

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

# GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Voluntary - Public

**Date:** 10/6/2010

**GAIN Report Number:** JA0519

## Japan

**Post:** Tokyo ATO

### **V5 Campaign Partners in Agriculture in Hokkaido**

**Report Categories:**

Market Development Reports

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**Report Highlights:**

This report evaluated the *V5 Campaign Partners in Agriculture* event held in Hokkaido on May 25, 2010.

## **General Information:**

### **Highlight**

Introducing U.S. agriculture to the largest agricultural prefecture in Japan can be tricky. In order to solve this problem, we combined V5 Campaign's U.S. vegetables with Hokkaido specialty food items to create fusion recipes. These specially designed and delicious recipes were introduced to 60 chefs from the Japan Chef Association as well as culinary professionals and the media. On the same day as our event, the largest local supermarket in Sapporo opened their American Fair that included over 83 products. The fair was held on May 25<sup>th</sup>.

### **Concept**

Agricultural partnerships between the United States and Japan exist in many parts of Japan, including Hokkaido. In fact, Hokkaido represents the oldest agricultural partnership with the U.S. in Japan through the Meiji Emperor's Foreign Advisor Program, Koyoh-Gaikokujin. This partnership provided us an avenue to introduce the V5 concept and vegetables. In the future, we would like to find similar ways to celebrate this historical relationship and others.

### **Setting-it-up**

Two weeks prior to the May 25, 2010 event we shared information about the supermarket American Fair and cooking demonstration with a local newspaper, *Hokkaido Shimbun*. *Hokkaido Shimbun*'s Mr. Katsuji Nakamoto wrote a small article about the event and informed their readers that we reserved ten to twenty seats for the cooking demonstration. We received requests from over 40 enthusiastic food fans, but many had to be turned down.



Chefs and culinary professionals, who are members of the All Japan Chefs Association, have local organizations in cities and regions throughout Japan. One of the largest is in the Hokkaido region. We tapped into the Hokkaido network through their Tokyo headquarter and the Association was eager to lend its support. There were 46 members in attendance, many executive chefs as well as a good number of younger chefs. The younger chefs were particularly

enthusiastic as they are always seeking new ideas and recipes to add to their culinary repertoire.



Attendance from the media was also strong. *Hokkaido Newspaper*, *The Suisan-Keizai (The Daily News of Fisheries)*, *The Minato-Jamaguchi Newspaper* and *The Nihon Shokuryou Newspaper (Japan Food Journal)* spent the afternoon with us. All attending media sources printed articles about the event in the following days.

### **The Event**

Forty six chefs and culinary professionals, 10 consumers who responded to a newspaper notice, and 10 journalists joined us to learn about American cuisine, American food trends and to experience Hokkaido & American recipes during our V5 Hokkaido Partners in Agriculture event.

To attract Sapporo chefs, consumers and the media, we coordinated with U.S. Consulate General Donna Welton from Sapporo and invited her to discuss her perspective of American cuisine. CG Welton is an avid cook and loves to talk about food. One of her favorite Christmas sweets is biscotti, which fit well within our program because it allowed us to introduce U.S. pistachios and cranberries. However, her message wasn't just about biscotti. It expanded to her family heritage that began in Italy and evolved in the United States. Her experience exemplified an important aspect of American cuisine: its roots and influences in a diverse background of peoples and cultures.



There was a special guest appearance by Hotel Okura Executive Chef Kasuga, who volunteered to speak about his international experience as a chef. He discussed how it was this experience that taught him to explore different cultures, countries, food ingredients and cuisines. Chef Kasuga especially wanted to deliver this message to the young chefs in audience. He

claimed that young chefs have a tendency to try to fit in and forget to absorb and try new culinary techniques, which he believes is unfortunate.



Finally, ATO's consultant chef Ema Koeda presented three original recipes. She explained the opportunities in creating American-Hokkaido fusion recipes and the fresh perspective it can bring to the culinary world. She then introduced her first recipe, American Beef Carpaccio flavored with ichimi (red pepper spice) and konbu, highlighting U.S. beef and Hokkaido ichimi and konbu. The second recipe was a dish combining California broccoli and Alaska salmon with Hokkaido potatoes for a delicious potato salad. Finally, Chef Koeda described her third dish, celery salad with Hokkaido seaberry and cheese, and how the slight bitterness of the California celery balanced well with sweet Hokkaido seaberry.

### **The Program Schedule**

1. Presentation: Concept of demonstration and agenda

CG Welton introduces her biscotti recipe, her thoughts about American cuisine and her experience with Japanese cuisine and how it has influenced American cuisine or food culture.

Chef Kasuga discusses his experience overseas and also shares his experience with international food products, including U.S. items.

Chef Koeda discusses her experience with American cuisine and demonstrates her recipes as well as presents trends in the American food industry.

### **The Survey**

30 guests responded to our survey, which asked the following questions:

1. Would you like to try to use Hokkaido and American food ingredients in the future?
2. Have you ever given thought to American cuisine?
3. Did you find anything intriguing or unique about today's American cuisine program?
4. Is there any other information you would like to know about American cuisine?
5. Would you participate in an American cuisine and food seminar again? What kind of

information would you like in the program?

### **Representative Responses to Our Survey**

The recipes introduced today gave me very new and different perspectives of the characteristics of American cuisine, such as the use of a lot of vegetables. I would like try these recipes at home.

I have never given much thought to American cuisine, but the images I do have are meat items such as hamburgers that are high in calories.

3. I was intrigued to learn that healthy eating and organics are trends in America.

4. I would like to learn about more U.S. products. Fruit and desserts would be interesting.

Yes. I would participate again, especially if there are more demonstrations of cooking techniques and recipe ideas.

### **Achievements**

Many of the young chefs in the audience were inspired to explore new ingredients and tastes. Some of them said they would like to use tweaked versions of Chef Koeda's recipes to fit their own design, but to leave Chef Koeda's concept in tact. The homemakers who joined us not only enjoyed the prepared dishes, but were eager to try them at home.

The young as well as the executive chefs also were intrigued with the U.S. food trends that Chef Koeda presented. One trend she shared was the healthier eating styles in restaurants. Opportunities to eat healthier at home were represented by the number of markets that now offer organic and offer healthier choices.

Hotel Okura Sapporo was inspired by our presentation and decided to have an American Fair in August. The recipes developed by Chef Koeda for this program were also selected by Hotel Okura Sapporo's lunch and dinner menus during the American fair.



Photo 1. American Beef Carpaccio Flavored with Ichimi and Konbu

These recipes, that use U.S. vegetables including broccoli and celery, have been included in both hotel

restaurants and at home. Providing new knowledge of cooking with broccoli and celery outside the normal range of usages and having restaurant chefs incorporate this new knowledge into their culinary perspective helps to expand the opportunities for overall consumption.

This event was supported by Western Grower's Association.