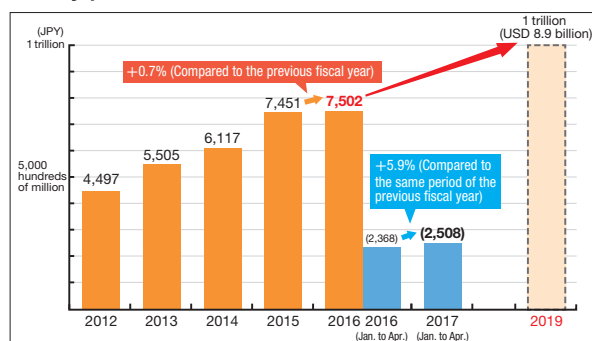


Japan Boosts Exports with “Aggressive Agriculture” Strategy

Japanese agricultural, forestry and fishery products and foods are known for their great taste and excellent safety. They're regarded as an important pillar of the health and longevity of the Japanese people, whose average life expectancy is the highest in the world at 83.8 years for men and 89.8 years for women. As these foods from Japan receive high evaluations all over the world, more and more people overseas are wanting to enjoy them. To help meet the growing demand, recent improvements in logistics networks, temperature management systems such as cold chain, and other technological innovations including electronic payment have made it easier to keep these foods fresh while exporting them. In addition, the Japanese government has been reforming many rules and institutions to enable farmers as well as various types of organizations to more freely expand their markets, including doing so overseas.

Japan sees these changes in the business environment together with free trade as an opportunity, and is now driving an export promotion campaign under the slogan “aggressive agriculture.” Japan's value of exports of agricultural, forestry and fishery products and foods have increased for four consecutive years since 2013, reaching a record-high JPY 750.2 billion (USD 6.7 billion) in 2016. To add to this momentum, efforts involving stakeholders through public-private partnerships are underway, centered on “The Strategy to Strengthen Export Capabilities of the Agricultural, Forestry and Fisheries Industries” which was established in May 2016. Now Japanese government is trying to achieve the goal of reaching JPY 1 trillion (USD 8.9 billion) in exports for the year 2019.

Change in Japan's exports of agricultural, forestry and fishery products and foods



Japan's 2019 goal of agricultural, forestry and fishery products and foods exports totaling over JPY 1 trillion (USD 8.9 billion) is within reach as overseas sales grow year after year.

Source: Compiled by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries using “Trade Statistics of Japan” data from the Ministry of Finance

Case 1: Paris-based exports of world-class fruity sake

The “DASSAI” *junmai daiginjo* was created by ASAHISHUZO Co., Ltd. in 1990 with the aim of providing sake that tastes delicious to everyone. From rice-washing to bottling, DASSAI is produced using a careful combination of traditional handwork by craftsmen and cutting-edge machines in each stage of the production process. Purity in taste and a fruit-like special kind of *ginjo* flavor are the characteristics of this sake.

ASAHISHUZO started exporting DASSAI to Taiwan in 2002. Gradually, it raised product awareness and expanded export destinations to twenty countries, with Paris as a base for its exporting activities.

One of the critical success factors is tasting events actively held overseas. ASAHISHUZO has developed creative sales promotions, demonstrating many ways to enjoy sake. For example, the company recommends using a glass in the shape of a wine glass to better relish fragrant sake, and invites customers to taste sake with local foods that pair with it.

To keep the brand equity of DASSAI, ASAHISHUZO aspires to further enhance the product's quality and brew sake that can compete with high-priced wines overseas. Its goal is to let DASSAI fascinate the world.



ASAHISHUZO recommends drinking its DASSAI *junmai daiginjo* from a small wine glass to better enjoy its fragrance.

Case 2: Selling and distributing fresh yellowtail with support from cold chain networks

OWASEBUSSAN Co., Ltd. farms yellowtail and exports its packaged fish parts such as “kama” (the area from under the gills to the pectoral fin) to regions including China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore. In 2016, the company enlisted the cooperation of Kochi University, which already had a proven track record in yellowtail farming research. Together, they succeeded in developing “Premium DHA Yellowtail,” which contains a larger than normal amount of beneficial DHA (docosahexaenoic acid), a substance believed to help prevent hardening of the arteries. It soon earned a reputation in Japan for being not only pleasantly fatty and flavorful, but also good for health, and significant growth in its export volume is expected as well.

One of the critical success factors of OWASEBUSSAN’s enlarged sales channels is cooperation with local entities in each importing country, capable of providing individual deliveries thanks to their own cold chains. It was essential for the company to establish a system that made it possible to deliver products with the same levels of quality, standards compliance, and prompt delivery as within Japan. Furthermore, the company regularly attends overseas business meetings to develop and present products addressing customers’ needs, with a view to enhancing product appeal.



OWASEBUSSAN made its first shipment of fresh yellowtail from Chubu Centrair International Airport to Vietnam in February 2017.

In the coming years, OWASEBUSSAN will be aiming to expand its export volume with a focus on the Southeast Asian market. It also has its sights on the European market, for which it’s planning to obtain EU HACCP certification (to be certified as a marine food handling facility for exporting to the EU). The company is also working toward being added to the FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) Green List, a requirement for exporting vacuum-packed fresh food.

Case 3: Thorough quality control ensures freshness all the way to the customer’s door

Oisix Inc. provides consumers in Hong Kong with vegetables, fruits, and other fresh foods from Japan through its own e-commerce website. The products are delivered directly to consumers’ homes.


Oisix began service in Hong Kong in 2009. Though the company was confronted with quality management challenges for overseas transportation, it soon found solutions by improving temperature management and damage-proof packing for aerial transportation and by using cold boxes for local delivery. The result was a good reputation among consumers, with some saying that Oisix products are even fresher than those in local supermarkets. In spite of relatively high prices due to the transport cost, Oisix is gaining more and more customers seeking safe and delicious foods.

The number of registered Oisix members in Hong Kong has been constantly growing, and has now reached 40,000. Many tasting events and interview surveys are conducted to help the company provide products and services suited for customers’ eating habits and needs. In 2014 and 2017, these efforts helped Oisix win the “Most Valuable Service Awards in Hong Kong,” an award that recognizes providers of excellent consumer services.

Oisix is planning to export more Japanese food products in the future, especially to Asian countries. Beyond this, it also aims to export its quality management systems and distribution expertise.



Oisix adapts its products and services to suit local eating habits and tastes.

	<p>Taste of Japan Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries</p> <p>Taste of Japan provides information about Japanese cuisine, covering Japanese restaurants around the world, Japanese recipes, and grocery stores that carry Japanese foods.</p> <p>http://www.tasteofjapan.jp/</p>
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