

ASA-IM Japan Helps Deliver Natto To Japan Disaster Area

ASA-IM JAPAN Japan Country Representative James Echle and Human Utilization Consultant Masi Tateishi visited Miyagi Prefecture to see first-hand disaster relief efforts and hold meetings with natto, tofu and miso associations. Traveling with Eiji Monden, a representative of Kawaguchi Natto, the ASA-IM JAPAN duo delivered 4,158 packs of natto to six Relief Centers in Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture. Located in the Tohoku region, the area was one of the hardest hit during the tsunami in mid-March. Echle pointed out that natto is an “everyday food” in Tohoku. “The people in the relief centers do not get it often so they really appreciated having it delivered,” Echle said. “They hardly even get hot prepared food at the relief centers, as they are just in grade schools and do not have large kitchens capable of feeding hundreds of people.”



Monden has been delivering the natto packages since June 7, and says that he can see improvements weekly throughout the parts of Japan that were devastated. The ASA-IM JAPAN team itself came across many piles of debris. Four months after the earthquake and tsunami, there are still damaged cars left in fields and along the roads, Echle said.

While in Ishinomaki City, Echle and Tateishi visited local government offices to meet with Vice-Mayor Etsuro Kitamura, who thanked U.S. soybean farmers for their support. They also visited with the Miyagi Tofu Association to discuss their relief effort in supplying tofu under the U.S. soy industry relief effort. USSEC, USB, ASA and the World Soy Foundation are partnering to help Japanese companies -- including soyfood processors, suppliers and distributors -- donate soy-based food to people affected by the earthquake and resulting tsunami and nuclear disasters. “We (U.S. farmers) have been fortunate enough to have served Japanese soy customers for more than 50 years,” Marc Curtis, USB chairman, said. “We hope this gesture will send a message to the Japanese people that all U.S. farmers – of soybeans and all crops, poultry and livestock – support them as they work to emerge from this difficult time.” Japanese small businesses simply

apply for reimbursement for donations of soy-based food such as tofu, cereal, pasta, bread, canned soybeans, soy nuts, soybean oil for cooking, soymilk, and other soy-based foods. ASA-IM JAPAN is helping bring together the small businesses that wish to donate. “We are grateful for the opportunity to show our support to the Japanese people and the local soy industry,” Echle said.

