

Session H – Vegetable Proteins in Fermented Foods and Other Products



Opening Remarks – Vegetable Proteins in Fermented Foods and Other Products

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I bring warmest congratulations from Japan to this important World Conference on Vegetable Proteins, and express the great honor and pleasure it is for me to serve as chairman of Session H. This meeting comes at a critical time as we consider increasing demands for a better standard of living through improved nutrition.

Japan has a long history of utilizing fermented soybean products as traditional foods. Soybeans came originally to Japan from China in the 7th century. Presently about one million tons of soybeans are consumed as traditional foods in Japan.

Miso, or soybean paste, one of the most important fermented soybean foods, was originally made in China. A missionary who was sent to China learned its production and modified it into a product suited to the Japanese taste in the 7th century. About 185,000 tons of soybeans are used for miso production annually.

Another major fermented soybean food is soy sauce which was originally developed by the Zen Monk Kakushin in 1234. He also visited China and discovered that the liquid portion from Miso was very delicious. This liquid

became the base for soy sauce, an essential ingredient in the Japanese diet. Soy sauce required the annual use of nearly 175,000 tons of soybean meal, the equivalent of 222,000 tons of soybeans.

Natto, the third major fermented soybean product of Japan, originated in our country. In 1087, a ruler in the northern part of Japan discovered natto to be part of local farmers' diets. Today, nearly 60,000 tons of soybeans are consumed in its production.

As Japan continues to draw from its historic past for a source of soy-based foods, we also are full participants in the new era of sophisticated vegetable protein foods. To promote utilization and production of this product, the Japan Vegetable Protein Food Association was organized in 1975. I am proud of the contribution the Association has made to better nutrition of the Japanese people.

As we further consider the role of vegetable protein throughout the world, I am honored to extend a warm welcome to each of you to participate fully in the matters which will be placed before you for discussion.