

Beat: Health

## ORGANIC TRADE ASSOCIATION SPONSORS FIRST-EVER ORGANIC DAY IN JAPAN

### EVENTS TO PROMOTE U.S. ORGANIC BRAND

PARIS - WASHINGTON DC, 14.11.2015, 17:30 Time

**USPA NEWS** - The first-ever Organic Day in Japan had something for everyone: an organic "market" showcasing hundreds of American organic products, a briefing for the Japanese business community on the U.S. organic industry, a yoga class for millennials led by a super-model,...

The first-ever Organic Day in Japan had something for everyone: an organic "market" showcasing hundreds of American organic products, a briefing for the Japanese business community on the U.S. organic industry, a yoga class for millennials led by a super-model, a seminar on organic for seniors with one of Japan's most celebrated actresses, and an all-organic cocktail hour thrown in for good measure.

The unprecedented event held in Tokyo on October 29 and sponsored by the Organic Trade Association (OTA) not only featured American-made organic products for an eager and interested Japanese audience estimated in the thousands, but explained how organic benefits consumers, farmers, and the environment, and deepened the awareness and trust of the U.S. organic brand, planting seeds for long-term business opportunities in this key Asian nation.

Leading up to Organic Day, 13 of Japan's top organic retailers and 11 organic cafés and restaurants in Tokyo participated in a week-long OTA-organized in-store promotion that highlighted organic products from the United States, and helped to whet the already-growing appetite of the Japanese consumer for organic.

Japan's organic market is valued at a little over a billion dollars, making Japan the ninth largest organic market in the world, according to recent industry estimates.

But considering the size of its huge retail and food service sector (around \$820 billion) organic's current share of the total domestic market is tiny. Given Japan's stable economy, its solid per capita income, and its discerning consumers, the growth opportunity for organic in Japan is significant.

Since the beginning of 2014, the U.S. and Japan have traded organic products under an organic equivalency arrangement, which allows a product certified as organic in one country to be sold as organic in both.

At the time of the signing of the agreement in September 2013, American organic producers and processors were selling about \$80 million worth of organic products to Japan each year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Organic exports to Japan have steadily increased since the arrangement, and are up almost 10 percent for the first half of 2015.

The Organic Day events, each of which was designed to target distinctly different consumer audiences, were held at Tokyo's destination shopping complex Omotesando Hills, one of the city's most popular meccas for hundreds of thousands of Tokyo consumers.

An American organic 'market' drew more than 5,000 people throughout the day, where many of the visitors got their first look at hundreds of American-made organic products displayed by more than a dozen of Japan's top organic importers.

Around 200 of Japan's leading retailers, importers, marketers and media attended a closely followed and standing-room-only briefing by Marez and Nina Ichikawa of the Berkley Food Policy Institute on the U.S. organic industry and market.

The capacity audience actively engaged in the presentation, asking numerous follow-up questions about organic trends, consumer attitudes and organic buying patterns.

A drop-in yoga class led by Japanese super-model Kaori Santoshima attracted more than 50 young Japanese women""key consumers in the country

Directed towards the older consumer, a seminar on organic led by Japanese actress and ardent organic activist Yuki Kudo (who has her own organic farm, café and education center) and Dr. Yukio Hattori (one of Japan's foremost food experts and president of Hattori Nutrition School, the leading professional cooking school in the country) discussed the many benefits of incorporating organic into an individual's diet.

The day ended with an all-organic cocktail reception attended by Tokyo business leaders, key thought-leaders in Japan's food sector, and prominent media. Chef John Taboada of the popular farm-to-table restaurant Navarre (Portland, Oregon) served guests organic treats made from locally grown organic foods, organic cheeses from Wisconsin-based organic dairy cooperative Organic Valley, American-made organic prepared foods, and U.S.-produced organic wine.

The Organic Trade Association (OTA) is the membership-based business association for organic agriculture and products in North America. OTA is the leading voice for the organic trade in the United States, representing over 8,500 organic businesses across 50 states.

Its members include growers, shippers, processors, certifiers, farmers' associations, distributors, importers, exporters, consultants, retailers and others. OTA's Board of Directors is democratically elected by its members. OTA's mission is to promote and protect ORGANIC with a unifying voice that serves and engages its diverse members from farm to marketplace.

Source : Organic Trade Association

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**Article online:**

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-6328/organic-trade-association-sponsors-first-ever-organic-day-in-japan.html>

**Editorial office and responsibility:**

V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSiV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Yasmina BEDDOU (Journalist / Photographer)

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