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Report Highlights:

G7 International Forum for Empowering Women and Youth in Agriculture Held in Tokyo, Acting AA and GSM Allison Thomas presents U.S. Soy Ambassador Award in Japan, FAS and Softwood Exporters Met with Japanese Industry and Toured Test Building, Certified Angus Beef Chef Seminar held in Tokyo, U.S. Poultry Recipe Contest, California Fig Ingredient Seminar and Tasting Event, Cooperator Meeting in Tokyo, Sake Seminar at the Embassy

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General Information:

The Wasabi

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G7 International Forum for Empowering Women and Youth in Agriculture Held in Tokyo: On Monday, December 12, Ms. Allison Thomas, the Acting Associate Administrator and General Sales Manager of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, led the U.S. delegation at the G-7 International Forum for Empowering Women and Youth in Agriculture and Food Systems. Representatives from G-7 countries, as well as officials of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, discussed efforts being made to encourage women to successfully pursue careers in agriculture, and emphasized the significance of empowering both women and young farmers. As a part of the day's events, Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries hosted a panel discussion which included women farmers from Japan, France and the United States, as well as the First Lady of Japan, Akie Abe. The panel discussion, which was attended by nearly 300 people, focused on the important role that women play on farms around the world, and ways in which more women can be drawn into agriculture.



Allison Thomas (right), Acting Associate Administrator and General Sales Manager of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, poses with Ms. Francine Rose Hartschuh (left), a farmer from Sycamore, Ohio, who participated in a panel discussion focused on the important role women play in agriculture.

Acting AA and GSM Allison Thomas presents U.S. Soy Ambassador Award in Japan: On December 13, Ms. Thomas delivered remarks and presented a plaque to the winner of the 2016 U.S. Soy Ambassador Award, Mr. Shigeru Ueda of Satonoyuki Shokuhin, who entered a tofu called "Kokutoro" that is made from U.S. soy from Michigan, Ohio, Minnesota, and North Dakota. His tofu was selected out of 107 entries as the best tofu made with 100% U.S. soybeans. The purpose of this award is to recognize and thank Japanese customers that use U.S. soybeans for their tofu production. This is the 1st year of the U.S. award, which was announced in the 2nd tofu competition at the Tofu Summit, which is organized by the National Tofu Federation of Japan. The award winner was greatly honored, and the

event received coverage in the Japanese trade media.



Allison Thomas (left), Acting Associate Administrator and General Sales Manager of USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, poses with Mr. Shigeru Ueda (right), the winner of the 2016 U.S. Soy Ambassador Award. They are holding the award winning "Kokutoro" tofu.

FAS and Softwood Exporters Met with Japanese Industry and Toured Test Building: Agricultural Attaché Jess Paulson and Agricultural Specialist Yuichi Hayashi joined softwood exporters from Washington, Oregon, and local company representatives at the 28th annual Japan Lumber Importers Association (JLIA) and Japan Homebuilders Association forum to discuss the current state of U.S. and Japanese forestry and home construction trends. FAS accompanied the exporters to tour the Building Research Institute (BRI - a joint venture of Tsukuba University and Japan's Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transportation and Tourism). BRI is home to a 6-storey, all wood test building that demonstrates several modern mass-timber construction products and techniques. The U.S. Softwood Export Council contributed to its construction to demonstrate the utility of Douglas fir in Japanese medium-scale mass-timber construction.



(Left to Right) Daisuke Sasatani, Kevin Cheung, Kazuharu Seki, Hirotoishi Iwabuchi, Doug Calvert, Yuichi Hayashi, Tomoko Igarashi, An Di Nguyen, Takahiro Tsuchimoto, Yukio Tsujimura, Ben Gokami, Kevin Binam, Eiji Sato, Masatoshi Tomoi, and Jess Paulson

Certified Angus Beef Chef Seminar held in Tokyo: On November 30 and December 1, the Certified

Angus Beef (CAB) brand, in collaboration with U.S. Meat Export Federation Japan, hosted a two-day seminar highlighting the attributes of Certified Angus Beef® for Japanese chefs and buyers. CAB Culinary Arts Director, Chef Tony Biggs, brought a tremendous amount of energy to his cutting demonstrations, leading the audience through an innovative deconstruction of high-value prime cuts of U.S. CAB beef, including a baseball rib eye and a bamboo blackened chateaux. ATO Japan assisted in promoting the event and took advantage of the opportunity to reinforce valuable industry contacts.



