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Taiwan

Retail Food Sector

Formosa Chefs Association

2007

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Report Highlights:

Taiwan recently celebrated the launching of the Formosa Chefs Association. Through this new association, Taiwan hopes to gain an international reputation for excellence in culinary arts as well as creating a platform for better exchange of knowledge and skills within the industry. The Formosa Chefs Association also provides opportunity for Taiwan to become an international travel destination for culinary tourism.

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Name of Activity: Formosa Chefs Association Inaugural Ceremony

Date: November 18, 2007

Location: Zhonghua University in Xinzhu, Taiwan

I. Summary

Taiwan recently launched the Formosa Chefs Association. Through the organization, Taiwan hopes to gain international recognition of Taiwanese cuisine, creating distinction from Chinese, Thai and other Southeast Asian cuisines. Taiwan celebrates a number of unique and delicious dishes, such as beef noodles, which previously have not received much recognition internationally but have been a local favorite as well as a favorite of visitors over the years.



The Formosa Chefs Association hopes to not only help Taiwan chefs and cuisine gain recognition in the international culinary world but also serve as a platform for communication and education across the island. Members of the Formosa Chefs Association enjoy a number of benefits including free professional culinary support and publications with the latest news in the culinary world. The Formosa Chefs Association also plans to offer a number of discounted educational programs for members to learn more about culinary culture, cooking styles and hospitality management.

II. Background

Prior to establishing the Formosa Chefs Association, Taiwan had a regional chefs association known as the Taichung Chefs Association. The Taichung Chefs Association was formed in 1994 by a group of enthusiastic chefs who were interested in increasing culinary standards and communication between colleagues. The Taichung Chefs Association was also actively involved in forming teams to take part in international culinary competitions. Not only did the Taiwan teams receive outstanding recognition but they were also able to learn from and observe international competitors.



As Taiwan continued to be actively involved in the international chef community, the Taichung Chef Association received a number of invitations encouraging them to become involved in the World Association of Cooks Societies (WACS). This society was established in October 1928 in Paris, France as a global network of chefs associations. There are currently 75 member countries in the association. Every two years WACS organizes a World Congress. The congress is a hallmark tradition of WACS and has been organized in over 20 cities across the world over the past 74 years. WACS is managed by an elected presidential body consisting of the WACS president, vice president, treasurer, secretary general and ambassador honorary president, as well as a board of continental directors that look after the regions of Asia, Europe, Africa, the Pacific and the Americas.

With the recent formation of the national Formosa Chefs Association, Taiwan has become eligible to be a member country of WACS. Through WACS membership, the Formosa Chefs Association hopes to expand its horizons and create standards that are equal to

international chef standards. Through the international organization, Taiwan will achieve the core goal of internationalizing Taiwan cuisine. In addition, the Formosa Chefs Association hopes to facilitate the transfer of Taiwanese culinary skills and traditions to future generations of chefs.

Taiwan currently has a solid base of young chefs who are eager and motivated to learn and share their skills. This motivation combined with the continued growth of the tourism and service industry will help the culinary standard in Taiwan to reaching the international standard as well as making a place on the map for Taiwan as an international destination for high quality culinary cuisine.

III. Formosa Chefs Association Inaugural Ceremony

The Formosa Chefs Association hosted an inaugural ceremony which combined a discussion seminar on the future of the Taiwan culinary industry along with a chef competition and culinary product display. The discussion during the ceremony was well organized with a number of important guests from the Taiwan hospitality and tourism industry attending as well as international guests from WACS.

The international guests offered an outside prospective of Taiwan cuisine and culinary standards which both challenged and encouraged those involved in the industry to get on their feet and make some changes to help Taiwan become known internationally. The guests included Mr. Marco Bruschweiler, Swiss Diploma Master Chef and Honorary Mentor of Thai Chefs' Association, and Mr. Peter Knipp, Managing Director Peter Knipp Holdings Pte Ltd and Co-organizer World Gourmet Summit in Singapore. Mr. Peter Knipp lit a fire under the Formosa Chefs Association, telling them that if they wanted to be known internationally they needed to begin to think internationally as they develop and promote Taiwan culinary standards and cuisine.

It was stressed that the next stage is for the Formosa Chefs Association and members to define "what is Taiwan cuisine." If they cannot define what Taiwan cuisine is, how will it be recognizable in the international cuisine world? The formation of a national chefs organization was the starting point for developing an internationally recognized Taiwan cuisine. The wheels are now in motion, requiring open lines of communication, cooperation and education throughout the industry from the chefs and culinary schools to the hospitality representatives and tourism agencies.

IV. Goals of the Formosa Chefs Association

The Formosa Chefs Association has developed goals which answer the need for continued communication, cooperation and education:

1. Organize educational events:
 - Culinary demonstrations,
 - Culinary art discussion seminars,
 - Domestic and international culinary competitions,
 - New product (food/ingredient) promotions,
 - Hospitality management support and consultations
2. Work hand-in-hand with the Department of Education
 - Provide case study and project proposals
 - Work to assist and improve the standard of culinary education,
3. Expand the culinary industry to increase Taiwan's reputation in the world of culinary tourism.

V. Opportunities and Future Outlook

With a number of Taiwan chefs and consumers already regularly using U.S. ingredients in their food preparation, the new formation of a national chefs association in Taiwan offers a number of opportunities for the Agricultural Trade Office. As outlined in the goals of the association, the educational events offer opportunity for ATO to collaborate and work with the association to promote U.S. ingredients.

Cooking Seminars and Demonstrations: The ATO worked with the Formosa Chefs Association during the Taste of America promotion. Together, ATO and the Formosa Chefs Association organized a chef training seminar. As the Formosa Chefs Association continues to grow this type of event could be held in numerous locations across the island to reach a larger audience and expose more Taiwanese to U.S. ingredients.

Chef Competitions: The ATO worked with the Formosa Chefs Association during the Taste of America promotion. Together, ATO and the Formosa Chefs Association organized a chef competition. The competition was well organized and very successful. The relationship with the Formosa Chefs Association allowed for promotion of the competition through their member network. Working with the network and contact of the Formosa Chefs Association this type of event could become more widely publicized throughout the island through television cooking shows.

New product (food/ingredient) promotions: There are currently a number of U.S. ingredients available in Taiwan. There are also a number of U.S. companies and exporters who are looking at exporting their products to Taiwan. Working with the Formosa Chefs Association provides an opportunity to promote U.S. products among the Taiwanese while training them on how-to use the products.

Tourism development: Culinary tourism is becoming increasingly popular throughout the world. Obviously everyone who travels to another country is going to eat while they are traveling. As Taiwan becomes internationally recognized for culinary tourism, there will be increased tourism in Taiwan and a number of opportunities to include U.S. food ingredients in the cuisine.