

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Voluntary Public

Date: 10/17/2016

GAIN Report Number: JA6039

Japan

Post: Tokyo

The WASABI - Hot News from Japan Vol. 12 Issue 8

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

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Report Highlights:

Taste of America 2016, Kuze Tradeshow, Seafood Show, American Fruits and Sweets Fair, American & Hawaiian Fair in Osaka, USMEF Heartland Team, Okinawan Cow-Calf Research, Nippon Ham Fighters, Biotech Regulator Tour, DuPont Japan Local Outreach, Web-based Training, California Prunes and Walnuts Baking Contest, New Arrivals

General Information:

The Wasabi

HOT News from Japan - Vol 12, Issue 8
October 17, 2016



Taste of America 2016: ATO Tokyo and the California Agricultural Export Council (CAEC) partnered with 50 Tokyo restaurants that created menus using U.S. agricultural ingredients to serve in their restaurants during the Taste of America (TOA) campaign from October 1 -14. Many of the participating restaurants will also couple their TOA menus with special events like how to make a Hawaiian “lei”, Southern Music performances, and a meet-up for Friends of Portland at Navarre, to name a few. To increase media exposure, ATO Tokyo hosted a media event at Bistro Barnyard, a TOA participating restaurant pictured above, on September 6. Over 150 media, TOA restaurateurs, and Cooperators were invited to judge the entries from ten restaurants participating in Slider and Gumbo competitions.

Taste of America at the Tourism Expo Japan Tradeshow: ATO Tokyo and the California Agricultural Export Council (CAEC) have expanded the Taste of America (TOA) campaign to promote U.S. food and agriculture through inbound travel to the United States. This year was the third time TOA made an appearance at the Tourism Expo Japan Tradeshow, which set a record high attendance mark with 185,800 visitors. With a considerable footprint at the show, TOA set up a kitchen to prepare Louisiana Seafood Gumbo, California Calrose Rice Salad, and other U.S. regionally themed dishes to be sold throughout the three day show. Chefs Jason Fox from San Francisco’s Commonwealth restaurant and chefs Cody and Samantha Carroll of Sac-a-Lait in New Orleans gave presentations on regional cuisines and travel destinations.



Highlighting U.S. Foods at Kuze Tradeshow: On September 13 and 14, ATO Tokyo teamed up with Cooperators and one Japanese importer to host a U.S. pavilion at the Kuze tradeshow, targeting the hotel,



restaurant and institutional (HRI) sector. Kuze is a major food service wholesaler with over 600 employees and \$660 million in revenue in 2015. ATO Tokyo developed the “American Gourmet Hot Sandwich,” concept for the event, a unifying a variety of U.S. products including beef and pork products, natural cheeses, potatoes, and Oregon mixed berries in the U.S. pavilion. The trade showcase attracted over 4,500 buyers from the Japanese HRI and retail sectors.

Japan International Seafood & Technology Expo: From August 17-19, over 30,000 seafood buyers from Japan and across Asia visited the show, which featured over 1,000 booths. Alongside numerous Japanese companies and pavilions from China, the Philippines, Korea, the United Kingdom, Malaysia, Thailand, and South Africa, the United States’ Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute (ASMI) and American Indian Foods featured U.S. crabs, salmon, cod and more. Based on its positive evaluation of the show and the show’s capacity to effectively support U.S. seafood products in the market, ATO Japan plans to provide additional support for the show in 2017. ASMI held a reception for approximately 140 Japanese seafood buyers at the Royal Park Hotel Shiodome on August 18. Vice Chairman of the ASMI Board of Directors Allen Kimball and ATO Director Rachel Nelson gave remarks at the reception, where guests enjoyed Alaska seafood prepared and served by the



Royal Park Hotel.

ATO Takes American Fruits & Sweets Online: ATO Osaka partnered with 20 different Japanese bakeries and patisseries to an online fair that featured online dessert using U.S. ingredients.



Fair hold shops

The fair, which ran from August 28 to October 3, aimed to increase awareness and consumption of U.S. fresh and dried fruits, by introducing some of the most appealing and innovative ways of enjoying high-quality U.S. products. Many of the desserts highlighted innovative, delicious pairings of U.S. and Japanese ingredients. Offerings like dried cranberries & matcha green tea and California raisins & Japanese bean paste were well-received and underscored the potential for increased utilization of U.S. fruits and nuts in Japan’s bakery and dessert sector.

