

Corn Briefs

Biodegradable Corn Products Are A Hit In Japan

As a result of U.S. Feed Grains Council efforts, the 1998 Winter Olympic games in Nagano, Japan, will feature biodegradable plastic products made from U.S. corn.

The Council, the Hoshida Group, and ASA will display and use biodegradable plastic bags, flatware, cups and coated paper products at the Eco-Friendly Kentucky Fried Chicken booth located near the Olympic Ice Skating Rink. U.S. corn imports could increase by 7 mmt (275.8 mbu) as a result of Council biodegradable promotion in Japan.

The Olympics are not the only venue for biodegradable corn products. The Council's composting infrastructure development efforts in Japan — targeted at expanding the market for corn-based biodegradable packaging — have spurred the harmonization of separate composting initiatives within different divisions of Japan's Ministry of Food and Forestry (MAFF).

Discussions are moving forward among three Japanese ministries (MAFF, MHW and MITI) on establishing a harmonized pan-government scheme for organic treatment of compostable waste. This unprecedented cooperation improves the outlook for develop-

ing a broad-based biodegradable market, rather than smaller niche markets.

High Oil Corn Continues To Shine

When high oil corn's (HOC) popularity began to grow, the Council began marketing it to overseas customers, both old and new. A recent signing ceremony in Taiwan marked another milestone in this market development effort.

In October, a Taiwan feed mill signed an agreement to purchase 280,000 mt (11 mbu) of U.S. high oil corn between November 1997 and October 1999.

Since 1995, the Council's office in Taiwan and the world headquarters in Washington, D.C., have been working closely with U.S. suppliers and Taiwan feed millers to promote U.S. HOC.

"Our promotional efforts on high oil corn have included demonstrations and short courses," said C.M. Lynn, USFGC director/Taiwan. In addition, "a trade team that visited the United States introduced key Taiwan customers to high oil corn," said Kent Swisher, USFGC manager of international operations. "They visited a feed mill in Ohio and saw how HOC was handled. That was the first time that many team members had heard of HOC."

In Japan, the Council helped

get HOC approved as a feed for swine and poultry and is working on approval for beef feeding. In Colombia, the top market for U.S. corn in South America, demand for HOC is increasing. Two major grain companies are currently contracting with U.S. corn farmers to produce more than 1.8 mmt (70.9 mbu) of HOC for export in 1998-99. According to the Council's Value-Enhanced Corn Quality Report, U.S. farmers planted 400,000 acres of HOC, in 1996/97. In 1997/98, the report estimates that to grow to one million acres.

Corn News In Colombia

El Nino has apparently caused many agricultural production problems in Colombia, forcing the country to initiate a substantial increase in imports over the last few months.

U.S. corn imports through September 1997 were close to 1 mmt (39.4 mbu) and with new Council marketing programs and estimates of decreased local grain production as a result of El Nino, corn imports are likely to rise to 1.6 mmt (63 mbu).

El Nino is presently affecting corn, sorghum and rice planting and the farmers' association has said that Colombia's feed grain production during the first part of 1998 will decline sharply. According to Colombia's seed association, seed sales are almost zero.



CORN TALK NEWS

PENNSYLVANIA MASTER CORN GROWERS ASSOC., INC.

The Minister of Agriculture said that if necessary he will support increased grain imports through the beginning of CY98. The Council's 1997 Pioneer International Agricultural Trade Fellowship Mission members found Colombian customers pleased with the quality of U.S. corn and very enthusiastic about high oil corn, all of which they source from the United States. They also heard during several meetings that corn and sorghum production is declining in Colombia, and that by the year 2000, Colombia could import 3.0 mmt of feed grains. HOC endusers in this region are willing to purchase more of this ingredient, and a key importing feedmill said that if there was more U.S. HOC available on the market they would buy it.

Egypt Initiates Use Of Corn Flour For Bread

Council work pays off again. Based on Council suggestions an Egyptian flour mill began using white corn in their bread production.

Currently, 50,000 mt (2 mbu) of white corn has been used with complete consumer

acceptance. Additional market tests using yellow corn have been a success, with the yellow corn bread receiving higher marks nutritionally. The flour mills intend to expand their use of white and yellow corn in flour and bread production in the upcoming year.

A Japanese Network Helps To Promote Corn-Related Products

Corn flake consumption got a big boost in Japan from a 30-minute program on the Tokyo Broadcasting Station's breakfast program. Hiroko Sakashita, USFGC associate director/Japan, and Juri Noguchi, ATO public relations, were instrumental in getting the program, originally planned for five minutes, expanded to a half hour. The broadcast included views of a typical American family eating corn flakes, discussions with nutritionists of the benefits of U.S. cereals, and demonstrations of their convenience, concluding with the suggestion that Japanese consumers are missing a great breakfast option if they don't increase their intake of corn flakes beyond the current 200 grams per capita per year.

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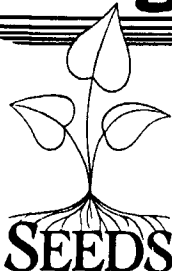
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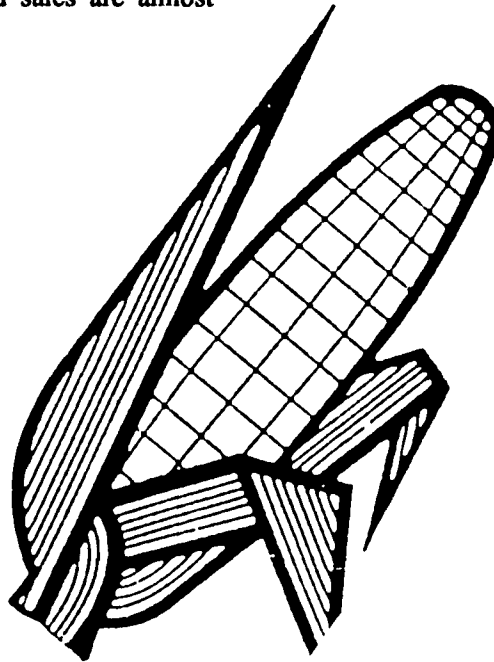
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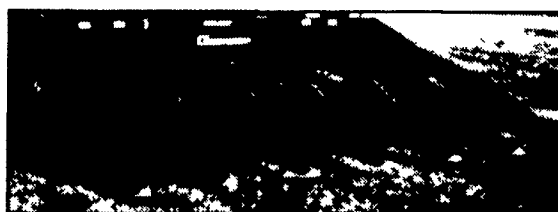


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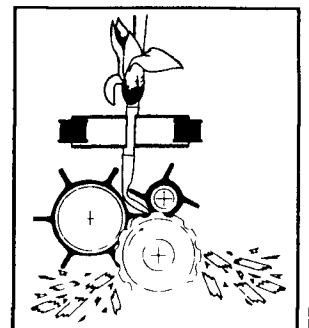
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