduce U.S. items that are not commonly used at hotels and restaurants and to promote the use of these items among chefs. In the seminar, the U.S. Meat Export Federation presented novel cuts of U.S. beef, U.S. Grain Council introduced white sorghum, U.S.A. Federation introduced Calrose rice and the California



held

food

Rice  
Milk

Advisory Board introduced California cheeses. A wide variety of menus featuring these new food items were created by Rihga Royal Hotel chefs and served at the following reception. About 90 chefs from the region attended the event and appreciated the opportunity to learn and try new food items.

**ATO Japan visits Saitama-based Pickle-maker Using U.S. Celery:** ATO Director Rachel Nelson and marketing specialist Akiko Kashiwagi joined representatives from Kyoto-based vegetable importer, Royal, to pickle producer Oki Shoten on August 11. Saitama-based company is one of Japan’s leading pickle producers, and focuses on celery. It also supplies high quality celery sticks to food service companies. The



visit  
The

processor previously used both Japanese and U.S. celery equally, but has shifted to primarily just U.S. celery over the years because of U.S. celery’s superior quality, price and supply stability. Today, ninety percent of the celery processed by Oki Shoten is sourced from the United States.

Thanks to stringent quality-control, which allows imported celery to remain fresh and crisp days after processing, the company’s business continues to grow. President Yoshie Oki gave ATO Japan a tour of his facility, where tons of celery are peeled and cut at a stunning speed, all by hand. Oki said it is a tough job, requiring a lot of skilled labor as well as a great attention to detail. The visit underscored why Oki Shoten has been so successful transforming U.S. celery into delicious pickles. In recent years, U.S. exports of celery have grown rapidly. Thanks to this processor, more Japanese consumers will enjoy U.S. celery, both at home and in restaurants.



**ATO Japan holds its first Virtual American Fair on Rakuten Ichiba:**

From August 5 to September 2, ATO Japan held its first virtual American fair under the theme “Enjoy Summer! Enjoy a Taste of America from BBQs, Picnics to Wine Parties” in August. The event aimed to increase awareness of the diversity of American food products as well as their uses and recipes – especially those suitable for the summer holidays – boosting online sales. Nearly twenty online shops, offering American products such as beef, pork, cheese, rice, sorghum, wine, hard cider and gourmet foods, participated in the month-long promotion. About a dozen cooperators’ products were featured on the dedicated webpage with pictures of how they are served in the U.S. The virtual fair attracted far more traffic than expected, and appealed to Japanese consumers, including those who were interested in authentic American-style barbecue.

**FAS Administrator Karsting Greets Japanese Restaurant Delegation:**

In May 2015, FAS Administrator Phil Karsting greeted the Japan Foodservice Association (JF) delegation, which included a group of 54 executives from Japan, at the National Restaurant Association (NRA) tradeshow in Chicago. The food service sector in Japan is valued at over \$300 billion, and represents more than 65,000 restaurants, including major U.S. chains like McDonald’s and KFC. This is an extremely important group of customers for U.S. agricultural product exporters. The Administrator showed his appreciation for the JF participants’ continued loyalty to U.S. food and agricultural products in spite of recent import difficulties. The meeting was one of the major highlights of JF’s NRA tour.



(FAS Administrator Phil Karsting is alongside Mission Leader Mr. Tomishige Tanikawa, front, fourth from left)



**FAS Japan Helps Open 20th International Food Ingredients and Additives Tradeshow:** On May 20, Agricultural Trade Office Deputy Director Evan Mangino helped cut the ribbon opening the 20th International Food Ingredients and Additives (IFIA) Japan tradeshow. In recent years, the IFIA show has combined forces with the complementary Health Food Exposition (HFE) Japan, now in its 13th year, to generate greater efficiency in reaching audiences with similar interests. Though the number of U.S. companies participating in the combined show has declined, IFIA/HFE continues to provide

opportunities to engage with leading Japanese companies interested in greater access to a wide array of U.S. food additives and ingredients.

Last but not least...



**FAS Japan Welcomes Agricultural Attaché Jess Paulson:** U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Japan welcomes Jess Paulson who is replacing outgoing Attaché Benjamin Petlock. Jess' portfolio will include food safety, oilseeds, horticultural products, forestry, fisheries, and organics. Tokyo is Jess' second overseas assignment following three years in Ankara, Turkey. He previously worked in the Office of Agreements and Scientific Affairs (OASA) where he covered new technologies in Europe and Central Asia, and in the Office of Country and Regional Affairs (OCRA) where he coordinated work with Japan, Korea and China. Jess is accompanied by his wife Mami, and their children Ami and Rick.

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