



The Tohoku Development Promotional Plan was initiated in 1989:

- to develop regional expressway and telecommunications systems;
- to promote industrial and research developments;
- to create regional power bases to repatriate development funds and decision-making power from Tokyo;
- to boost Tohoku's population to 13.1 million by the next century; and
- to raise regional production to ¥39 trillion.

5 Summary and Recommendations

Tohoku is emerging as a market of interest to Canadian exporters. And although it is not as well developed as other regional markets, it should not be dismissed by Canadians seeking business opportunities in Japan.

The southern prefectures of Miyagi, Fukushima and Yamagata enjoy easy access to the vast Tokyo market. Sendai's port and airport are relatively uncongested and closer to Vancouver than the traditional entry points of Yokohama and Narita. The growing network of surface transportation offers good connections to Tokyo and other Japanese centres.

Industrial parks offer spacious, serviced lots at lower rates than normally available in Japan. In some cases, government development assistance is available to foreign companies wishing to locate in the region. The labour pool is larger in Tohoku and wage rates are lower than in Tokyo.

These factors combine to make southern Tohoku a viable distribution and/or production base for Canadian companies faced with high start-up costs posed by Tokyo and other metropolitan centres.

Southern Tohoku's natural attributes and proximity to Tokyo make it a prime candidate for resort development. This could provide opportunities for Canadian resort-designers, log-home specialists and suppliers of leisure products and services.

Tohoku farmers, among the least efficient and modern in Japan, are scrambling to upgrade farm operations in the face of rising international competition. As a result, there is growing interest in Canadian breeding products and technology and livestock feeds.