



'The Japanese people were so friendly and anxious to practice their English. This girl works in the meat department at a DAIEI store, and she helped cook the beef for the samples.' Every store presented Amy with flowers, and she in turn, presented them to her new friend here,

A Kansas Beef Fair - where?

MISS AMERICAN ANGUS

CHARMS JAPANESE



Somehow, there's a feeling this isn't Kansas . . . anymore. Tokyo's skyline seen from the Tokyo Tower near the city's center bears little resemblance to the peaceful Flint Hills near Manhattan, home of this year's Miss American Angus.

Meat cases were very attractively arranged and trim of the product was to a zero percent.



Japanese location photographs by Jan Lyons; others by Jim Cotton

Amy Lyons, Miss American Angus, represented the breed, her home state, and American beef interests in Japan this summer. She's a sophomore at Kansas State University, Manhattan.

Miss American Angus, Amy Lyons of Manhattan enjoyed an added and unexpected assignment while representing the Angus industry in 1988. Just before last summer's National Junior Angus Show, Amy and her mother jetted off to Japan where they promoted the Kansas beef industry - and indirectly won favorable impressions for American beef in general and Angus beef in particular. Amy's appearance grew from a pooling of contributions from the State of Kansas, Excel Beef Corporation, and Japanese merchandising giant DAIEI, with the American Angus Assn. providing the personality through its Miss American Angus. Here are reactions from both Amy and her mother Jan.



Debbis Lyons is a senior at Kansas State University, was an American Angus Auxiliary scholarship recipient, and also promoted American beef in Japan, 1987.

How did all this come about?

In the early 1980s, the then Governor of Kansas, John Carlin, traveled to Japan to enhance Kansas-Japanese trade relations. In 1987, the DAIEI Corporation asked Governor Mike Hayden to go to Japan to promote Kansas beef which they were featuring during its July gift-giving season. The Governor worked with the commerce department, and they asked Miss Kansas and two beef ambassadors to go instead.

Calla Yingling had been active in the state junior Hereford association, and my sister, Debbie, was the Angus representative. On that promotion, Excel exported 90 tons of beef.

The promotion was very successful. DAIEI wanted to repeat the promotion on a wider national appeal, and the Kansas Department of Commerce called and asked if I would go since I was the only reigning national queen from Kansas. I said my bags were packed and when they mentioned sending a chaperone, my mother volunteered!



The Lyons 4L herd is respected for its strong performance base with a foundation from PS Power Play daughters. Hilltop Skylar 524 (Otto Poser-bred, Denton, Mont.), GDAR Traveler 551 LT, QAS Traveler 23-4 and Rito 2100 GDAR are service sires along with Scotch Cap and VDAR Valiant in this A.I. program.

How did DAIEI, EXEL, and Certified Angus Beef get linked up together?

DAIEI is a supermarket and department store chain with more than 300 stores in Japan and an office in California. They also have the Wendy's fran-



Dr. Frank Lyons, a radiologist, finds the serenity of sundown across the Flint Hills the perfect ending for the day. Both he and Jan are natives of Ohio and settled in Kansas after his tour of duty at Fort Riley.

chises in Japan and Victoria Station restaurants.

The Japanese observe two gift giving seasons - summer and winter. The

The Kansas beef was often purchased in gift box sets.

Since 40 percent of the Certified Angus Beef comes from Kansas, and since Excel had just been added to the list of CAB packing plants, we contacted the CAB office who talked to the Kansas Department of Commerce. It approved our taking CAB materials, hats, and key chains to give away. In addition, the Kansas Beef Council supplied us with pamphlets concerning the myths about beef, recipes, and hats and pins to distribute.

In addition, Dick Spader sent a proclamation to the Japanese people thanking them for their interest in American beef and discussing safe, wholesome beef production in the U. S. Also Governor Mike Hayden sent a proclamation.

We were in Japan two weeks during which time we traveled from store to store giving about an hour's promotion. I read the proclamations, served samples of beef, and played a game where the people won beef or a telephone card which DAIEI had printed with my picture on it.

Any surprises?

I was most amazed at all the publicity which surrounded me. There were posters and advertisements for the newspapers and the telephone cards, all with my picture on them. At the first store we visited, I was shocked to see the posters in the elevators, at the entrance, even above the escalators.

Had you any previous experience with things Japanese?

We had a Japanese LABO student through the 4-H program spend one month with my family when I was 11 years old. I had spoken with my sister Debbie about her experiences in Japan but I was still unprepared. Japan is very different from Kansas. The biggest shock was all the people everywhere we went. All of Japan is about as large as Kansas, but Tokyo alone has more people than all of Kansas - more than 12 million. It was odd to wake up and not see the Flint Hills or even any grass.

It was great to get home.

When we landed in Kansas City, things seemed so open and spacious, and I felt a special feeling for good old Kansas and the United States.

How was it to travel there? Did you see any countryside or small villages?

The people were so gracious and very hospitable the whole time we were there. We traveled all over Japan from Tokyo, to Osaka, to a remote store in Marugame. We went by taxi and train primarily, and since I had not ridden on a train the Bullet Train was a real adventure.

See any cattle?

When asked to go, the one request I made was that we see a cattle operation. I really wanted to see more than just the stores and the cattle interested me greatly. On our free day, Mr. Sugihara, our host, arranged for us to see the Itoham Packing Plant and to tour a "farm."

Japanese farms are really large barns where cattle are confined in stanchions or small pens all of their lives.

I have toured IBP so it was interesting to see a Japanese packing plant. I noticed that their beef carcasses were much larger than ours. They slaughter 1,500-pound animals. And, of course, the maturity was different - their slaughter heifers and steers are usually around four years of age. The amount of external and internal fat on the carcasses was the most I have ever seen.



