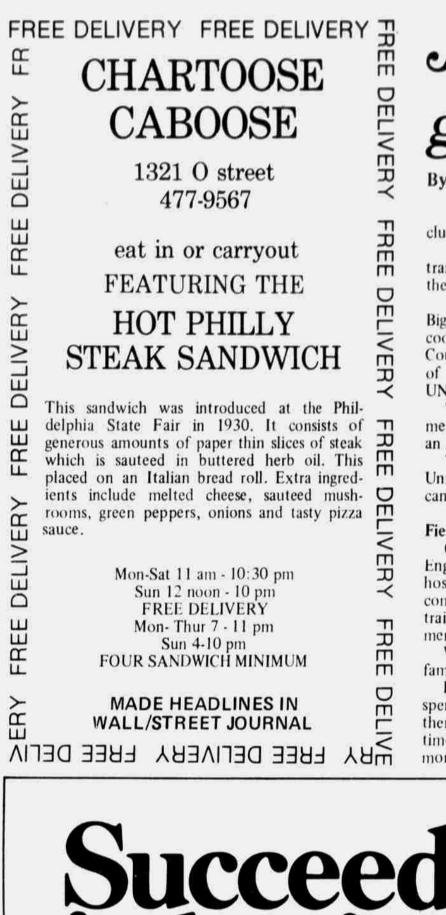
Daily Nebraskan



Japanese trainees in agriculture gain education, learn cooperation

By Willis Gray

For 42 Japanese agricultural trainees, life at UNL includes both education and international cooperation. According to project administrator Russ Free, the trainees, who arrived in Lincoln Jan. 9, are participating in the Japanese Agricultural Training Program.

The program started in 1965 and is administered by Big Bend Community College in Moses Lake, Wash., in cooperation with the Japanese Agricultural Training Council, the Japanese Embassy and the U.S. Departments of State, Agriculture and Labor. This is the 15th year UNL has participated in the program.

The trainees were selected from candidates recommended by governors of the prefectures (the equivalent of an American state) where they live.

The program lasts for two years. Before coming to the United States the students were trained in English, American culture and the operation of farm equipment.

Field work

Once they arrive in the country and receive more English instruction, the trainees spend four months on host farms learning agricultural field work. They then come to UNL, where they spend two months in classroom training in livestock, fruit and vegetable training or ornamental flower work.

While in Lincoln, the trainees stay with Lincoln families, most of whom volunteer each year.

Following their stint at the university, the trainees will spend a year working in their specialized fields. They will then spend three more months of academic work, this time related to their specialized interests. After one more month of work experience, the trainees tour the United States and then return to Japan.

According to Free, the program is financed by the trainees themselves. The wages they make on the farms are channeled back into the program. The students receive a \$50 to \$60 allowance each month, and their host families also share part of the expenses. Free said the trainees don't make money, but they don't lose any either.

Agricultural techniques

Hideaki Kanai, 25, from Chiba prefecture near Tokyo, said he likes the program. He said he joined because he wanted to come to America and learn this country's agricultural techniques.

Takashi Yokishawa, 24, from Tokyo, said American farming methods are more mechanized than those in Japan. He said it will be difficult to introduce and apply the methods he learned in the United States because of the difficulty of breaking tradition.

Yokishawa said in Japan, the farmer is both a manager and a worker, whereas the American farmer is basically a manager.

Both students were impressed with the size of the farms in the United States. They said Japanese farms, out of necessity, are much smaller than their American counterparts.

Free said the trainees don't duplicate American techniques in Japan, but use the knowledge they learn in the United States to supplement their own techniques.

Free said the program is useful as a tool for learning international cooperation and understanding. It gives the participant an opportunity to learn about American culture, he said, especially through the host families and participation in local activities.



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