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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: AgMin Counselor Pope Meets Top Brass in GOJ; Trendy Asahi Beer Restaurant Features Great American Regional Cuisine; World's Largest Hot Spring Resort Opens "East Meets West" American Food Fair; and Snow Brand Plants Reopen, But Market Concerns Remain.

Includes PSD changes: No

Includes Trade Matrix: No

Unscheduled Report

Tokyo [JA1], JA



This Week in Japan

An Update of Major News and Events from the Largest U.S. Agricultural Export Market
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- i AgMin Counselor Pope Meets Top Brass in GOJ:** Last week George Pope, the new Minister Counselor for Agricultural Affairs, made courtesy calls on high-level Japanese government officials including the Vice Minister of Agriculture and Director-Generals in the Ministries of Agriculture, Health, and Construction. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i Trendy Asahi Beer Restaurant Features Great American Regional Cuisine:** One of Asahi Beer's newest restaurants, Zak Zak, recently switched formats from Korean barbecue to ATO's Great American Regional Cuisine (GARC) theme, using a country western motif. ATO Japan and U.S. Meat Export Federation (U.S. MEF) representatives joined executives from Asahi Beer and the Shimizu business community for a dinner ceremony on July 14 to launch the restaurant's new format and an American Food Fair being held July 15 - September 17. Zak Zak's Great American Regional Cuisine menu features a variety of regional American favorites, such as Baby Back pork ribs, USDA Cowboy Steak, and New England Clam Chowder. The restaurant is located within the S-Pulse Dream Plaza, a new facility that typifies the recent explosion in development of large-scale retail stores and shopping malls throughout Japan. Located in Shizuoka Prefecture, one of the key consumer test markets of Japan, Asahi Beer's Zak Zak restaurant concept promises further national visibility for ATO's cross-commodity GARC marketing thrust. (ATO Tokyo)
- i World's Largest Hot Spring Resort Opens "East Meets West" American Food Fair:** ATO orchestrated efforts among U.S. MEF, U.S. Potato Board, and the Florida Department of Citrus to kick off a six week long American Festival and Food Fair at Spa Resort Hawaiians, one of Japan's most popular theme park attractions. Located in the hot spring capital of Japan, Fukushima Prefecture, the resort expects to attract over 400,000 visitors and 60,000 hotel guests during the event period. On July 21, ATO Executive Director and Deputy Director joined representatives of the U.S. Potato Board and the Florida Department of Citrus for the promotion's opening ceremony, covered by national and local television and print media. The resort is spending over \$1 million in media advertising throughout Eastern Japan emphasizing the American Food Fair and ATO's upscale, health-oriented themes of Great American "Spa" and "East Meets West" Cuisine. (ATO Tokyo)
- i Snow Brand Plants Reopening, But Market Concerns Remain:** Snow Brand's Nagoya milk plant and nine others around the country reopened, according to July 31 news reports. Japan's leading dairy maker received the go-ahead from the Ministry of Health and Welfare that declared the facilities safe. Snow Brand will decide on August 2 when to resume operating the remaining 10 facilities after inspections are completed. Snow Brand halted operations at all of its 20 milk plants following an outbreak of food poisoning from late June on caused by its milk products that sickened 14,000 people. Despite the opening of Snow Brand's plants, large retailers are cautious about handling Snow Brand products; further, the impact of the milk incident on overall consumption of dairy products remains unclear. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

