

Japan - Alberta Relations

Government
of Alberta



This map is a generalized illustration only and is not intended to be used for reference purposes. The representation of political boundaries does not necessarily reflect the position of the Government of Alberta on international issues of recognition, sovereignty or jurisdiction.

PROFILE

Capital: Tokyo

Population: 126.8 million (2010)

Language: Japanese

Government: Constitutional Monarchy

Head of State: His Imperial Highness Emperor Akihito

Head of Government: Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda (since August 2011)

Currency: \$1 CDN = 81.08 Yen (2011 average)

GDP: US\$5,460 billion (2010)

GDP (PPP): US\$4,303 billion (2010 estimate)

GDP Per Capita (PPP): US\$33,930 (2010 estimate)

GDP growth rate: 0.1% (2006-2010 average)

Inflation: -0.1% (2006-2010 average)

Unemployment: 5.1% (2010 estimate)

Key Industry Sectors: Japanese companies are world leaders in the manufacturing of autos, electronics, machine tools, steel and nonferrous metals, ships, chemicals, textiles, and processed foods.

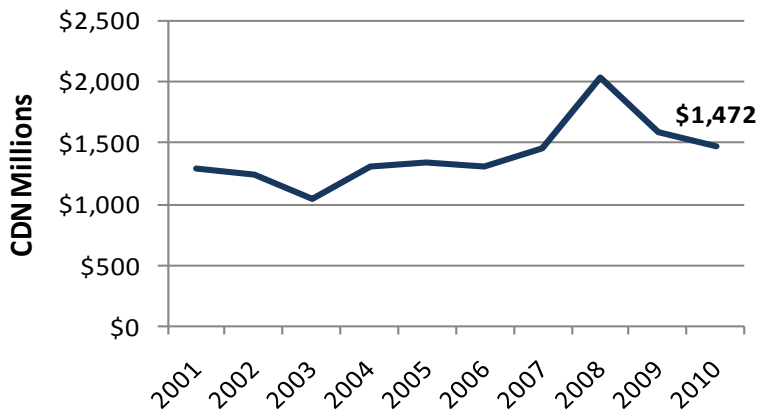
RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

- In April 2011, the Alberta government contributed \$5 million to the Canadian Red Cross to support earthquake and tsunami relief efforts following the March 11, 2011 disaster in Japan. This complemented the generous contributions made by Albertans in response to the disaster.
- Japan is a key overseas economic partner for Alberta, accounting for 15 percent of non-U.S. exports. Alberta also enjoys a multi-faceted relationship with Japan that includes strong business ties, cultural and sports exchanges, educational initiatives, municipal twinnings, and people-to-people activities.
- Alberta exchanges with the prefecture of Hokkaido began in 1973, with a formal twinning signed in 1980. The year 2010 was the 30th Anniversary of the Alberta-Hokkaido sister province relationship.
- Several Alberta municipalities are twinned with Japanese counterparts, such as Jasper, Taber, Rocky Mountain House, Stony Plain, Camrose, Lacombe, Canmore, Stettler, Wetaskiwin, Barrhead, Hanna, Whitecourt, Hinton, Didsbury, and Lethbridge. Nine municipal twinnings are in Hokkaido.
- Approximately 13,000 Albertans are of Japanese descent.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

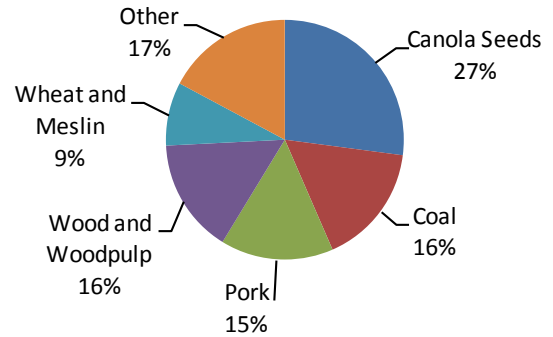
- From 2006-2010, Alberta's merchandise exports to Japan averaged \$1.57 billion per year. Primary exports included: canola seeds, pork, wheat and meslin, wood and woodpulp, and coal.
- From 2006-2010, direct imports to Alberta from Japan averaged \$242 million per year and consisted primarily of vehicles, machinery, and electronic machinery. This figure does not include goods sold in Alberta that arrived via other provinces.
- Japanese investment in Alberta is concentrated in the forest products, oil sands, energy, petrochemicals, food processing, and tourism and hospitality sectors.
- Japan continues to maintain a significant presence through Daishowa-Marubeni International Ltd. and Alpac Forest Products Inc. in Alberta's forest product industry.
- Japan's reconstruction efforts following the tsunami and earthquake in March 2011 are creating demand for building products. Alberta housing and building products and services show excellent potential for growth in Japan, including lumber, windows, doors, kitchen cabinets, moldings, pre-packaged homes, panelized components and pre-cut lumber.

