

## 'Butter refugees' cry over spilled milk

- 1) Shoppers are up in arms over a serious butter shortage that has forced the government to resort to emergency imports and some grocers to limit sales to one package per customer.
  - 2) Some store shelves are bare and retailers are trumpeting the arrival of new supplies with posters in the windows announcing "We have butter!"
  - 3) With Christmas cake-baking season fast approaching, social media has been abuzz over the shortage, with Twitter user @justastarter1 claiming to be a "butter refugee" after going to different stores without success.
  - 4) The agriculture ministry said the problem is linked to a broiling summer that left the nation's cows exhausted and unable — or unwilling — to generate their usual milk supply.
  - 5) The bovine strike has sapped supply just as dairy farmers trim their herds to cope with the nation's dwindling population and falling demand. And with farmers prioritizing supply for liquid milk to keep the supermarket shelves stocked, Japan now faces a shortage in the raw material used to produce butter.
  - 6) In a bid to keep the nation's kitchens operating, the government imported 7,000 tons of butter in May and another 3,000 tons in September, the first time in years Japan has raided foreign dairy markets.
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- 7) "Judging from inventory levels at the end of September, stockpiles are down 30 percent from a year earlier so we're in a shortage trend," an official in the agriculture ministry said.
  - 8) Not many farmers are willing to raise milk production, the official added.
  - 9) "They are concerned about where the dairy farming industry will go in the future as they see feed prices soaring," he said.
  - 10) A sharply weaker yen has sent the price of imported feed grain skyward. Japan's raw milk production was 7.45 million tons in the year ended in March, down 14 percent from the peak year 19 years ago, according to government data. 【2014/11/10 AFP-JIJI】

1. up in arms 身構えている、いきり立っている 3. abuzz 騒然として、~をめぐっての話が飛び交う

4. broiling 焼けるように暑い 5. bovine 牛の sap 徐々に弱める 6. raid 侵入する

## Butter makers agree to whip up supply to avert Christmas shortage

- 1) Four major butter makers have agreed to boost output by about 33 percent this month at the request of the farm ministry to meet surging demand for the Christmas season, the ministry said Thursday.
- 2) The four companies told the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Ministry the same day that they plan to comply with the request, made last month, before demand peaks for the annual Christmas cake rush.
- 3) Last year's sweltering summer and a drop in dairy farmers reduced the production of raw milk, the precursor to butter.
- 4) The four firms — Megmilk Snow Brand Co., Yotsuba Milk Products Co., Meiji Holdings Co. and Morinaga Milk Industry Co. — will increase butter supply to 1,846 tons this month compared with 1,393 tons in November, the ministry said. "Sufficient supply of butter will be ensured at stores before the Christmas season," a ministry official said. 【12/4/2014/KYODO】

whip up 料理などを手早く作る、早急に計画する precursor 先行するもの、元の姿

☆Ice breaker for active discussion☆

1. Did you recognize butter shortage before the Christmas season last year? Were you affected?
2. Why does Japan have problem with butter shortage?
3. What kinds of businesses are affected by butter shortage?
4. One of the Twitter users described him/herself as a `butter refugee`. Have you ever been any type of refugee?
5. What measures can the government do to stimulate the dairy production industry?
6. Except for butter, can you think of any other products where supply is declining?
7. How important is butter in your regular diet? What ingredients can you not live without?
8. Make sentences using the following words: trumpet, abuzz, refugee, broil, trim, dwindling, bovine, precursor, surging and sap.

生乳は腐りやすいため、まず最も生鮮性が求められる牛乳や生クリームなどに加工され、最後に保存性の高いバターや脱脂粉乳に加工される。猛暑の影響で多くの牛が乳房炎にかかり、抗生物質を投与している間は生乳を出荷できなかった事と、国際約束数量(生乳換算年間13.7万トン)を超える輸入には非常に高い関税がかかるというWTOの取り決めも今回のバター不足の原因となった。