

ASA-IM Japan attended Ultra-healthy Natto Seminar

ASA-IM Japan participated in the 6th Natto Health Seminar sponsored by the Federation of Japan Natto Manufacturers Cooperatives. Over the last few years' research on the health benefits of Natto has been aggressively promoted in Japan as a result of ultra-health consciousness and in large part driven by mandatory medical exams for obesity and other metabolic disorders that was implemented by the GOJ. The government here estimates 25% of men and 10% of women between 40 and 74 suffer from 'metabolic syndrome' in Japan. The good news is this awareness has also led to increased interest-consumption of soy foods including: soymilk, tofu, Natto, miso, soy ingredients, etc.

The seminar examined natto as a historical cuisine, and molecular bio-medicine in the prevention of cardiovascular disease. Interestingly, a newly discovered protein Apoptosis Inhibitor of Macrophage (AIM) which promotes arteriosclerosis is blocked by the consumption of natto and research supports it is effective in metabolic syndrome prevention. The essential amino acid Tryptophan found in Natto and which the human body can't produce aids natural sleep and gives people a feeling of happiness. As well, research indicates the Tryptophan in natto is preferable to that contained in animal protein due to the actions of natto bacillus and enzymes. Polyamine a human growth factor known as cellular polyamine synthesis is inhibited and cell growth is severely diminished which is also found in natto in large amounts. So, not only is natto good to eat but consuming it is an excellent anti-aging foods available which is another important factor in the Japan market given the rapidly aging population. .

At the conclusion of the seminar participants were provided gift packages of natto products to take home to try which are made mostly with US Soybeans.. In the materials distributed by the Federation was included the USB logo as part of an USB/ASA-IM Japan natto promotion in 2008. Japan continues to provide an important market for non-GMO food bean varieties. Of the approximately 130,000 MT of non-GMO beans purchased by Japan each year, 80% of these come from the US at the highest premiums paid to contract growers for food beans. As natto gains recognition as not only a nutritious but ultra-healthy food for physically and mentally some companies here are looking to expand markets

beyond the borders of Japan in Asia and globally in the future.

