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Global Agricultural Information Network

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Report Highlights:

Japan Announces Approval of Hawaiian Rainbow Papaya; Hattori Nutrition Cooking School teaches how to cook with U.S. Pomegranates; U.S. Grains Council holds Symposium on the Potential of U.S. Sorghum; The American Soybean Association holds annual Soybean Quality Conference; California Raisins Celebrates 50 years of Presence in Japan; U.S. Hay Association Leads Lively Discussion on Communicating Hay Safety

General Information:

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Japan Announces Approval of Hawaiian Rainbow Papaya: On December 1, 2011, the Government of Japan notified in the Kampo (Federal Register) its official safety approval for commercial shipments of rainbow papaya to Japan. This announcement marks the end of a long process that began back in 1999, and the beginning of a new chapter for Hawaiian papaya growers. The approval of rainbow papaya is significant because it is the first horticultural biotech product and the first direct-to consumer food product to gain regulatory approval in Japan. At its height in 1996, the Hawaiian papaya industry shipped nearly \$15 million worth of papaya to the Japanese market. However, as Hawaiian papaya production was devastated by a virus, Hawaiian farmers adopted biotech papaya varieties. Since these varieties were not approved by the Japanese government, Hawaiian farmers lost access to their key overseas

market. From 1996 to 2010, U.S. papaya exports to Japan shrank from an average of \$10 million to less than \$2 million a year. The stage is now set for Japanese consumers to once again have greater access to supplies of delicious Hawaiian papayas.



Hattori Nutrition Cooking School teaches how to cook with U.S.

Pomegranates: On Saturday, November 26, U.S. Agricultural Trade Office (ATO) Director, Steve Shnitzler, spoke at the Hattori Nutrition Cooking School (from the famous Iron Chef Hattori) at a Chef teaching seminar about how to cook using U.S. pomegranates. The seminar was held by Ms. Kazuko Watanabe of Inoue PR with the help of Mr. Fumiki Arai, President of the Shinjuku Cooking Academy. Ms. Watanabe presented the history of pomegranates and demonstrated the correct way to cut open a pomegranate. She also discussed different ways to use pomegranates in both Japanese and Western style cooking. Many of the attending teachers had never used pomegranates before and marveled at the tart/sweet taste and the nutritional benefits of U.S. pomegranates.

U.S. Grains Council holds Symposium on the Potential of U.S. Sorghum: The U.S. Grains Council held a symposium and tasting for sorghum called "Seeking U.S. Sorghum Food Potential" on November 21, 2011 in Tokyo. The symposium consisted of presentations by Dr. Hitoshi Nakagawa on the origin of sorghum in Japan, and Dr. Lloyd Rooney of Texas A&M on the nutraceutical and nutritional benefits of sorghum. In addition, Dr. Keiko Nagao spoke about the practical use of U.S. sorghum in cooking. The panel was also joined by Mr. Florentino Lopez, Director of the Sorghum Check-off. Earl Roemer, Board Member from Healy, KS, also attended the symposium. Much of the discussion focused on sorghum growing in arid climates, its role in sustainability, and sorghums anti-oxidant properties to act as a food preservative. ATO Director, Steve Shnitzler, kicked off the tasting portion of the event where sorghum cakes, pancakes, chicken recipes, and deserts were served.

The American Soybean Association holds annual Soybean Quality Conference: On November 17 and 18, the American Soybean Association International Marketing Japan (ASA-IM Japan) held the 2011 soybean quality conference at the Tokyo American Club, marking the 27th consecutive year that the annual event has been held. ASA has operated a Japan office since 1956, and the U.S. soybean industry and Japan continue to have a long and strong relationship. The first day of the

conference was for the oil and feed industry and the second day was for soybean food industry, and included a press conference and mini trade show. The U.S. Embassy's Agricultural Minister-Counselor, Geoffrey Wiggin, and Agricultural Attaché, Benjamin Petlock, attended each day to give the opening remarks and participate in related activities. Speakers at the conference explained the Japanese and global soybean market situation, Hi-Pro soybean meal, and the quality of the 2011 crop. Both conferences were well attended, attracting a total of about 300 participants.

California Raisins Celebrates 50 years of Presence in Japan:

On November 15, California Raisins held a ceremony in Tokyo to commemorate 50 years of trade with Japan. Approximately 300 guests attended the event including Japanese raisin importers, bakers, confectioners, media and winners of the recent California Raisin Bakery/Cooking Contest. Also in attendance were the Chairman of the Japan Bakery Association, and the Chairman of the Japan Raisin Importer's Associations and a California raisin delegation. Among the highlights of the event, California Raisins recognized those who have contributed to promoting California raisins in Japan since 1962. In addition, guests were able to enjoy delicious dishes featuring California Raisins. U.S. Embassy Chargé d'affaires, Marc Wall, and U.S. Agricultural Minister-Counselor, Geoffrey Wiggin, participated in the event.



Winners of the Raisin Bakery/Cooking Contest

U.S. Hay Association Leads Lively Discussion on Communicating Hay Safety: On November 10, John Szczepanski, Director of the Export Processors Council of the National Hay Association, led a panel discussion targeted to Japanese dairies, Japanese forage importers/wholesalers, and U.S. forage exporters for an informal trade-only discussion on Communicating Forage Safety. The panel discussion focused on generating ideas to improve communication and to convey to end users and consumers a message of Safety (Anzen) and Peace of Mind (Anshin). The panel represented members of the consumer, exporter, importer, dairy farmer and Japan's Dairy association. The prevailing sense of the discussion was that while the industry can maintain control of the safety aspects of its image, only good communication among all levels from the importer/end-user chain can create the atmosphere to allow "Anshin" to develop. Each sector was able to share its experience and improved their understanding of the needs, strengths and challenges of each link of the importer/end-user chain.

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