

Tomato processing in Japan

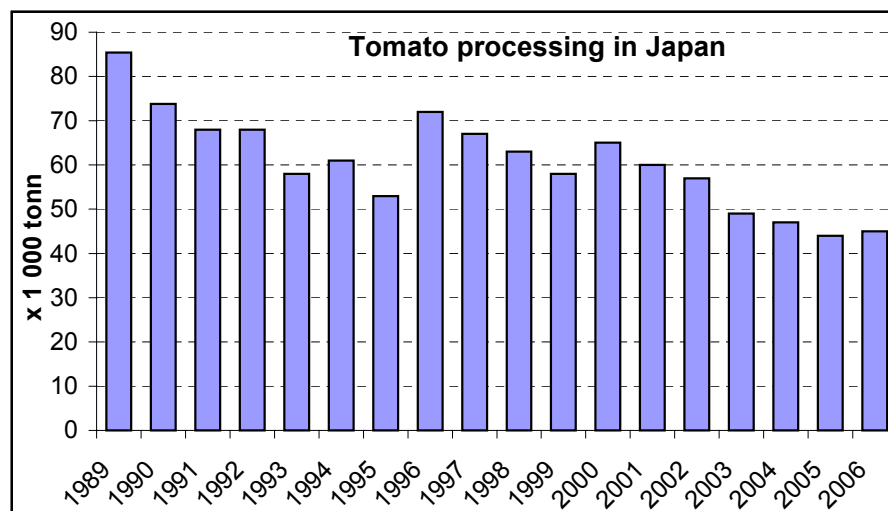
After processing around 85 000 metric tonnes in the beginning 90's, the Japanese tomato processing industry has reduced its production to around 50 000 tonnes in the last few years. This is the current total annual capacity of the three main companies operating today in Japan : Kagome Co., Ltd, Nippon Del Monte Corporation and Naganotomato Co., Ltd.



The main producing district is the East Japan. The tomatoes are harvested from the end of July to the beginning of September : the Japanese season is one of the shortest in the world.

Almost 100% of the tomatoes processed in the country are used for producing seasonally-packed tomato juice. The yield reached 68.2 MT. in 2005 on a total surface of 645 hectares. The price of fresh tomatoes is around 52 000 yens, about 450 US\$ per MT, the highest in the world.

Regarding the industry organization, the production is based upon contracts between manufacturers and agricultural cooperative associations. There is no specific research centres, so that private research are conducted by each processor.



The processors have a hard time securing the tomatoes, due to the shortage and aging of the farming population. In this connection, they are struggling to make the system which they can secure the materials continuously through according to the saving labour, the expansion of scale and putting together.

Japan is a net importer of tomato products, with around 110 000 tonnes of tomato paste and 90 000 tonnes of peeled tomatoes imported in 2005.