

## **JATP Graduation Ceremony – October 8, 2014**

Dr. Terrence Leas, President Big Bend Community College, Ms. LeAnne Parton, Executive Director Big Bend Community College Foundation, Mr. Takashi Yoshikawa, Director US Branch of the Japan Agricultural Exchange Council, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to say a few words on the occasion of the closing ceremony of the Japanese Agricultural Training Program. First I'd like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those involved with JATP, including Big Bend Community College, Big Bend Community College Foundation, University of California Davis, host farmers, and host families.

To all trainees, congratulations on the successful conclusion of your term in the US over the past 19 months. You have gained invaluable experience, which would not have been possible in Japan. I believe you have learned a lot regarding agriculture and farm management. I also believe you have grown greatly as people. It is a great asset for all of you to have cultivated friendly relations with local Americans and a network among trainees. Please maintain these important relationships.

As you all know, the environment surrounding Japanese agriculture is severe. I would hope all the trainees will serve as leaders in their respective regions to take care that Japanese agriculture survives the competition in the international market. I'm looking forward to seeing your active contributions in the future.