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**U.S. GRAINS  
COUNCIL**

*Developing Markets • Enabling Trade • Improving Lives*

**U.S. Grains Council Symposium**  
**“Seeking Potential of US Sorghum for Human Food”**  
**Introducing Recent Advancement of Intensive Research on Various Aspects of Sorghum**  
**Great Expectation for New Healthy Food Attributes in the Japanese market**

Sponsored by: U.S. Grains Council  
Co-sponsored by: Agriculture Affairs Office, US Embassy, Tokyo  
Hotel Okura, Tokyo  
November 21, 2011

November 21, 2011, Tokyo - U.S. Grains Council (1-6-19 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo, Japan: Director: Tommy Hamamoto) held a symposium focusing on the potential of US sorghum for food.

Sorghum, originated in Africa, and has been cultivated since before the Birth of Christ and spread to the rest of the world. After numerous breeding improvements, varieties at present count more than 2,000. Sorghum is known as the fourth grain following wheat, soybean and corn. The United States accounts for 25% of the world's sorghum production.

Sorghum, which has been used for food and livestock feed for a long time, is found by recent research that it possesses various health benefits such as rich in dietary fiber and minerals, and anti-aging effects by antioxidant substances. The Objective of the symposium gained understanding of the health benefits of sorghum by food industry, trade and researchers in Japan.

In the symposium, three experts introduced various aspects of sorghum; as a long history but relatively unknown crop, its potential nutritional and human health benefits and its advantages in food processing, followed by a tasting session of dishes using sorghum.

Summary of each presentation:

**“Origin of sorghum and cultivation and utilization in Japan” by Dr. Hitoshi Nakagawa, Director of Biomass Research Development Center, National Agriculture and Food Research Organization.**

Japan has a long history of breeding and cultivation of sorghum, the crop readily grows on arid soil and tolerant to lodging and damage by strong wind. According to Dr. Nakagawa, sorghum can recover quality of soil from salt damage which attracts attention as an eco-friendly cereal crop. Dr. Nakagawa also emphasised sorghum's superior productivity. In the presentation, Dr. Nakagawa shared his long years of experience in collecting a wide variety of sorghum specimen from all over the world, and introduced how they are grown and apply in food.

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**“Nutraceutical & nutritional benefits of sorghum” by Dr. Lloyd W Rooney, Regents Professor, Cereal Quality Laboratory, Department of Soil and Crop Science, Texas A&M University.**

Dr. L.W.Rooney, a renowned authority for sorghum spending his 47 years for research, talked about colored sorghum’s potential nutraceutical and nutritional benefits such as tannin and polyphenols that act as antioxidants. Dr. Rooney also presented that sorghum is also rich in fiber contributing to prevention of Type II diabetes through low digestibility. It also contains high level of flavanones/flavones compared to other grains, and has great potential opportunities as healthy human foods, according to Dr. Rooney

**“Advantages of sorghum in food processing” Dr. Keiko Nagao, Professor in the Department of Food and Nutrition, Tokyo Kasei University.**

Dr. Nagao made a presentation on advantages of white sorghum in food processing. Dr. Nagao studies functionality of coarse cereals increasing number of health conscious Japanese people become interested in. Among coarse cereals, sorghum is gluten-free and can be used as a substitute for recently increasing population allergic to wheat flour. Through her research on white sorghum, Dr. Nagao also found other advantageous characters of sorghum for food processing, such as easiness in processing and with almost no color no smell, stating that sorghum is not merely food materials for gluten allergy people. As an example, sorghum flour makes deep-fried foods crispy because of its low oil absorption and high dewatering rate, contributing to easier preparation of low-calorie diet. She highlighted that sorghum has great potential to be used in food development in the future.

Sorghum tasting session:

Mr. Steve Schmitzler, Director of the Agriculture Trade Office, US Embassy expressed his expectation of sorghum as a relatively new food ingredient with health benefits. Six dishes using sorghum developed by Ms. Chisako Hori for this event were served. Ms. Hori is a national registered dietitian and anti-aging specialist. Mr. Earl Roemer, sorghum producer from US attended to the event to introduce his latest sorghum products including those from colored sorghum to the audience.

Audience showed great interest to sorghum and its market potential after the event. U.S. Grains Council continues to deliver updated information on human health benefits of sorghum and conducting promotions of U.S. sorghum in the Japanese market.

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