Everyone enjoyed playing 'rock, scissors, paper', or as the Japanese call it, 'jan-ken-pon'. The winners received beef and a telephone card with Amy's picture on it. Losers were awarded a pen.



Traditional tea ceremonies are very ritualistic, serving a thick green tea that's been ground very fine. Shown are from left: Shigeharu Shighara-san (host and meat merchandise manager for DAIEI), Jan Lyons, Amy, Yuko (interpreter), and Kazumi, (master of ceremonies for the promotions).



Amy read a proclamation from Dick Spader. Kzumi on the right, interpreted.

Some impressions of the famous Kobe . . . Jan Lyons

Pedigrees printed on the menu

We were most interested in seeing the Japanese Tajima cattle which produce the high quality "Kobe" beef, so named because of the region near Kobe where it is housed.

The Senda region is hilly and not as densely populated as Tokyo. The heifers and steers are confined for three- four years and are often brushed and massaged to "make the meat more tender." These cattle are valued as slaughter animals because of their pedigrees and the amount of pure Tajima blood they possess. Some elite restaurants even print the pedigree of the animal they slaughter on their menus.

The cattle are on a concrete floor and consequently many have feet and leg problems. Their hooves are trimmed fre-



Chopsticks were used frequently. Dinners were often formal business as well as social events.

quently. The dimension of bone in these cattle is slight, almost frail. Many of the cattle have been foundered and they stand humped over and get up with difficulty.

These cattle are valued for their high degree of marbling. The meat contains much more internal fat than our prime quality grade. This meat is very tender and is the standard of excellence in Japan. The Japanese feel Angus can fit into a crossbreeding program for them because of its marbling ability.

Interestingly enough, many of these cattle die a few months before they are scheduled for slaughter. I suspect the heart and liver cannot handle the excessive fat and lack of exercise.

The Japanese, then, must have a strong preference for beef high in flavor and tenderness.

The Japanese people are very interested in quality. DAIEI was first interested in Kansas Beef because of its comparative low price for the high quality. Mr. Sugihara is the head of DAIEI's meat division. Mr. Kanei is the head of imported beef. When we discussed CAB and shared the material we had taken for international clients (written in Japanese), they were most interested and wondered if Excel could supply them. I understand they have talked with the CAB people and the Meat Export Federation in Denver about getting CAB. So I feel our trip was productive.

Excel exported 240 tons of beef for this campaign. DAIEI was very

happy as sales were above predictions in the stores where we had a promotion. They predict their beef imports to more than double in the next two years. The Japanese people like the taste of our grain-fed beef. And we produce this much more cheaply than they can produce their high quality "Kobe" beef.

How did prices compare?

Certified Angus Beef is a natural for Japan. The Japanese value quality and are willing to pay for it. Our American beef sold for about \$9 a pound (regularly around \$15 a pound). Their high quality domestic beef sells for about \$100 a pound and their low quality dairy beef or Australian beef brings around \$7 a pound.

Did you try any new foods?

We really liked the Japanese rice but Sushi (raw fish) must become an acquired taste! Although I ate a lot of it those two weeks, I still have not "acquired it."

How was the communication process?

Many people who spoke some English came up in the stores to "practice" their English. I asked if they had been to the U. S. and often the answer was, "Yes, Los Angeles and Disneyland." The Disneyland Park in Tokyo is most popular. But the biggest barrier in trade is communications.



One of the highlights of the trip was a tour of three of Itoham's farms and packing plants. White coats had to be worn even in the barns. Takemichi Kanai-san, imported beef manager for DAIEI, on left, with Mr. Horiushi, assistant manager of Itoham.



"One night was spent at a traditional Japanese inn near the Senda region. The mats were quite soft and the pillows were made of rice. Anyone for tea?"

Although we had an interpreter with us at all times, often explanations and questions were misunderstood. More Americans must learn Japanese to communicate one-to-one instead of through a third party.

People-to-people campaigns are most effective. The Japanese trust face-to-face discussions and they loved having someone to represent and present the product.

Did you encounter any hostility in light of Sino-American trade differences over beef exports?

On the contrary, while we were there, the formal trade agreement between Japan and the United States was signed. The news media in Tokyo covered the opening store promotions, and we made an evening spot on TV. DAIEI was very happy. Those early sales were above their projections. Almost all the beef was sold before we left, and the campaign was to continue two more weeks.

We were told, under the new agreement, Japanese producers would be subsidized.

What do we need to remember when considering Japanese trade?

The Japanese are a very gracious, for-



A high percentage Tajima cow and her calf. The cow is being fed for slaughter until about four years of age. She calved unexpectedly and her heifer calf will be grown out in the same pen for four years. The halter and ring is used to hold the cow for daily brushings.

mal host. We need to understand their customs of formality and gift giving to trade in an honest manner.

In talking with Mr. Sugihara, an area of concern to the Japanese is safe, wholesome beef. DAIEI stopped importing

Korean pork because of this concern. We must continue to inform the Japanese of our strict USDA standards as we produce the safest beef anywhere in the world.



Toshi Taannka, member of the United States Meat Export Federation, Tokyo, is shown translating Certified Angus Beef videos.

In Japan, food is viewed as an art form, requiring superior ingredients. Certified

Angus Beef fits because of its quality and consistency. A busy man, Toshi, he took time from his busy schedule to narrate the training videos that will help tell the CAB story in Japanese markets.

This is not an unusual assignment for MEF personnel as educating consumers is part of its 56-nation mission. MEF is the only private, non-profit, international meat trade association of scale. It provides the meat industries a conduit for improving trade relations and establishing trading dialogues and agreements.