

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

THIS REPORT CONTAINS ASSESSMENTS OF COMMODITY AND TRADE ISSUES MADE BY USDA STAFF AND NOT NECESSARILY STATEMENTS OF OFFICIAL U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY

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## Japan

**Post:** Tokyo ATO

### MyFood Steps into Social Media

**Report Categories:**

ATO ACTIVITIES reports

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**Report Highlights:**

Myfood.jp has made many bold changes to the site's concept, design, content and management, which has made it into a fun, colorful and cool American communication tool. The newest communication feature is social networking through Twitter.

## **General Information:**

Myfood.jp has made many bold changes to the site's concept, design, content and management, which has made it into a fun, colorful and cool American communication tool that has shed any nuance of a government site. The reasons for myfood.jp's success are related to the constant new creative ideas and site management's implementation of new communication methods such as partnering with the media and creating links with industry partners. The newest communication feature the site management team incorporated is social networking through Twitter.

Japan is the second biggest tweeting country in the world with 4 million bird-like-humans tapping away with their thumbs to send off their special message. Tweeters also get much of their information for shopping, dining, drinking, dating, etc. through twitter as it is convenient for mobile phone users. Japanese carry their mobile phones 24/7. It has practically become a body part. The popularity of twitter and other social networking methods will continue to increase exponentially in Japan

Why did we want to take this step and incorporate twitter? The goal was to increase accesses through interactive communication with present and new readers. At first, we thought of offering culinary tips through blogging. However, we weren't clear about the amount of staff hours necessary and whether it was a service that we could provide well. Other communication methods were considered but tweeting made the most sense to fulfill our purpose.

Presently, the site reaches 50,000 people a month. That is pretty good for a site that specializes in American food culture in the Japanese market. However, many of those visitors are one-timers and we needed a way to keep them coming back.

Our first goal is to let readers know about updates to the site and to highlight special news reports about myfood.jp. We hope that this will maintain the momentum of visitors to myfood.jp. Eventually, as our lead tweeter gets her feet wet and learns to tweet freely through the sky, she will solicit comments about past events and coming events to interact with our visitors. It is also projected that she can tweet with guests to get their opinions about the site or perhaps get ideas for content development.

Myfood.jp site was created to represent the entire American agricultural community. The site has accomplished the goal of projecting American culture, traditions and trends that are intertwined with food and agriculture. It has become a platform to support marketing and promotion of American food products. Individual commodities are fine but individual products are most likely the public relation trend for myfood.jp. The most recent accomplishment in the area of product or export marketing was the Ambassador and Family Thanksgiving television event. You can read all about here [GAIN Report JA0526](#) but this generated interest for turkey, poultry, cranberry, raisin, prune, almonds, pecans, walnuts, potato, olive oil, wine, wild rice and more. Perhaps on a little smaller platform was the watermelon feature that introduced watermelons and recipes.

As the twitter account develops, the ATO will provide updates on the reach and effectiveness of the account on promoting U.S. foods.