

Agriculture and Marine Products

Kyushu's importance to the Japanese economy and its solid agricultural base are shown in Table 5.

There is much concern about agricultural import liberalization in Kyushu. Significant beef and orange import liberalization will begin in 1991 and restrictions affecting orange juice will be eased from April 1992.

Table 5

Agriculture: Kyushu's Share of National Output

Product	Percentage of Total Japanese Output
Sweet potatoes	54.0
Dried shiitake (mushrooms)	45.7
Broiler chickens	45.5
Mikan oranges	43.7
Beef cattle	34.2
Pork	27.6

Kyushu's leading agricultural product, the mikan or mandarin orange, supplies almost 50 per cent of national demand for the fruit. The area will be watched closely to see if trade liberalization will eventually destroy the beef and mikan industries or promote competition instead. The results over the next five years will be analyzed and used by decision makers on the politically sensitive issue of barriers to the trade in rice and other agricultural products.

Efforts continue to cut Kyushu's mikan production, but not without problems. While mikan juice has traditionally been used to adjust production and dispose of sub-standard fruit, demand for the juice is expected to fall off with the abolition in April 1991 of the requirement to mix imported orange juice with the domestic variety.

Demographic statistics show that the population continues to move away from farming. The number of Kyushu's farm households declined to 695 000 units in 1989, from over 860 000 households in 1975. Full-time farms make up 24 per cent of the figure, almost 10 per cent more than the 15 per cent national average. But as usual, significant intra-regional differences are evident. Only 15 per cent of all farms in the Fukuoka region are operated by full-time farmers, while in the less cosmopolitan Kagoshima region, the full-time numbers climb to 34 per cent.

Opportunities for Canada are good in the agriculture sector, especially for products and services that can improve efficiency and help Japanese farmers adjust to an unregulated market. Possibilities range from raw materials to automated machinery, farm-management software and genetically improved farm-animal embryos.

Marine products have always been an integral part of the Kyushu economy, with the region producing a disproportionate amount of the nation's total in both fishery (21.4 per cent) and aquaculture (36.9 per cent).

Marine industry shipments in 1988 totalled 2.2 million tons valued at ¥636.8 billion, with Nagasaki far ahead of the other fishery prefectures. As leading aquaculture producers, Nagasaki, Kagoshima and Kumamoto were about equal.

Innovation in the marine industries ("marinovation" in Japanese) has affected all aspects of the industry, from processing to marketing and delivery. Biotechnologies have been introduced, and successful projects in "ocean ranching" are operating in Nagasaki and Oita prefectures.