

Media release

12 March 2025

Building on Decades of Trust and Trade: Australian Food and Wine Collaboration Group on a mission to Japan

The Australian Food and Wine Collaboration Group is headed to Tokyo in April as part of its ongoing efforts to strengthen bilateral trade relations and increase export opportunities for Australia's premium food and wine producers.

It's the sixth target market for the Collaboration Group, which has previously focused its attention on emerging markets across Asia including Thailand, South Korea, Vietnam, Indonesia and Taiwan.

Over the past two years, the Collaboration Group, comprising of Hort Innovation Australia, Dairy Australia, Wine Australia, Meat & Livestock Australia and Seafood Industry Australia, has met with more than 1,000 food, trade and government representatives, leveraging the individual sectors' export strengths to deepen industry and government networks, advance bilateral trade and improve market access for the Australian Government.

Japan is a highly valued trading partner and Australia's third largest agriculture, fisheries and forestry export market, valued at \$6.3 billion in 2023-24.

Dairy Australia Sustainable International Trade Senior Manager Catherine Taylor said this latest market activation, in Tokyo on April 9, is a chance to enhance the relationship with what is one of Australia's strongest trading partners.

"Japan and Australia have a long history of mutual high value trade and now is the time to strengthen the relationships and ensure the partnership continues to thrive into the future," said Ms Taylor, a former Australian Government Senior Trade Commissioner and Consul General to Osaka.

"The strength of the Australia-Japan trade relationship lies in its depth and its mutual strategic benefit. Australian producers have worked hard over the years to meet Japan's demand for quality produce, which has in turn helped improve our processes and our presentation and sharpened our competitive edge."

"It's more than just a transactional relationship for both parties. In agrifood we have a highly complementary, counter-seasonal partnership and we are invested in each other's success. Japan will always be one of the world's largest net importers of food and Australia's agrifood export sector needs trusted, stable partners."

Opportunities in Japan

Japan's demand for premium Australian produce is driven by several factors, including limited land on which to grow produce at scale, the evolving Japanese diet - which requires produce that cannot be grown domestically - and the ongoing demand from Japan's food manufacturing industry, which depends on Australian produce to create high-quality export goods.

For Australia's beef industry, Japan is Australia's second largest export market, and the fourth largest for red meat overall.

Meat & Livestock Australia Regional Manager for Japan and Korea Travis Brown said Australia has built a strong reputation among Japanese trade and consumers as a source of high-quality beef and lamb backed by a robust, world-class supply chain.

“As an industry we’re both proud, and fortunate, to have had the ability to supply Aussie beef and lamb to three generations of Japanese consumers, and we look forward to a continued, prosperous relationship,” Mr Brown said.

For Australian horticulture, Japan is Australia's fourth largest market by value, led by citrus, macadamias, table grapes, melons, asparagus, avocados, onions, carrots, turnips and cherries.

Horticulture Innovation Australia General Manager, Trade and Biosecurity R&D Dr Mila Bristow said Australia benefits from Japan’s demand for quality produce, with opportunities driven by seasonal differences between the two trading partners.

“From July to November, Japan has significant domestic production, however, as we have counter seasonality, this provides opportunity for Australian horticulture imports into the market, especially for our fruit industries,” Dr Bristow said.

“While there is a competitive environment in Japan for horticulture imports, Australian exports are supported by stringent quality assurance programs, first-rate food safety systems and a strong reputation for safe, clean and innovative agricultural products.”

Wine Australia CEO Dr Martin Cole said the Japanese trade and consumer's growing enthusiasm for Australian wine presents a tremendous opportunity for the industry to strengthen its presence in the market, showcasing the quality and diversity of Australian wines and regions to an engaged audience.

“The Food & Wine Collaboration Group activations provide the ideal platform for us to better understand the market opportunities, build lasting connections with key trade, and bring people together in a celebration of premium Australian wine and food,” Dr Cole said.

Seafood Industry Australia Chair Catherine Sayer said the Australian seafood industry values its longstanding and mutually beneficial partnership with Japan and is looking forward to the opportunity to build on this existing relationship.

“As one of our most important export markets, Japan has played a critical role in shaping the success of Australia’s seafood sector, with its discerning consumers appreciating the quality, sustainability, and provenance of our premium products,” Ms Sayer said.

“This relationship is built on shared respect for tradition, and we are proud to work hand-in-hand with our Japanese partners to deliver the best of Australia’s oceans to the tables of Japan.”

On the ground in Tokyo: April 9

The Australian Food and Wine Collaboration Group will be in Tokyo on April 9 to conduct the Taste the Wonders of Australia market activation. The events include export market roundtable discussions with industry and government contacts, food and wine workshops with local food industry representatives, and a Taste the Wonders of Australia Gala Dinner, which showcases the best of Australian food and wine to more than 100 Japanese food and trade representatives.

Australia’s Ambassador to Japan, Justin Hayhurst, will be attending the roundtable discussion and Gala Dinner on April 9.

“As a trusted and reliable partner, Australia has supplied counter-seasonal agrifood for decades,” Mr Hayhurst said.

“Food security is becoming an increasingly important part of the Australia Japan relationship. Australian agrifood will continue to deliver premium food and beverage to the Japanese market, further strengthening our mutually beneficial partnership.”



The investment by the Australian Food and Wine Collaboration Group is supported by Agriculture Trade and Market Access Cooperation (ATMAC) grants, with a \$500,000 for the first four export market destinations in 2022-24, and a second grant of \$600,000 to continue the program for 2025-26.

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For more information or to organise an interview with a representative from the Australian Food and Wine Collaboration Group, contact xxx