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Japan

Agricultural Situation

This Week in Japan

2000

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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: AMS Administrator Merrigan Negotiates Organic Certification Requirements with MAFF; Strong Demand for U.S. Whey Products in 2000; Japan's Tobacco Production Flat in 1999; and U.S.-Japan Wood Designs Conference kicks-off June 6.

Includes PSD changes: No
Includes Trade Matrix: No
Unscheduled Report
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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 AMS Administrator Merrigan Negotiates Organic Certification Requirements with MAFF:** Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) Administrator Kathleen Merrigan met with Food Marketing Bureau officials last week to discuss ISO Guide-65 accreditation as an alternative to MAFF's proposed organic certification requirements, set for April 1, 2001. If implemented, MAFF's proposed requirements would prohibit U.S. certified organics from entering Japan without additional certification by Japan-based certifiers. In response, MAFF agreed to consider the AMS proposal and continue discussions at the technical level. While in Japan, the Administrator also conducted FAS/Japan-sponsored seminars in Tokyo and Osaka on the U.S. National Organic Program and organic agriculture in the United States. Combined attendance totaled nearly 300 trade and media representatives. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i Strong Demand for U.S. Whey Products in 2000:** Increased market demand for NFD in 2000 by Japanese end-users may result in excess demand of 12,000 MT over the import access volume. In contrast to the possible shortfall in NFD, Japan will likely have a large surplus of butter stocks this year due to weak demand for domestic product. For trade of edible whey, the current TRQ limits import expansion of this new ingredient. The U.S. industry wishes to expand opportunities for this market, and FAS/Japan is supporting their efforts to find a technical solution permitting greater whey access. MAFF's new dairy subsidy program is scheduled to be implemented in JFY 2001. Japan's total cheese consumption is forecast to grow modestly in 2000. For details see JA0056. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i Japan's Tobacco Production Flat in 1999:** The number of tobacco farmers and planting area continues to decline in Japan, and tobacco leaf production last year, 64,727 MT, was only slightly above last year's level. Japanese leaf tobacco imports declined 2.5% to 98,920 tons in 1999; however, the U.S. share grew 2.6% from the previous year to account for 43.6% of the total volume imported in 1999, attaining 43,187 metric tons. Though the Japanese cigarette market is relatively stable, there are increasing indications of more social and legal restrictions against smoking. For details see JA0059. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

Upcoming Events: June 6: U.S.-Japan Wood Designs Conference, Yokohama.