



Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agriculture Information Network

Voluntary Report - public distribution

Date: 12/20/1999

GAIN Report #JA9162

Japan

This Week in Japan

1999

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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: FAS GSM Visits Japan; FAS/Tokyo Holds Biotech Food Safety Seminar for Major Media; Daiei Hyper Mart Opens Nationwide American Christmas Fair; Demand for Pure-Bred Black Hog Increasing Following MAFF's Policy Change; January -October Soybean Imports Show Modest Growth; MAFF to Hold Fifth OMA Rice Tender December 22; and Government's Economic Outlook: Growth of One Percent.

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
Volume III, Issue No.50

December 20, 1999

- i FAS GSM Visits Japan:** FAS General Sales Manager (GSM) Richard Fritz utilized a two-day visit to Tokyo to advocate U.S. farm trade issues with senior government officials; discuss market development efforts with U.S. farm organization representatives; visit Japanese private sector partners active in the promotion of U.S. high value foods; and share issue views with Tokyo-based agricultural counselors from Canada, The Netherlands, Denmark, Australia, and New Zealand. GSM Fritz was the first senior-level USDA official to visit Japan since Secretary Glickman in November 1998. His talks underscored U.S. commitment to the Japan market. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i FAS/Tokyo Holds Biotech Food Safety Seminar for Major Media:** U.S. Embassy/Tokyo Public Affairs Staff organized a biotech food safety seminar for major print and broadcast media on December 17, featuring presentations by FAS/Tokyo staff. Presentations focused on FDA's safety assessment, status of U.S. genetically modified crop production, and environmental benefits of biotech crops. The next FAS/Tokyo Biotech Food Safety Seminar, arranged by ATO/Osaka, will be held on January 20 in Fukuoka. (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i Daiei Hyper Mart Opens Nationwide American Christmas Fair:** Daiei Hyper Mart, modeled after Wal-Mart, opened a week-long Great American Christmas Food Fair at its 36-unit strong hyperstore chain nationwide. Following the recent ATO Buyer Showcase introducing U.S. cooperators and agents to Daiei Hyper Mart, ATO Executive Director and staff helped launch the Christmas Fair with employee pep-talks and ribbon-cutting at Daiei's flagship hyperstore near Tokyo. During the fair now in progress, U.S. foods saturate Hyper Mart's shelf and floor space with beef, pork, seafood, grapefruit, gala apples, broccoli, carrots, frozen strawberries, prunes, tree nuts, cream cheese, confections, wine, juices, spirits, beer, American rice, and prepared rice lunch boxes. As an outcome of this effort, Daiei Hyper Mart now hopes to integrate the American theme with other upcoming seasonal promotions, including expanding American Christmas Fairs to all of Daiei's nearly 350 stores nationwide. (ATO Tokyo)
- i Demand for Pure-Bred Black Hog Increasing Following MAFF's Policy Change:** Following the September 1st implementation of MAFF's labeling policy on Kurobuta (black hog) products at the retail level, Japanese demand for pure-breed black hog products has risen, according to media reports. Japan's major corporate pig producers expect continued strong demand for pure breed Berkshire and plan production increases of pure-breed Kurobuta pigs. (See JA9119) (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i January -October Soybean Imports Show Modest Growth:** Japan's trade data for January -October 1999 shows a 4.8 percent increase in soybean imports from the United States compared to the same period last year. Imports from all sources were up by 3.7 percent to reach 4 million metric tons. There was a notable increase in Canadian soybean imports which rose 60.3 percent. Also up were imports from Brazil which rose 16.1 percent to reach 531,757 metric tons. (See JA9156)
- i MAFF to Hold Fifth OMA Rice Tender December 22:** On December 17th the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries announced plans to hold the fifth ordinary minimum access rice tender on December 22nd for a total quantity of about 99,000 metric tons. (See JA9161). (AgAffairs Tokyo)
- i Government's Economic Outlook: Growth of One Percent:** A Monday morning newspaper reported that EPA Director-General Sakaiya said that he is confident that Japan will attain 1 percent economic growth, as predicted by the GOJ, next year. Sakaiya stressed the need to implement additional pump-priming, structural reform and other measures to put the economy on a more solid track to recovery. (AgAffairs Tokyo)

