

Pavilion Organizer - PERU

COMMERCIAL OFFICE OF PERU IN JAPAN - COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR, MR. LUIS HELGUERO

Japan: large potential for natural products



Q: Please give us a brief introduction of yourself and your activities in Japan.

I am the Commercial Counselor of the Commercial Office of Peru in Japan. It's my 6th year here. My main activity is to promote trade between our countries, especially the variety of products that Peru has. We mainly focus on food and textiles. Others like minerals ores are important too, but we promote further our agriculture, fishery, textile, and manufacturing companies.

Q: Tell us about your involvements with FOODEX JAPAN.

We are focusing on B2B this year. Last year was a mix in which half of our space was for B2B, while the other half was for a festival called "Peru Mucho Gusto" or "Many Taste in Peru." We distributed about 20,000 tasting portions to the visitors in 4 days. They were mainly unique products from Peru including Pisco, Peruvian brandy made from grapes. We also made a handout recipe of the food they were tasting and where to find the ingredients as well as the main Peruvian restaurants in Tokyo.

Q: Why did you decide to exhibit in Hall 9, the new Organic and Wellness zone this year?

Over the last 3 years, the Commercial Section of the embassy has been in charge of arranging for FOODEX. For 2 years, I have been feeling a large potential for natural products in Japan. A lot of Japanese companies coming to FOODEX have high interest in the natural Peruvian products.

Q: What are your aims in this new zone?

We have 2 main focuses. First focus is our fresh and frozen products such as avocado, asparagus, and mango. Our agricultural industry has been providing high quality fruits and vegetables to the world for 25 years. We are especially focusing our promotion on avocado this year because they have just being allowed to enter Japan last year. When it arrived last year, it was at the end of the harvest season so we were only able to sell little more than one container. This year, the Peruvian avocado will be arriving in full season. Here in Japan, people consume a lot of avocado.

Second focus is our natural products. We want to continue promoting this category as we have been doing in FOODEX for the last 4 years. We also have an important group of exporters that provide quinoa, chia, kiwicha, maca, coffee, and sacha inchi. Sacha inchi known as inca inchi here in Japan contains a lot of omega3. Maca is well known in Japan, but the problem is that it's thought to be a product for men. Maca is like a natural energizing drink. If you have maca in the morning instead of coffee, you're more awake and vigilant. We are also promoting maca for women over 40 since it helps balancing their hormones. We know that people come to FOODEX to look for good and reliable supply of different foods, and we want to provide a new, improved and reliable offer for them. It is a good platform for entering the Asian and Japanese markets. A delegation of 11 Peruvian companies will be participating this year.



Q: How do you view the organic market of Japan?

The market is much bigger in Japan compared to Peru with larger awareness of ecological or natural foods. People choose natural products instead of artificial ones to maintain or improve their lifestyles. We especially see high potential in Japanese market because Japan has the highest life expectancy that is achieved by consuming natural products.

Q: What are the challenges of the Peruvian companies when they enter the Japanese market?

Japan is very challenging in aspects of quality assurance, sanitation, etc. It's strict. Having said that, Peruvian agricultural and food exporters have been doing so for 40 years, and they have been sending their products to highly competitive markets worldwide including Japan, US, EU, and others. Quality assurance and sending products according to the importers' specification are important. It's challenging, but we are familiar and not afraid of it.

Q: What kind of advice do you give to Peruvian companies coming to Japan?

Always to think that the samples you are offering should be complied and to be very patient especially with large companies because they take more time to make decisions. They like to evaluate and involve many people. Also, Japanese companies have limited warehouses availability so the timing of shipping is important.

Q: What is your goal in the Japanese market?

Our goal is to maintain and enlarge the products already sold in Japan, to introduce new ones, or new use of the products that are already sold here, and to expand the presence of Peruvian products in Japan. At the end, the objective of this commercial office is to promote trade from Peru to Japan. Of course, we would like to have a larger trade from Peru to Japan with products that we are promoting.