

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY
USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT
POLICY

Voluntary Public

Date: 11/9/2016

GAIN Report Number: JA6047

Japan

Post: Tokyo

The WASABI - Hot News from Japan Vol. 12 Issue 9

Report Categories:

Agricultural Situation

Approved By:

Evan Mangino, Agricultural Attaché

Prepared By:

FAS Japan Staff

Report Highlights:

Ambassador Kennedy Meets MAFF Minister Yamamoto; Ambassador Kennedy at USSEC 60th Anniversary; U.S.-Japan Soy Partnership Tour and Roundtable; USAPEEC AI Event; Wakayama Citrus Tour; Hawaii at Gift Show; Media Tour of U.S. Organic Production; GIPSA Visit; Kewpie Headquarters Visit; Agricultural Exchange Trainees Return; G7 Food Security and Nutrition Symposium; Experience Vermont: A Taste of the Green Mounts in Tokyo!

Ambassador Kennedy Meets new Agricultural Minister, Yuji Yamamoto – U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Caroline Kennedy, accompanied by Gary Meyer, Minister-Counsellor for Agricultural Affairs, called on Japan’s Agricultural Minister, Yuji Yamamoto on September 8, 2016. The Ambassador congratulated Mr. Yamamoto on his appointment as the new Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF), and emphasized the importance of the Japanese market for America’s farmers and ranchers. The two confirmed the importance of U.S. and Japanese relations with regard to agriculture, and discussed U.S. market access for Japanese Unshu oranges and persimmon, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization’s Port State Measures Agreement to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and ways to encourage younger generations to pursue careers in farming.



U.S. Ambassador Kennedy meets with Yuji Yamamoto, Japan’s new Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Ambassador Kennedy Congratulates U. S. Soybean Export Council on 60th Anniversary – On September 12, 2016, U.S. Ambassador to Japan, Caroline Kennedy, congratulated approximately 200 members of the soybean industry for 60 years of exceptional bilateral cooperation at a reception celebrating the anniversary of the U.S. soybean industry’s representational office in Tokyo. Through long-term representation in Tokyo, the U.S. soybean industry has contributed to increased utilization of soybean oil and introduced modern animal nutrition concepts. The U. S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) celebrated the 60th anniversary with a roundtable dialogue of women industry members to discuss mutual challenges that face the U.S. and Japanese soybean industries. ATO Director Rachel Nelson and Agricultural Specialist Midori Iijima also attended the roundtable. Agricultural Attaché Jess Paulson later gave remarks at a press conference highlighting the importance of the Japanese market for U.S. soybean farmers.



U.S. – Japan Soybean Partnership Program Site Tour, August 23 – 24, 2016 – On August 23, Agricultural Attaché Jess Paulson and Agricultural Specialist Yuichi Hayashi joined the U.S. – Japan partnership team’s soybean feed tour. U.S. and Japanese soybean industry members have participated in this education and exchange program 20 years to increase mutually understanding in issues and conditions in the market. The program included a two-day industry site tour followed by a round table meeting. Twenty three people including six U. S. soybean farmers visited Nissin OilliO Isogo Plant (Japan’s largest crushing facility) and Hayashi Hog Farm in Kiryu, Gunma - Japan’s third largest privately owned hog farm.



Unloading corn in Gunma Prefecture with a special container lifter.

The 20th U.S. – Japan Soybean Partnership Program Round Table meeting, August 25, 2016 – On August 25, Agricultural Minister Counselor spoke to the soybean industry representatives at the 20th Annual U.S. – Japan Soybean Partnership Program Round Table meeting held in Tokyo. In attendance were 11 U. S. soybean farmers and USSEC representatives from the United States. The members participated in a round table meeting to exchange views on the oilseed and vegetable oils markets in Japan, the results of quality analyses on imported soybeans in Japan, the global soybean supply and demand situation, and certified sustainable soy for global end-users.



U.S. Poultry Avian Influenza Reception – On September 1, Agricultural Minister-Counselor Gary Meyer provided welcoming remarks at a reception following a Poultry and Egg Export Council U.S.A.'s Avian Influenza (AI) Seminar which was held at prominent Meiji-Kinen Hall in Tokyo. The event targeted poultry and egg traders and food scientists to highlight the steps being taken against AI in the United States.

FAS Tokyo Visits Wakayama Citrus Producers – The U.S. is the largest exporter of citrus to Japan, particularly of grapefruit and lemons. On September 5-6, Agricultural Attaché Jess Paulson and Agricultural Specialist Tomohiro Kurai traveled to Wakayama prefecture, the leading production region of Unshu-oranges in Japan, to learn about constraints and trends in the production of Unshu and new varietal oranges. Japanese production of Unshu oranges reached its peak in 1975, but due to policy changes that began in the 70's, and with greater constraints in Japan's aging labor market, planted area and production of Unshu oranges are in continuous decline. To bolster demand, local citrus research centers have been breeding new varieties that are sweeter, easier to peel, and extend the harvest and marketing season.

State of Hawaii trade delegation showed up Gift Show – During September 7 through 9, State of Hawaii Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism participated in the Tokyo International Gift Show, which was held at a convention hall Tokyo Big Site. The delegation from Hawaii stood out with 42 Hawaiian companies while showcasing variety of Hawaiian agricultural products, such as coffee, confectioneries, condiments and other local specialty at Hawaiian themed space. Gift Show is the Japan's biggest fancy product tradeshow targeting various industries, and had a total of 2,867 exhibitors and 189,023 visitors this year.



