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Contributors

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Report Highlights:

Eco-fruits, ice cream for guys, marketing to moms, and eating bus tours are all trends that are in this month's issue.

Japan Food Trends (JFT) communicates Japanese food and lifestyle trends that may help U.S. exporters to generate product and marketing ideas.

Editor's Note:

There are many changes in Japan that are affecting food and distribution. Here are a few example areas that are showing change. The new government and its policies may put an extra few hundred dollars into parent's pockets for each child; designer food for men is up and coming; and environmental protection may keep us fit, in a way. These are all good and necessary, especially in the sense that it injects something different, a change of pace, and hopefully some fun.

Spending

Moms are the Future, Nikkei MJ, September 2, 2009, page 1 & 4

Designed in the manifest of the new Democratic Party of Japan is a subsidy for children that will provide parents approximately \$300/child every month until the child finishes ninth grade. Many say that the ways this money will be spent depends on the parents, child's age, household needs, and other daily expenses, but many will save the money for the child's future. Nonetheless, marketers are targeting the purses of the "Mom Clubs".



"Mom Clubs" refers to mothers who spend money cautiously to socialize a couple hours with other mothers over inexpensive food and beverages. They are also apt to take self-improvement classes. These "mom clubs" might be the best targets for marketers since mothers might have \$300 a month extra in cash.

Food Designs

"Ice Cream for Guys", Walkerplus.com

Did you know that Japanese men tend to like their desserts to have a soft and fluffy texture? Well, Ezaki Glico Co., Ltd (Glico) <http://www.glico.co.jp/en/index.htm>, confectionery manufacturer famous for its Pocky series, surveyed men with a sweet tooth to develop an ice cream product just for men.



The development team leader found that men like the soft and fluffy texture of pudding, and the way it melts in the mouth. So, that was the goal for the development of the ice cream product. Glico wrapped soft and fluffy chocolate mousse inside smooth vanilla ice cream to create an ice cream for guys.

Source: Walkerplus.com

From the Editor:

Since the release of Glico's product, their rivals have also developed their own manly desserts. Morinaga & Co., Ltd. <http://www.morinaga.co.jp/index.html> (Japanese only), released their pudding product called "Men's Ideal Pudding".

Food Tours

"Eat 'til You Drop" Bus Tour in Tokyo, J-cast, www.j-cast.com

The number one bus tour provider added another venue. Three stops at well-known establishments from the old and traditional to the modern for breakfast, lunch and dinner. An all-you-can-eat breakfast is offered banquet style at the breathtaking facilities of Meguro Gajoen <http://www.megurogajoen.co.jp/english/index.html>. A Japanese style barbeque is served for lunch at another beautiful and traditional venue, Jojoen <http://www.jojoen.co.jp/index.html> (Japanese only). The modern portion of the tour is dinner at the Hard Rock Cafe Japan <http://www.hardrockjapan.com/edefault.asp> located in Roppongi, Tokyo. The cost is a mere \$111 for adults and \$83 for children.



From the Editor:

Food is a big hook in Japan. Perhaps with the worlds' first Major League Baseball sponsored restaurant that newly opened in September, there could be an American food tour in Tokyo.



<http://www.mlbcfe.jp/index.html> (Presently Japanese only)

Source: MLB Café

Eco-Food

Eco-Fruits are Selling, Nikkei MJ, September 17, 2009, p14

Eco-friendly fruits are showing good sales results. A cluster of bananas sells for \$2.50, which is a little on the high side, but it satisfies the eco-friendly consumer. The eco-friendly consumer is also purchasing 1 kilogram of CO2 emission allowance for each banana cluster. One cluster reduces CO2 by 500 grams. Another example is the leafless pineapple. The leaf of the pineapple is removed before shipment and re-planted. This reduces three tons of leaf waste going into Japanese trash facilities if the pineapples were imported with the leaves.

From the Editor

I'm sure I need to get my brain around the CO2 emission allowance concept, but it's still a bit fuzzy honestly speaking. I haven't thought about it terms of marketing agriculture and food & beverages, but perhaps its time.

Distribution

Dramatic Change of Over-the-Counter Drug Distribution, The Daily Yomiuri, August 4, 2009, page 8

The Yomiuri Shimbun reported that the new Pharmaceutical Affairs Law introduced two months ago has made a significant impact on store shelves and internet & mail order companies. This law allows for nonprescription drugs to be sold at supermarkets and other stores without a pharmacist on the premises for the first time. The nonprescription drug categories include Category 2 and 3 drugs (2 has few side effects, 3 are vitamins and health foods), though Category 1 drugs may not be sold over-the-counter because a pharmacist must be on the premises to explain possible side effects to customers. This will increase the convenience of consumers who can now buy their food items at local convenience stores and supermarkets.

Not everybody is happy with this new law though. Internet and mail order companies have seen their sales plunge. It may not last long, but it seems consumers find it more convenient to purchase their cold medication and health tablets while they shop for their groceries. It will be inevitable for the internet and mail order companies to move on to other product lines, because starting June 2011 they will be prohibited from selling pharmaceutical products through the internet and mail order.



From the Editor

Although this isn't about food, it is important for you to know about this huge change in the distribution network in Japan. This could ultimately change the way consumers shop.