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Japan

Agricultural Situation

This Week in Japan

2001

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Report Highlights: A summary of events and developments in the United States' largest export market for agricultural, forestry, and fishery products. This week's highlights include: MHLW Gives Safety Thumbs-Up on GM Potato and Canola Variety; Imports of U.S. Beef Forecast to Decline 4% in 2001; Hotel Kintetsu Universal City Kicks-Off American Cuisine Fair in Osaka; Japan Leaps Ahead as World's Second Largest Country of Internet Users Behind US.

Includes PSD changes: No
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This Week in Japan

An Update of Major News and Events from the Largest U.S. Agricultural Export Market

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i MHLW Gives Safety Thumbs-Up on GM Potato and Canola Variety: On August 8, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare's Subcommittee for Biotechnology approved the safety of NewLeaf Plus (NLP) potato and Roundup Ready canola. However, the Food Sanitation Committee, scheduled to meet in September, must now grant approval before these two varieties are formally approved. According to industry sources, MHLW's preliminary safety approval will provide some relief to food companies concerned about NLP potato detections, but other unapproved potato varieties, such as NewLeaf Y, remain a concern. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

i Imports of U.S. Beef Forecast to Decline 4% in 2001: Japan's weak yen, the weak economy, and price-cutting are expected to lead to a 4% decline in imported U.S. beef compared to last year, while Aussie beef is expected to fare better. Japan's pork safeguard was triggered on August 1st and remains in effect until March 31, 2002, resulting in a 25 percent increase in the gateprice (minimum import price). Danish frozen imports will be most affected due to the difficulty in mixing low and high value parts to meet the higher gateprice. The impact on U.S. pork sales to Japan, consisting of mostly chilled pork, is unclear at this point. See FAS/Japan's 2001 annual livestock report, JA1075, for more details. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

i Hotel Kintetsu Universal City Kicks-Off American Cuisine Fair in Osaka: ATO/Osaka and the U.S. Meat Export Federation are sponsoring an American menu fair at nine hotels owned by the Miyako Hotels & Resorts group throughout Japan during July and August, including the new Hotel Kintetsu Universal City located adjacent to the new Universal Studios theme park in Osaka. Over \$540,000 worth of U.S. food ingredients and beverage are expected to be consumed during the fair, which has been advertised widely in major newspapers and magazines. (ATO Osaka)

i Japan Leaps Ahead as World's Second Largest Country of Internet Users Behind US: Japan is now second only to the United States in terms of internet users, according to the *Japan Times* and a white paper recently released by the Japanese Government. The number of internet users in Japan totaled 47.1 million (37 percent of the population) in 2000 compared to 153.8 million in the U.S (56 percent of the population). However, Japan's figure is a 74 percent increase over the previous year, thanks in large part to the popularity of accessing the internet via mobile phones in Japan. While not yet revolutionizing food retailing, this phenomenon should continue to drive growth in a number of food-related consumer and B2B internet sites which have sprung up in Japan over the past two years involving national supermarket retailers and convenience stores. (ATO Tokyo)

i Upcoming Events: August 27 Single-Buyer Showcase with Prince Hotels Chian in Tokyo; August 30 Toho Food Service Fair 2001 in Kobe (Western Japan); September 5 Chain Food Service Fair 2001 in Fukuoka (Western Japan); September 18-19 CGC Food Products Annual Exhibition in Yokohama (near Tokyo).