Organic Media Tour to the United States 2016 – The Organic Trade Association (OTA) organized a media tour to visit organic operations on the east coast of the United States in September 2016. They invited journalists from various countries: two from Japan, two from Korea, one from France, and one from Germany, to learn and write about the growth of the U.S. organic market. ATO Osaka Agricultural Marketing Specialist Chika Motomura accompanied the group to assist the Japanese journalists with translation and help facilitate networking during the tour.

The tour consisted of numerous visits to a wide variety of organic operations, including organic animal and horticultural producers, an organic baby food manufacturer, an organic business incubator, an

organic restaurant chain, organic retailers, and Natural Product Expo East.

The mission gave the journalists from Japan a great opportunity to learn about the organic industry in the U.S. by talking directly with U.S. organic food producers, manufacturers, retailers, and restaurants. The tour helped the participants to understand what organic means in the United States and why the U.S. is a world leader in the organic sector.



Officials from USDA’s Federal Grain Inspection Service (FGIS) visit Japan – As part of larger tour of Asia, FGIS Board of Appeals and Review Chairman Brian Adam, and Ohio Field Office Quality Assurance Specialist Ronald Bundy visited Japan in late September. Accompanied by Christopher Riker and Keiko Fujibayashi from FAS Tokyo, Mr. Adam and Mr. Bundy visited one of Japan’s largest bulk vessel ports at Kashima and observed operations at Showa Sangyo’s silos, wheat flour mill, and its oil mill. In addition to other meetings, the two met with representatives from the Japanese feed industry, and participated in a roundtable discussion with several major importers to answer questions and hear views on the quality of imported U.S. grains. The visit afforded Mr. Adam and Mr. Bundy with an opportunity to explain how FGIS works to move the nation’s harvest into the marketplace, and allowed them to better understand how U.S. grains (e.g., corn, wheat, and soybeans) are tested, handled, and used in Japan.



Mr. Adam and Mr. Bundy, accompanied by FAS Tokyo, meet with senior leaders at Showa Sangyo

Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) Japan Visits Kewpie International Headquarters – On October 4, Agricultural Specialist Kakuyu Obara, Agricultural Marketing Specialist Masayuki (Alex) Otsuka, and Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino visited the corporate and R&D headquarters of major Japanese food manufacturer Kewpie. Kewpie, famous across Japan for its mayonnaise, is also a major manufacturer of condiments, baby food and senior care foods. While Kewpie may not be as well known in the United States yet, it currently utilizes seventy percent of all U.S. egg imports, nearly twenty percent of imported U.S. soybeans crushed for oil, and more than one percent of all U.S. corn exported to Japan. FAS/Japan and Kewpie are exploring ways to develop collaborative research and development projects with U.S. institutions.

Agricultural Exchanges Continue to Strengthen Ties between Japan and the United States – On October 7, 2016 Agricultural Attaché Evan Mangino and Agricultural Assistant Midori Iijima helped welcome home 52 agricultural trainees returning from a 19-month agricultural training program in the United States. These promising young farmers were the latest beneficiaries of academic and in-the-field training organized by the Japan Agricultural Exchange Council (JAEC), which has been sending young Japanese farmers overseas to receive advanced agricultural training for more than 60 years. The Embassy’s Office of Agricultural Affairs maintains a close relationship with JAEC and its alumni, nearly all of whom go on to successful agricultural careers in Japan.

At a reception following the ceremony, former MAFF Minister Yoshimasa Hayashi encouraged the young farmers to revitalize Japan’s agricultural sector with their new skills and innovative ideas. Diet members of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party established the Diet Members’ League for Training Farmers to Compete in Global Markets earlier this year. The League, of which Mr. Hayashi is President, has 100 members.



2016 Japan Agricultural Exchange Council Trainees

FAS Tokyo Supports G7 Food Security and Nutrition Symposium – The 2016 G7 Ise-Shima Summit announced the “G7 vision for Action on Food Security and Nutrition” to “lift 500 million people in developing countries out of hunger and malnutrition by 2030.” To fulfill that vision, Japan organized the October 25-26 G7 Symposium on Food Security and Nutrition in Tokyo on. In addition to G7 member countries, Japan invited the Food and Agriculture Organization, the World Health Organization, the World Bank, international non-governmental and non-profit organizations, and a variety of Japanese stakeholders. FAS Tokyo Agricultural Specialist Tomohiro Kurai joined the U.S. delegation led by the Department of State and FAS. The United States presented on “Better Data for

Enhancing Implementation” and “Towards More Effective and Sustainable Resource Mobilization.” The United States also presented on gaps in urban versus rural poverty and hunger.

“Experience Vermont: A Taste of the Green Mountains in Tokyo!” – On October 26, the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Market held its first-ever marketing event in Japan, a product seminar, media event and industry reception at Bistro Barnyard Ginza in Tokyo. Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Japan Director Rachel Nelson provided welcoming remarks, and ATO Deputy Director Evan Mangino reflected on his time in Vermont for a congratulatory toast. The event was well-attended by media and industry buyers, providing significant exposure for the Vermont companies displaying products including craft spirits, condiments, hard cider, artisanal cheese, and (of course) delicious maple syrup.