ATO Osaka Marketing Specialist Akiko Kashiwagi held a media tasting session with newspapers and food bloggers, and ATO Director Rachel Nelson joined a popular radio program for an hour-long radio interview to launch the event and to attract listeners to the website. The and associated promotional events helped attract more visitors the participating online shops than anticipated, and ATO Japan plans to continue promoting U.S. fruits and nuts to dessert makers across Japan.

ANA Crown Plaza Hotel Osaka Hosts First American & Hawaiian Fair: The ANA Crown Plaza Hotel in Osaka held American & Hawaiian fair in August 2016, at its “Café in the Park” restaurant. Previous ATO Osaka American food seminars inspired the ANA Crown Plaza’s head chef to develop this particular American fair, which featured U.S.



fair to an beef,

pork, Calrose rice, white sorghum and other U.S. products. During the fair, over 3,500 customers enjoyed the American-inspired dishes in the restaurant, and, following the event's success, the hotel is planning to hold another American fair next summer. U.S. Consul General to Osaka-Kobe Mr. Allen Greenberg showed his support for the event and appreciation to the hotel for promoting U.S. food by dining there on August 30.



USMEF Heartland Team Visits #1 Export Market for U.S. Beef and Pork: The week of August 29, 2016, the U.S. Meat Export Federation hosted a visit by the 2016 Heartland Team, comprising representatives from across the country and across the agricultural industry. FAS Japan helped this group start its busy week on the right foot with a country briefing early on August 30. FAS Japan Minister Counselor Gary Meyer delivered welcoming remarks to a crowd of nearly 600 importers, distributors, end users, and industry representatives gathered for a seminar on social media marketing on Friday, September 2. The tasting session that followed capped a highly productive visit and gave the Heartland Team a chance to further develop relationships with customers in their most valuable market.

Okinawa Cow-Calf Operators Form Critical Link in Wagyu Supply Chain: Given the tropical climate, lack of local fodder, and distance from consumer centers like Osaka and Tokyo, the outer islands of Okinawa prefecture may seem an unlikely place to find *wagyu* beef cattle. However, Okinawa may be one of the only places in Japan where the cow-calf industry is thriving. On September 12-13, Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino and Agricultural Specialist Kakuyu Obara traveled to Ishigaki Island in Okinawa to see the largest, most valuable calf auction in Okinawa and learn more the island's vital role in the supply chain of premium Japanese *wagyu* beef.

Demand for authentic *wagyu* beef remains high at home and is beginning to grow abroad. However, aging cow-calf operators across Japan have continued to exit the industry as they retire without successors, driving average *wagyu* feeder calf prices up more than 70 percent since 2013. Among prefectures, Okinawa has the 9th largest beef cattle herd and is one of the few places where feeder calf supply is expanding. While feed costs in Okinawa can range between 20-30 percent higher than on Japan's main island of Honshu, record high calf auction prices and generous government support help to balance the books. However, even with record high prices, it is still

difficult to expand production in Okinawa due to the high cost of breeding cows, the high cost of necessary infrastructure investment, the scarcity labor, the scarcity of quality bedding material, the cost/scarcity of land, and the undesirability of more/larger cattle operations near local populations.



Though the growing tourism trade is expanding demand for Ishigaki Island beef as Japanese tourists tie local food and tourism closely together, few *wagyu* cattle in Ishigaki are fed to the customary slaughter age of 30-32 months (primarily due to the high cost of imported feed).

FAS Joins the Nippon Ham Fighters for a Road Game: On August 30, FAS Japan joined several members of the Embassy team for a night out at Tokyo Dome courtesy of Nippon Ham, a major importer of U.S. pork beef and the corporate sponsor of the Pacific League Champion Nippon Fighters. Though the Hokkaido-based Fighters lost that night to the Rakuten Eagles, they battled back in the month of September to clinch pennant and punch their ticket to the Japan Series. Go, Fighters!



