

MAFF, Soyfood Alliance and ASA-IM Japan Working Together

ASA-IM Japan Country Director Brabant and Food Marketing Manager Tateishi hosted a pre-USSEC/Japan Soyfood Alliance meeting in the lead up to the Japan Soy Food Summit scheduled June 29-30 in Japan. Participants included Japan's Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) officials and representatives of the Japan Tofu Association and Japan Federation of Miso Manufacturers Cooperative who represented Japan's Soy Food Alliance made up of nine soy trade associations.

The discussions provided an excellent forum to not only work out this year's agenda but consider possible future approaches with regard to the issue of food security and maintaining stable supplies of U. S. Soybeans in the Japanese market. ASA-IM Japan has been cooperating with the Japanese Soybean Processed Food Manufacturers Committee since 2008 at MAFF's request, which originally developed the consultations between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries and nine (9) Japanese Soy Food Associations including: the Japan Tofu Association; Zentoren (National Federation of Tofu Commerce & Industry Trade Association); Federation of Japan Natto Manufacturers Cooperatives; Japan Federation of Miso Manufacturers Cooperatives; Japan Soy Sauce Association; Japan Vegetable Protein Foods Association and Japan Soy Milk Association, etc., to exchange information about soybean supply and demand, market trends, variety development, and macro-economic issues related to long term food and soybean security critical to the nation of Japan.

The Japanese Soyfood Industry concluded the U. S. and Japan Soyfood Alliance is too important not to continue, however, they plan to seek more market oriented approaches which include non-GMO soybean growers, exporters, seed breeders, food research scientists, ASA-IM and individual Japanese trade association members independent of MAFF given the rapidly changing needs of the Japanese Soyfood Industry, particularly in the value-added market segments as industry consolidation continues to take place.