

**Taipei International Food Show June 21-24, Taipei, Taiwan  
Trip report**

David Gagnon, Chief Operating Officer of the Organic Trade Association, attended the Taipei International Food Show June 21-24, in Taipei, Taiwan on behalf of the Organic Trade Association. OTA participated in the trade show conference, in a retail tour and hosted a US Organic Market Update (with a focus on new and upcoming organic products and US organic product trends) seminar for the Taiwan audience. The population of Taiwan is 23 million. As of 2000 the average household income was \$29,000 US.

The interest in organic products at the trade show was high. Of the 100 seminar attendees about ½ indicated that they had tried organic food in the last year and about 10% reported that they had tried US organic products based on an informal request to raise hands by the speaker, Dave Gagnon. FAS Taipei reports a strong developing interest in organic foods, especially with the recent completion of the Taiwan organic production and certification program (January 29, 2007).

During an all day tour of stores in the greater Taipei area, Mr. Gagnon observed a variety of organic foods in a cross section of the retail markets as follows; 1) a supermarket chain store, Geant located in Taipei with a “natural corner” displaying both organic and natural products, primarily from Europe, Australia and the US as well as local fresh produce brands, 2) A mid-sized “health food store”, Orange Market, with fresh, frozen, processed products as well as a very busy restaurant was noted to have a wide variety of products many from the US, and 3) a natural convenience, one of 50 located throughout Taiwan, GreenVillage Natural and Organic, had a variety of organic products, including some of their own house brands. The government’s new organic seal was seen on some products, but primarily on fresh produce from Taiwan.

OTA also had the opportunity to talk about the great value of US organic products during a radio talk show on ICRT, a local English speaking radio station. Mr. Gagnon stressed the benefits of organic and talked about the wide variety and availability of US organic products. The program was live and aired on Friday morning.

OTA also had the opportunity to meet with the Deputy Agriculture Minister and the staff responsible for implementation of the new organic program in Taiwan. The staff explained how the new regulations worked, especially in regards to organic imports. According to staff all imports will be required to comply with the regulations by January 2009. The staff strongly recommended that the US officially submit a copy of our regulations for their review and consideration as an “equivalent” regulation. Even with approval as an equivalent regulation Taiwan would require that each “batch” of product will be accompanied by a copy of the most recent organic certification. There was also talk that a TM-11 form will also be required but this was less clear. The OTA will forward this information to the appropriate staff at the USDA for analysis and consideration.

Our recommendation is to focus on these regulatory issues and work closely with FAS Taiwan and with Kelly Strzelecki, our organic liaison at FAS, Washington to address and prioritize them. Regarding marketing, we recommend continuing OTA participation in at least one marketing activity to keep up our presence in the market and show support for companies currently selling in to the market.

Special thanks to: Keith Schneller, Director of the Agricultural Trade Office of the American Institute in Taiwan (keith.schneller@usda.gov) for making all the arrangements for the organic industry’s participation in the seminar, meetings with Agriculture and Food Agency Council of Agriculture of Taiwan (Yu-Tsai Huang, PhD Director General) and the organic store tour, Geant’s Peter Lee (peterlee@fe-geant.com.tw) for his insightful store tour, Orange Mart’s Executive Director, Katherine Chang (uniquech@ms7.hinet.net), for the store tour and graciously serving us a delicious organic lunch, and James Zhan (greenvillagecom@yahoo.com.tw), President of Green Village Co, Ltd. for the tour of Green Village and food sampling table set up for our tour.

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