

Philippine fresh avocados gain access to Japan market; first shipment sent from Mindanao

18 November 2024 | News

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The Philippines has successfully expanded its access to Japan's lucrative food market with the approval to export Hass avocados, a significant milestone in the country's agricultural export growth and highlights the quality of local produce.

"This is a testament to the Philippines' dedication to expanding its agricultural exports and the high quality of our farm produce. We are optimistic that this access granted by Japan will lead to opportunities in other international markets for locally-grown Hass avocados," said Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. He further commended the collaborative efforts of the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), the Office of the Agriculture Attaché in Tokyo, and Dole Stanfilco in achieving this international trade milestone.

BPI Director Glenn Panganiban emphasized that the inclusion of Hass avocados in the Philippine export portfolio to Japan, which already includes bananas and pineapples, is the culmination of over a decade of effort, with initial access requests dating back to 2011. "Securing access to Japan's highly competitive market for Hass avocados is a significant step forward in our trade relations with Japan," he said.

This development comes at a time when the Philippines' agricultural exports to Japan are experiencing an upward trend. In 2023, the Philippines exported \$1.1 billion worth of agri-fisheries products to Japan, generating a trade surplus of \$990 million. The addition of Hass avocados further solidifies the Philippines' position as a key supplier of high-quality fruits to Japan, a

market renowned for its discerning consumers. The Hass variety, favored for its smaller size and pebbly skin that turns purplish-black when ripe, is particularly well-suited to Japanese preferences.

Japan is a major importer of Hass avocados, with imports valued at \$160 million (61,000 metric tons) in 2023. Key suppliers include Mexico, Peru, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. The global market for Hass avocados is projected to reach USD 18 billion by next year.

“We are proud to announce that the Philippines is the first country in Asia to export Hass avocados to Japan. This provides local producers with an excellent opportunity to capitalize on Japan’s growing demand for fresh fruits,” said Tokyo-based Agriculture Attaché Aleli Maghirang.

Gaining entry into Japan’s discerning market is anticipated to pave the way for Philippine-grown Hass avocados to access other international markets. The successful entry of Hass avocados underscores the potential for further expansion of Philippine agricultural product exports. With increasing demand for Philippine fruits in Japan and globally, the Philippines is well-positioned to strengthen its presence in the Japanese market and expand its agricultural exports throughout Asia and beyond.