

Pavilion Organizer - ITALY**AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. ARISTIDE MARTELLINI, HEAD OF THE
TRADE PROMOTION OFFICE, EMBASSY OF ITALY - TOKYO**

The Foodex is very important and valuable for us. The Italian companies participating, as well, said they were satisfied overall for the meetings held, the quantity and quality of the visiting buyers. During the Fair, Italian manufactures could distribute and spread more detailed information of their products throughout the conference, mini-seminars, cooking shows, tastings, etc. organized by ITA. We have a very positive feed-back from Italian exhibitors, who really appreciated the events. —**Dr. Aristide Martellini**

**Q: Can you give us an introduction of your organization?**

The ICE-Italian Trade Promotion Agency (ITA) is the government organization which promotes the internationalization of the Italian companies, in line with the strategies of the Ministry for Economic Development. ITA provides information, support and advice to Italian and foreign companies.

In addition to its Rome headquarters, ITA operates worldwide from a large network of Trade Promotion Offices linked to Italian embassies and consulates and working closely with local authorities and businesses.

ITA provides a wide range of services overseas helping Italian and foreign businesses to connect with each other:

- identification of possible business partners

- bilateral trade meetings with Italian companies
- trade delegation visits to Italy
- official participation in local fairs and exhibitions
- forums and seminars with Italian experts

Please visit our website for further information: <http://www.italtrade.com>

Q: Is ITA involved in any activities related to entry and promotion in the Japanese market? What are the results of those projects?

Main activities of ITA Tokyo are:

- Participation to trade fairs in Japan with an Italian Pavilion;
- Organization of seminars, conferences, workshops, tastings, business meetings b2b, etc.;
- Provide information about the Japanese market to Italian manufacturers and about the Italian industries to Japanese operators;
- Business matching between Italian companies and Japanese ones.

Q: What are some difficulties that Italian companies face when they enter into the Japanese market? How do you resolve those problems?

(1) Rigidities of regulations for food sanitation:

As compared to the European regulations about food sanitation, those of Japan are considered very strict. The main difficulties, in fact, don't consist in tariff barriers, but in strict and extensive application of regulations for food sanitation.

For example, it is still prohibited to import from Italy to Japan fresh meat (beef, chicken, etc.) and fresh fruit except Tarocco, Moro e Sanguinello oranges, due to the possible risks of BSE and of Mediterranean flies, respectively.

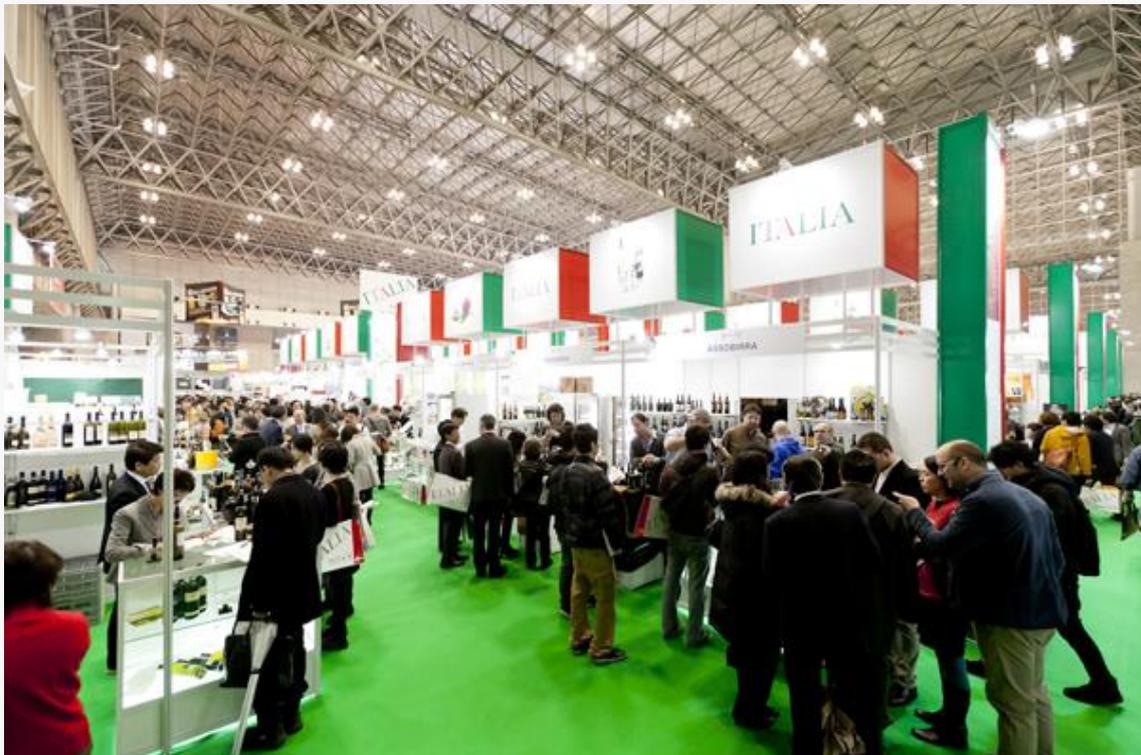
Also, the permissible amount of pesticide residue in Japan is sometimes smaller than that in Europe. Speaking of *Listeria Monocytogenes* standards, while in Europe permitted up until 100 cfu/g, at the moment in Japan it is completely forbidden, so many Italian cheese and salami have been blocked out. In addition, the usage of additives is different from that in Europe and many Italian manufactures get confused at first.

(2) Complexity of the distribution system In the Japanese food market, the commission business has been well developed. In general, between the manufacturers and the consumers, there are more than one distributor and all the operators in business are willing to coexist in peace. This kind of system is rarely noticed in Italy. Worth mentioning also, purchasing

protocols differ from companies, and outsiders can hardly understand how they work. Thus it sometimes happens that Italian suppliers would make a mistake at the beginning of the communications with Japanese partners.

Q: Do you feel that participation at Foodex is valuable for ITA? How could it be effective?

The Foodex is very important and valuable for us. In 2014, the ICE-Italian Trade Promotion Agency participated to the fair with 176 companies in 125 stands from 15 regions, over an area of 2,185sqm.



The response of the Japanese operators has been very positive for both the selection of productions for the high quality and professionalism of our companies.

The Italian companies participating, as well, said they were satisfied overall for the meetings held, the quantity and quality of the visiting buyers. During the Fair, Italian manufactures could distribute and spread more detailed information of their products throughout the conference, mini-seminars, cooking shows, tastings, etc. organized by ITA. We have a very positive feed-back from Italian exhibitors, who really appreciated the events.



Q: Finally, how do you observe the Japanese market?

Japan is one of the most important trading partners for Italy. Outside the EU, it is in fact the second country of destination for Italian food products. In 2013, Italy was the top market for

exports of pasta and confectionery products, and second, after France, for wines.

Since the mid-90s', the Italian food exports to this market has more than doubled. At present almost 10,000 Italian restaurants operating in Japan and catering are absorbing about 70% of the export value of Italian food in the country. These data show that Italian food products are largely accepted and appreciated.

In 2015 Italy will welcome millions of visitors from all over the world to Milano Expo, whose theme is "Feeding the Planet, Energy for Life". Now the involved organizations in Italy, including ITA, are promoting more keenly the Italian food industries and we expect more pragmatic collaborations between Italian manufactures and Japanese operators.