

## **USSEC/ASA-IM MEET WITH JAPAN'S MAFF**

*Sept. 11, 2009*

Acting USSEC CEO Escobar, Japan Country Director Brabant and Food Marketing Manager Tateishi recently met with Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Officials of the Food Industry Promotion Division in Tokyo. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a Government of Japan proposal to hold bi-lateral discussions between American and Japanese soy industries related to the long-term prospect for securing food soybean including production, supply and demand. MAFF Director Takahashi and staff invited US Soybean Growers to work with them in organizing a US-JAPAN Soy Food Alliance Meeting in Japan in Calendar Year 2010 with subsequent meetings to be held annually.

Japan's Soy Food Alliance was first established in 2007 by MAFF in concert with the 10 principal soy food industry associations. The Soy Food Alliance has evolved over the last several years as an important forum which now includes meetings in Japan's primary soybean production areas to promote orderly soybean market procurement in line with Japan's food policy goals. These meetings provide an important discussion platform for the production, supply and demand of soybeans. The first meeting involving ASA and USB Farmer Leaders in Japan was held September 2008 in Hakone at the foot of Mr. Fuji.

Given recent political and market changes, the MAFF plans to expand use of bi-lateral meetings with suppliers from the U. S., Canada, and possibly South America in future years in an effort to secure long-term soybean supplies and national food security goals. Japan's MAFF has asked us to consider involving participants to include Japanese soybean purchasing executives; soy food associations; Government of Japan officials, USSEC/ASA-IM Japan; US Soybean Growers and academic-technical specialists expert in production, plant genetics, etc., in future bi-lateral US-JAPAN Soy Food Alliance meetings.

USSEC/ASA-IM has advised MAFF we support the proposal in principal and will seek ways to achieve mutually beneficial goals and objectives. The US-JAPAN Soy Food Alliance Forum appears to provide an excellent opportunity for the US Soybean Industry and Growers to strengthen our long-term and important partnership with Japanese Soy Food users in the world's as well as the United States largest market for value-added IP soybeans!