

## **ASA-IM JAPAN met with Solae, the world largest soy protein supplier**

ASA-IM Japan met with the world largest soy ingredients supplier Solae DuPont-Bunge Ltd joint venture this week to exchange soy ingredient market information. According to Solae, Textured Soy Protein for ham production and animal protein analog utilization increased by more than 6 % in recent months due to increasing demand for animal protein substitution driven largely by current economic conditions. Solae also said protein products for seniors increased nearly 20 % last year due to the rapidly changing demographics in Japan. According to Solae Japan the market for liquid diets once dominated by large dairies in Japan increasingly is moving toward soy protein formulas in recognition of soy as an excellent vegetable protein source given its natural health and nutritional benefits. To meet anticipated demand Solae Japan is working with hospitals, and nutritionists to make available supplies to seniors which has become the fastest growing market demographic in all of Japan.

As in the US, the largest food use for soy protein is in ham and sausage production yet mostly unrecognized by consumers. In Japan large amounts of soy protein is also used in popular winter dishes like “*Oden*” which often takes the shape of fish cakes and vegetables cooked which are cooked in a fish stock or broth. However, the soy protein in fish cakes is also mostly invisible to consumers here. One of the largest “*Oden*” makers in Japan, Kibun Foods, recently told ASA-IM Japan during this year’s US Soybean Quality Outlook Conference in Japan they encourage the U. S. Soy Industry to place more attention on the invisible yet huge soy ingredients market traditionally used as food extenders so a better image of the products can be realized. In fact, there is growing appreciation in Japan for recent improvements in foods perceived as healthy and especially those value-added foods made with soy in Japan.