

After a demonstration of its capabilities at an experiment station in Shikoku prefecture last November, a robot called "AT-2" may some day be helping out with the chores in Japanese orange groves. The AT-2, created jointly by Applied AI Systems, Inc. (AAI) (www.aai.ca) of Ottawa and the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, is a service robot designed specifically to reduce the work involved in tending to oranges, and thus ease the burden on ageing fruit farmers in Japan.



AT-2 is actually a mobile transportation platform, equipped with a camera and a computerized "brain" that enables the robot to move through a muddy grove among the orange trees, identifying each one. Not only will AT-2 carry fruit as it travels down the rows, but it will also fertilize the

trees. How can a robot accomplish this? AT-2 will be able to sense the colour of the leaves in each tree and will analyze this information to determine whether or not the tree is healthy.

application development. The company is particularly interested in service robots like the AT-2 that are designed to make life easier for an ageing workforce, and is currently developing other

Canadian robot cares for Japanese oranges

Then, if a particular tree needs to be fertilized, AT-2 will calculate the precise amount of fertilizer to apply.

The Japanese vision of robots in farmers' fields is almost a reality and with the success of the AT-2 this tremendous labour-saving technology will likely be developed further.

AAI Systems, Inc., an Ottawa-based robotics research and development company, has been active in Canada and Japan for several years, creating and supplying robots for research and

robotic devices to assist the elderly and infirm, such as intelligent wheelchairs.

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Canadian pork exports rise to new heights in the Land of the Rising Sun

Exports of Canadian pork to Japan were valued at \$476 million and approached 115,000 million tonnes in 2000 — a 21% increase in volume and an astonishing 43% increase in value over 1999.

The value of pork exports to Japan has risen dramatically recently thanks to the increasing exports of chilled pork, which is prepared using new packing technology. Canadian exporters have seen the value of these products climb 70% over the previous year to almost \$180 million. Canada now holds over 23% of the Japanese import market for fresh pork, making it the supplier of choice in this lucrative market.

The consistent quality of Canadian pork and pork by-products, as well as the ability of Canadian pork exporters to adapt to the demands of the Japanese consumer, are the main reasons that Canadian pork has reached the number one spot in the Japanese marketplace. This adaptability on the part of everyone along the pork export chain has resulted in the development of trusted relationships with Japanese importers and wholesalers over the years. The implementation of a quality assurance program by the Canadian Pork Council, and pilot research projects aimed at improving pork are contributing to good relations as well.

Last November, Canada Pork International hosted a seminar in Tokyo attended by 30 representatives from the Canadian pork industry as well as over 170 Japanese buyers and wholesalers. Given the huge success of this event, a similar seminar will be held next year in a different Japanese city.

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