Chef Tony Biggs, CAB Culinary Arts Director (left), carves Certified Angus Beef® at the seminar.

U.S. Poultry Recipe Contest: On December 7, ATO Japan Director Rachel Nelson served as one of seven judges at the 3rd annual U.S. turkey and chicken recipe contest. The U.S.A. Poultry and Egg Export Council hosted the contest at the Tokyo cooking school Home Made Kitchen. Only 10 of the 200 submissions were selected for preparation at the contest. All of the finalists showed creativity in eliciting the Japanese sense of Umami for the home-use of U.S. chicken and game hen.



The first place winner was a fresh take of the traditional soup that is eaten on New Year's Day, with a whole game hen, shrimp, chestnuts, rice cake, and yuzu-flavored chicken broth base".



(Left to Right) Miyako Kato, Director, Home Made Cooking School (HMCS); Hiroko Kurushima, Manager, HMCS; Izumi Amano, Japan Director, USAPEEC; Fumio Yonezawa, Chef De Cuisine, Jean-Georges Tokyo; Toshiko Hirasawa, Director, HMCS; Rachel Nelson, Director, ATO Japan; Masayuki (Alex) Otsuka, ATO Japan

California Fig Ingredient Seminar and Tasting Event: On November 30, ATO Director Rachel Nelson gave opening remarks at a California Fig Ingredient Seminar and Tasting in Tokyo. The event, organized by the California Fig Advisory Board, introduced a variety of innovative fig ingredients and product development solutions, along with the latest U.S. food trends, to an audience of food industry professionals and the media.

Mr. Matt Jura, former Chairman of the California Fig Advisory Board, Ms. Karla Stockli, CEO of the California Fig Advisory Board, and Ms. Kris Caputo, Marketing Director, all gave remarks. The main speaker, chef John Csukor, gave a presentation on techniques to substitute fig ingredients for refined sugars and artificial flavors. The technique retains moisture while adding natural color and nutrition. The highlight of the event was a live demonstration creating Japanese recipes using these techniques. The recipes included sushi, gyoza, yakitori, and okonomi-yaki. The half-day seminar ended with a lively Q&A session and tasting.



Chef John Csukor adding California fig sauce to Anago Sushi during his live demonstration.

Cooperator Meeting in Tokyo: ATO Japan organized a meeting for all Cooperator representatives in Japan on December 15. The meeting focused on the use of social media, best practices, and how the ATO can collaborate more closely with cooperators on social media platforms. A well-known YouTube star gave a presentation on her experience with the show “Amya’s American Kitchen” and USMEF staff highlighted some of their recent successes, including a very successful Youtube video about cooking pork that got almost 7 million views. The meeting also included updates on new personnel, budgets, and upcoming activities.

Sake Seminar at the Embassy: On December 9, ATO Tokyo organized the 7th annual sake seminar for the U.S. Embassy community at the residence of the Deputy Chief of Mission. FAS Japan Agricultural Minister-Counselor Gary Meyer gave welcoming remarks. This annual event fosters our connections with Japanese sake producers and offers Embassy staff the chance to better understand this important element of Japanese culture. This year we featured sake from one of the oldest sake breweries in Kyoto, Tsuki-no-Katsura, which hosted a congressional delegation led by Senator Paul Ryan two years ago.



(Left to Right) Yohei Kiyose, Midori Iijima, Denise Severino, Tokubee Masuda (President of Tsuki-no-Katsura), Gary Meyer, Jun-ichi Masuda, Masayuki (Alex) Otsuka, and Yoshi Sternberg.