

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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### **The WASABI - Hot News from Japan Vol. 12 Issue 6**

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**Report Highlights:**

Japanese Retail Giant AEON Capitalizes on American Fairs; ATO Japan Brings Japanese Importers to the Summer Fancy Food Show; ATO Japan Brings Japanese Importers to the Summer Fancy Food Show; American Hardwood Seminars Attract Record Crowds in Fuchu and Sapporo; FAS Japan Hosts 140+ Iowa Farm Bureau Federation Members; Evaluating Japanese Interest in Egg Exports at Major Layer Operation

**General Information:**

# The Wasabi

*HOT News from Japan - Vol 12, Issue 6*  
July 22, 2016

**Japanese Retail Giant AEON Capitalizes on American Fairs:** Operating 625 supermarkets and 274 malls nationwide, Japan's largest retailer Aeon took in more than 8 trillion Yen in revenue last year. ATO Japan has been collaborating with Aeon since 2009 to promote U.S. food and agricultural products, providing fresh ideas and the starpower of our Agricultural Minister Counselors and Trade Officers. One of the most highly visible and successful efforts has been the annual American Fair, typically held in conjunction with the arrival of U.S. cherries towards the end of May. Aeon outlets from Hokkaido to Kyushu have capitalized on this annual event to promote U.S. foods and introduce a wide variety of new products, including: craft beer, gourmet popcorn, U.S.-style barbecue, California olive oil, artisanal U.S. cheeses, and a range of bakery and confectionery recipes. Aeon and ATO Japan have also joined up to include complementary product lines like sporting goods, outdoor equipment, and apparel to increase foot traffic and enhance food sales numbers.

This year's American Fair events including contributions from the U.S. Meat Export Federation, Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute, Sunkist, California Agricultural Export Council, American Cherries, USA Poultry and Egg Export Council, Blue Diamond Almond, U.S. Dairy Export Council, California Prune Board, California Walnut Commission and Raisin Administrative Committee. At its flagship AEON Laketown mall in nearby Saitama (about 30km from central Tokyo), ATO Japan Director Rachel Nelson joined the President of AEON Retail Jerry Black to launch the 2016 American Fair at big promotional event on June 10. And at AEON Hokkaido, U.S. Consulate General Public Affairs Officer Harvey Beasley grilled U.S. beef live on local television.



AEON Lake Town

AEON Retail President Jerry Black and ATO Director Rachel Nelson



**ATO Japan Brings Japanese Importers to the Summer Fancy Food Show:** Senior Agricultural Marketing Specialist Tommy Aoki accompanied nine representatives from five Japanese importers to the 2016 Summer Fancy Food Show in New York, NY from June 26 – 28. ATO Tokyo also provided a tour of trendy eateries and specialty food shops in Brooklyn to introduce a variety of hip, new U.S. food products.

ATO Tokyo coordinated with WUSATA, SUSTA, and Food Export USA to provide

the Japanese importers with a list of STRG-sponsored exhibitors featuring such products non-fried chips and chocolates. The Japanese importers returned to Japan with bags of samples for further product testing and a number of new opportunities, flavors and products to follow up on.

A winery (blending in) in Brooklyn



**ATO Osaka Hosts American Food Seminar:** On July 12, ATO Osaka educated and entertained more than 80 chefs at the Rihga Royal Hotel in Osaka for an American Food Seminar & Reception. Targeting Kansai region restaurant and hotel chefs, the event introduced American food items, including innovative U.S. pork cuts, potatoes as a main course and Oregon hard ciders. Agricultural Minister Counselor David Miller encouraged the crowd to try new things and keep exploring the variety of high quality food and agricultural products that the United States has to offer.

During the seminar, the U.S. Meat Export Federation highlighted U.S. pork, the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute described the pristine environmental conditions and sustainable harvesting practices in Alaska, Potatoes USA underscored the benefits of U.S. potatoes, and the California Olive oil Council explained how their strict production standards assure the high quality of extra virgin olive oil made in California. Following the seminar, high-profile Japanese chef Junichiro Horie of restaurant “i-lunga” in Nara led a team of Rihga Royal chefs in preparing a dinner that incorporated the four ingredients featured in the seminar and was complemented by a delicious range of Oregon craft ciders. ATO Osaka, with great support from the Oregon State Department of Agriculture and the Northwest Cider Association, invited hard cider manufacturers from Oregon to pair their ciders with the food at the event in order to introduce the Japanese chefs to the boom in American craft cider production and consumption.

**American Hardwood Seminars Attract Record Crowds in Fuchu and Sapporo:** With robust collaboration from the local governments and various wood-related industry associations in these regions The American Hardwood Export Council (AHEC) held seminars in Fuchu (Hiroshima prefecture) on June 29 and in Sapporo (Hokkaido prefecture) on July 1. National Hardwood Lumber Association (NHLA) Chief Inspector Dana Spessert explained about the U.S. grades and labeling of hardwoods, and Dr. Eva Haviarova of Purdue University talked about kitchen design trends in the United States. Agricultural Attaché Jess Paulson traveled to Hiroshima from Tokyo to deliver opening remarks at the Fuchu seminar, which drew more than 130 attendees. He welcomed the audience and expressed his appreciation for their continued support for U.S. hardwoods in the region.





**FAS Japan Hosts 140+ Iowa Farm Bureau Federation Members:**

On July 8, the Office of Agricultural Affairs hosted a country briefing for 142 Members of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation (IFBF) visiting Japan as part of their ongoing efforts to better understand the indispensable Japanese market and to maintain the historic bonds of friendship with Yamanashi Prefecture. Ambassador Kennedy welcomed the group and received photographs from the historic Yamanashi hog lift, when Iowans generously sent 35 breeding sows and 100,000 bushels of corn to help the farmers of Yamanashi recover from a devastating typhoon. The IFBF delegation was comprised of IFBF leadership, including President Craig Hill (pictured above), County Presidents and their spouses from over 60 counties, and Iowa Sister States Executive Director Kim Heidemann. Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino provided an agricultural briefing and (somewhat) successfully orchestrated the security/entrance of the largest visiting group in recent memory. Iowa exports more pork and beef to Japan than any other state, topping \$580 million in 2015 alone.

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**Evaluating Japanese Interest in Egg Exports at Major Layer Operation:**

On July 6, FAS Tokyo joined working level staff from the Ministry of Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) at TOMARU, one of the largest vertically integrated layer operations in Japan. MAFF and MHLW have been in consultation with Post regarding access to the U.S. market for Japanese eggs to be used in Japanese restaurants in the United States. Most Americans are surprised to learn that eggs feature prominently (often raw) in a number of traditional Japanese dishes (such as *sukiyaki*) and that Japan ranks second in the world in per capita egg consumption at more than 17 kg per person each year.



10-egg pack retailing between \$1.75 - \$2.25.

With over 90 years of experience as a breeder/hatcher Tomaru, in nearby Gunma prefecture, has expanded over the last 30 years to include considerable laying, grading and packing capacity. With a wholly owned feed mill under construction and the expansion of laying capacity with the opening of Japan's largest laying shed (housing 240,000 birds), Tomaru is an example of a modern Japanese agricultural producer that is expanding as smaller, traditional operators continue to exit agricultural production. Tomaru's grading and packaging (GP) center handles approximately 120 different brands of fresh eggs and ships nearly 50 metric tons (MT) of eggs each day from their own and nearby layer farms. Depending on the brand and their marketing tactics, the GP center packages eggs for retail in plastic clamshells of 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, or 15 eggs, with a standard

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