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Biotech Regulators Tour: FAS Japan and the U.S. Grains Council (USGC) organized the 10th annual biotechnology study tour for Japanese regulators traveling to the United States from August 21 to 28. The group learned about grain export logistics at the port of New Orleans, met with GE corn farmers in Maryland, established relationships with U.S. regulatory counterparts and industry experts in Washington, D.C., as well as learning about the latest biotech R&D, product pipelines, field trials and robust regulatory compliance in North Carolina. As Japan is one of the world's largest per capita importers of and feed produced using modern biotechnology, the tour provided a critical opportunity for Japanese regulators to gain experience and information needed to maintain smooth trade, to improve the Japanese regulatory system, and to accommodate expanding applications of modern agricultural technologies, such as new breeding techniques.



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Though the Japanese regulatory review process for genetically engineered crops is generally based on sound science and fairly efficient, very few (if any) Japanese regulators have ever seen large-scale agricultural production utilizing modern biotechnology. And since Japanese regulators frequently rotate into new positions (often ever two years), the USGC-sponsored study tour is constantly reaching new regulators who will carry this experience with them throughout their careers. Seven regulators from the Government of Japan responsible for food, feed and environmental risk assessment and management participated on the 2016 tour.

DuPont Japan Educates Neighbors on Biotech: On September 2, U.S. Embassy Office of Agricultural Affairs (OAA) Agricultural Assistant Midori Iijima a tour organized by DuPont Japan to visit its research facility in Utsunomiya City (Tochigi Prefecture) to learn the company's business and research activities and their outreach efforts to promote greater understanding of agricultural biotechnology and its derived products. At a plot on the facility compound, DuPont Japan is growing cultivars, as well as conventional and biotech varieties, maize and soybeans so visitors can observe the effects of traditional and modern biotechnology crop breeding technologies.



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The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries requires companies performing pre-approval biotech crop test trials to provide local residents, including farmers, with information on the trial cultivation. Since 2007, DuPont Japan has organized regular tours to its research facility in Utsunomiya City to provide local residents and the public with information on agricultural biotechnology and DuPont Japan's trial cultivation research. The tours have been well-received by participants, and through such sustained educational efforts, the company has been able to establish positive relationships with local residents and farmers. The tours are organized during the summer time and anyone who is interested in learning about agricultural biotechnology can participate by registering with the company.

FAS Japan Joins 8 Other Offices in First-Ever FAS Asia Region Webinar: FAS Japan helped to organize and comprised more than a quarter of the participants in the Foreign Agricultural Service's first-ever web-based, live training session for offices in the Asia region on September 1. An American trainer worked into the early hours of the morning (Central Standard Time) to provide FAS locally employed staff from 10 FAS offices across the Asia region with live, interactive training content during an Asian business day. Thanks to everyone for helping to make the event such a great success. We look forward to more training options like this in the years ahead.



California Prunes and California Walnuts Take Center Stage: The California Walnut Commission and the California Prune Board again joined forces to hold a baking competition in Japan on October 8. The competition once again succeeded in inspiring Japanese bakers and patissiers from across Japan to explore the versatile uses of California prunes and walnuts in the categories of breads, pastries, and confectionary products. FAS Japan judges Agricultural Assistant Midori Iijima and Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino were intrigued by each of the fifteen finalists' entries, particularly by the ability to completely replace butter and oils in the production of deliciously light, fluffy, chewy, crispy, and moist baked goods!



The Grand Prize-winning entry came from a Nagoya-based baker who had been a finalist in 2014, but had failed to take home a prize. His winning entry this year (California Tea Time; pictured above, center-left), creatively incorporated earl grey tea into one of two pastry doughs wrapped around a filling of cream cheese, walnuts, prunes and more. The delectable pastry was designed to be served chilled in the summer months and toasty warm in the cooler months. USDA/Tokyo welcomes **Gary Meyer** (left), the newly arrived Minister-Counselor for Agricultural Affairs. Mr. Meyer, a native of Wisconsin, has served overseas in Germany, New Zealand, and Thailand. A member of the Senior Foreign Service, his most recent Washington assignment encompassed management and trade policy responsibilities.

USDA/Tokyo also welcomes
arrived Senior Agricultural Attaché.
previously served overseas in Moscow,
overseas assignment, Mr. Riker has
a variety of trade policy issues for both



Christopher Riker (right), the newly
Mr. Riker, a native of New Jersey,
Russia. In addition to his previous
also served in Washington addressing
Asia and Europe.