

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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### **The WASABI - Hot News from Japan Vol. 8 Issue 2**

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**Report Highlights:**

ATO Osaka holds Food Safety Seminar during the All Japan Supermarket Association (AJS) Trade Show; Natto Made from U.S. Soybeans among 240 Samples competing at this Year's Annual National Natto Competition; U.S. Soybean Delegation Observes tofu Making in Japan; USDA-Trained Detector Dogs Debut at the Haneda Airport in Japan

## General Information:

# The Wasabi

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**ATO Osaka holds Food Safety Seminar during the All Japan Supermarket Association (AJS) Trade Show:** On February 16, 2012, Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Osaka held a Food Safety Seminar featuring USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Japan Agricultural Specialist, Dr. Suguru Sato, to discuss U.S. food regulations, including policies on Maximum Residue Limits (MRLs), and other food safety topics of interest to traders in the Kansai region. The well-attended seminar attracted Kansai buyers of processed and fresh foods, as well as AJS member companies' executives. Attendees found the topic of the seminar timely as both governments continue to consider increasing bilateral trade ties.

**Natto Made from U.S. Soybeans among 240 Samples competing at this Year's Annual National Natto Competition:** On February 17, 2012, the 17th Annual National *Natto* Competition took place in Aomori. *Natto* is a traditional Japanese dish made out of fermented soybeans and is usually consumed at breakfast. Among the categories competing is the category for *Natto* made using U.S. soybeans. This year's winner of the Red River award, bestowed to the best *Natto* made from U.S. soybeans, was the Marukin company. Around 100 people attended the event and got a chance to taste 240 varieties of *Natto* which were entered into the competition.



## U.S. Soybean Delegation

**Observes *tofu* Making in Japan:** On February 21, 2012, U.S. Embassy, Tokyo's Agricultural Attaché, Benjamin Petlock, and Agricultural Specialist, Yuichi Hayashi, joined a delegation from the Soyfood Alliance during their tour of a *tofu* plant, which was organized by the American Soybean Association - International Marketing Japan. The group visited the Shikoku Kakoki Gotemba *tofu* factory which uses 1500 MT of soybeans every day. Shikoku Kakoki's long life *tofu* has a shelf life of 240 days, without using antiseptic agents. The company produces not only *tofu*, but also *tofu* filing machines. The U.S. soyfood delegation, which included a scientist, a non-GMO seed company representative, and a non-GMO soybean farmer, had a detailed discussion with factory staff and exchanged useful information and opinions. In addition to the factory tour, the group was also able to enjoy a spectacular view of Mt. Fuji.



**USDA-Trained Detector Dogs Debut at the Haneda Airport in Japan:** On

February 20, all major media in Japan reported the debut of two Animal and Plant Quarantine detector dogs at Tokyo's Haneda Airport. The dogs are Bucky (3 years old, male) and Neal (2 years old, male) trained in the USDA/Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS)'s National Detector Dog Training Center in Georgia. The two beagles arrived in Japan on January 26 and received with their Japanese handlers final training from two APHIS trainers dispatched from the Center in the U.S. Their handlers are quarantine officers of Japanese Ministry of Agriculture who, last year, visited the Center in Georgia to receive training with dogs. The Haneda Airport resumed international flight services in 2010. The Ministry of Agriculture reportedly said that it expects highly on the dogs in preventing unapproved food and farm products to be brought into Japan by tourists.



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