

## Promoting Asian agrifood products in global markets


Asian countries produce a wide range of processed food grown in varying agroclimatic conditions. However, many of those products do not reach overseas markets in other regions due to a lack of awareness of consumers elsewhere and inadequate export promotion. Recognizing the huge potential for Asian agrifood exports and their contribution to economic development in member countries, the APO has held projects to encourage exports over the last two years. This year, the APO organized a multicountry study mission on Export Promotion in Tokyo, Japan, 1–6 March, to demonstrate tools and approaches for promoting food-related exports to global markets.

International experts on export facilitation and market research from the USA and importers and distributors of agrifood products in Japan served as resource persons. “Speakers shared their experiences and expertise and gave us several tips about how to penetrate new markets. It opened up new options to overcome issues that we could face in starting agrifood exports to difficult countries such as the USA and Japan,” mentioned Director Abdul Rashid Bahri, Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority, Malaysia.

Extensive site visits gave participants new insights into the promotion of agricultural and food products as well as market trends in modern supermarket chains in Japan. One important venue was FOODEX 2010, the biggest annual international food fair in Asia, held at Makuhari Messe near Tokyo, 2–5 March. “The visit to FOODEX 2010 gave me the opportunity to view new, innovative products produced by other competing countries,” commented Bahri. The participants also visited the Ota Wholesale Market and famed Tsu-

kiji Wholesale Fish Market in Tokyo. “I learned a lot from the visit to Ota Market, including varieties of imported and local produce; international quality standards such as for freshness, size, shape, color, etc.; and packaging, labeling, and cool-

chain management including transportation. I also observed the importance of infrastructure development, hygiene, roles of wholesalers, and how auctions proceed,” commented Assistant General Manager Mohammad Rafiqul Islam, Hortex Foundation, Bangladesh.

Participants concluded that there are many methods to promote agrifood exports, including: information and/or product samples mailed, shipped by air, or uploaded to a Web site; promotion campaigns in wholesale and retail outlets; and participation in international trade expositions or exhibitions like FOODEX. They also commented that the APO should continue this type of project as SMEs and small-scale food producers and traders in many Asian countries do not have sufficient information and resources to promote their products in overseas markets. 



*At Ota Wholesale Market*