

## JATP 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – July 15, 2015

Dr. Terry Leas, Mr. Kiyoshi Ishii, Senator Judy Warnick, Senator Burt Brackett, JATP alumni, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a great pleasure for me to attend this 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Japanese Agricultural Training Program. Every year I host the closing ceremony for JATP and have had the pleasure of seeing happy faces after this very meaningful program. It is good to meet so many JATP alumni who have also been through such a wonderful experience.

JATP is one good example of person-to-person exchange facilitated by the relationship between Japan and the State of Washington. Japan and Washington have boasted close and amicable relations in the areas of business, culture, and exchange. Japan is one of the primary trading partners for Washington and the trade volume is increasing. In particular, Japan is one of the largest export markets. As to agricultural products, Japan is the second largest market, as well as the number one market for food products. The market shares for hay, frozen potatoes, and pasta are all over 50%. Regarding forestry products, it's the second largest market. It's through the dedication of people like all of you that this relationship is thriving.

I appreciate the long-term efforts of those concerned in JATP. Most of all, I thank the US government, Big Bend Community College, and the host farmers. I wish further growth for JATP and continuing success for the alumni.

Thank you very much.