



**Media Report for  
The Tasmanian Department of Economic Development  
and Tourism  
29 November – 5 December 2008**

*Politics/Economy/Social*

Tuesday 2 December, 2008

**Government Releases Plan to Raise Japan's Food Self-Sufficiency to 50%**

Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Shigeru Ishiba on 2 December unveiled a road map for boosting Japan's food self-sufficiency rate in calorie terms to 50 percent from the current 40 percent in about 10 years mainly by increasing rice consumption and wheat production.

The draft plan will undergo a thorough study by a dedicated panel from the end of January and will be fleshed out with specific reform measures in 2010, the minister said at a press conference.

In light of growing demand for rice powder used in bread and other food, rice powder production is to be jacked up to 500,000 tons from 10,000 tons in the year ended in March 2008, according to the plan.

The ministry plans to have farmers grow 260,000 tons of rice for use in animal feed. No rice was cultivated for such a purpose in fiscal 2007.

The plan calls for doubling production of wheat to 1.8 million tons from 910,000 tons in fiscal 2007 and that of soybean to 500,000 tons from 230,000 tons. The output of milk and dairy products will be also increased.

(Summary from Nikkei Net Interactive)

## *Industry/Market – Australia*

Sunday 30 November, 2008

### **Import Restrictions Removed for Non-Fumigated Tasmanian Cherries**

On 28 November, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) gave the green light to the import of non-fumigated Tasmanian cherries. To control the risks of codling moth under the new system, the cherries will be grown in an orchard with a low risk of outbreak of codling moth and will undergo a combination of orchard monitoring, trapping test and export inspection. Imports of Tasmanian cherries under the new system are expected to begin in December.

This Tasmanian case is the second case after the New Zealand cherries were allowed into Japan under this system for the first time in December 2005.

(Summary translation from Nihon Nogyo Shimbun, Page 5)

Wednesday 3 December, 2008

### **Japanese to Enjoy Fresh Australian Cherries**

Japanese will be able to enjoy Australian fresh cherries in their New Year holidays.

Japanese and Australian quarantine authorities have agreed on a new protocol to allow the export of the cherries. The new agreement means that Australia's high quality cherries no longer need to be fumigated before export, so they will be even safer.

Australia's Ambassador to Japan, Mr Murray McLean, welcomed the news today. "I am delighted that Australia can share these delicious cherries with our Japanese friends. I hope there will be fresh Australian cherries on the tables of many Japanese households in the New Year holidays".

(Summary from Australian Embassy Tokyo Press Release)

<http://www.australia.or.jp/english/seifu/pressreleases/?pid=TK20/2008>

Friday 5 December, 2008

### **Australia-Japan Trade Shows Strength in Tough Times**

The Minister for Trade, Simon Crean, said today that Australia's trade relationship with Japan was as strong as ever, despite the global slowdown and the rapid growth of Australia's trade with China and other countries in the region.

"Our merchandise exports to Japan in the first three quarters of 2008 have already surpassed total merchandise exports in 2007," Mr Crean said ahead of the launch of a new report from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's Economic Analytical Unit, Australia and Japan: How distance and complementarity shape a remarkable commercial relationship. "Japan is a crucial customer for Australia's major commodity sectors, and Australian business should also

be aware of how change in the Japanese economy is opening up a range of opportunities in other sectors as well."

(Summary from Australian Embassy Tokyo Press Release)

<http://www.australia.or.jp/english/seifu/pressreleases/?pid=TK21/2008>

## *Industry/Market/Trends – Japan*

Wednesday 3 December, 2008

### **Restaurants Offering Discounts Under the Strong Yen**

A growing number of restaurants are offering discounts on beef dishes and other menu items to take advantage of the strong yen at a time when the economic slowdown has cautious consumers tightening their purse strings.

The Japanese currency's strength allows restaurant operators to stretch their budgets for imported foodstuffs such as beef.

Denny's Japan, a family restaurant chain in the Seven & i Holdings group, has cut prices for steak dishes using Australian and New Zealand beef. Sirloin steak served with steamed oysters will be offered for 1,280 yen, a 100 yen discount from the regular price until 10 December.

(Summary from Nihon Keizai Shimbun morning edition, Page 31)

Thursday 4 December, 2008

### **Nippon Oil, Nippon Mining To Merge Under Holding Firm in Oct 2009**

Leading Japanese oil refiner Nippon Oil and sixth-ranked Nippon Mining Holdings announced on 4 December that they will merge under a holding company to be established in October 2009.

The new company will become the world's eighth-largest player, with annual sales of more than 13 trillion yen and a 33% share of the domestic gasoline market.

The deal was prompted by falling petroleum demand amid the ongoing economic downturn, and is designed to boost production and market share through economies of scale.

(Summary from Nihon Keizai Shimbun evening edition)

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