Alberta's Exports to Japan 2001-2010



Alberta's Merchandise Exports to Japan

2006-2010
(Total Average CDN\$1.57 Billion)



SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- Alberta has a large, sophisticated and growing information and communications technology (ICT) industry, and the Alberta government continues to promote investment and partnerships opportunities between businesses in Alberta and Japan.
- In February 2011, Alberta Innovates – Energy and Environmental Solutions and Japan Coal Energy Centre (JCoal) signed an agreement to exchange technical information in the research and development of Clean Coal Technologies (CCT) and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technologies and to explore opportunities for cooperation in other areas of mutual interest.
- In July 2009, the National Institute for Nanotechnology (NINT), located in Edmonton, became home to a new research and product development centre using state-of-the-art Hitachi microscopes (the first outside of Japan), stemming from collaboration with Hitachi High Technologies Canada. NINT is a joint partnership of the Alberta government, the University of Alberta, and the National Research Council.
- In 2006, NINT signed an agreement with the Nanotechnology Research Institute, part of the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology in Japan. The institutes agreed to establish a joint research lab and to host visiting researchers.
- Alberta organizations have worked on several joint research projects with Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization. Several Alberta-based microsystem and nanotechnology companies are also developing strategic relationships with Japanese companies and have sales representatives in Japan.

ENERGY

- Japan has virtually no domestic oil or natural gas reserves. In 2011, Japan will be the 3rd-largest net importer of oil and the largest importer of liquefied natural gas (LNG) and coal in the world.
- Since 1978, Japan Canada Oil Sands Limited (JACOS) has been active in Alberta. Today, JACOS operates a Steam Assisted Gravity Drainage project at its Hangingstone lease, producing about 8,000 barrels per day (bpd). In April 2010, JACOS submitted a joint application for regulatory approval to expand its operations to incremental production of 35,000 bpd of bitumen. JACOS expects project approval in late 2011 and production start-up by the end of 2014.
- Nippon Oil Exploration of Japan, through their project company Mocal Energy, owns 5 percent of the Syncrude Project.
- INPEX, a Japanese energy company, acquired a 10 percent interest in the Joslyn Oil Sands Project from Total Canada Ltd. in November 2007. The project is planned for 200,000 bpd in phased development.
- In October 2011, Grande Cache Coal announced that it entered into a definitive agreement with Winsway Coking Coal Holdings and Marubeni to be acquired for a total cash consideration of approximately \$1.0 billion.
- In October 2010, Toyo Engineering Corporation announced they would acquire 100 percent of the shares of Calgary-based Tri Ocean Engineering from ASRC Energy. Tri Ocean has expertise in upstream plant engineering of oil and gas in Northern Canada and Alaska.
- In August 2010, Mitsubishi announced that it would acquire a 50 percent interest of gas assets owned by Penn West Exploration in northeast B.C. for approximately \$250 million.

- Japan's electricity demand is expected to diminish in the short-term because of the 2011 earthquake. However, Japan is likely to require additional oil and natural gas to generate electricity in the future. Fuel oil consumption, according to industry estimates, may increase by up to 238,000 bpd over the long-term. Natural gas consumption is estimated to increase by up to 1.2 billion cubic feet per day.

AGRICULTURE

- In 2010, Japan was Alberta's third largest agrifood export market with revenues totaling \$827 million, a slight decrease from 2009 values. Top agrifood exports in this period included: canola seed, pork, wheat, beef, and roasted malt.
- Japan is Alberta's second largest market for value-added, agrifood products and in 2010, totaled \$383 million, comprised primarily of pork and beef. Alberta beef exports (including offal) increased by 36 percent from 2009.
- While Japan has begun to accept Canadian beef exports from animals under 20 months of age, Alberta and Canada would like to see this market access expanded to 30 months. Japan also maintains considerable tariff and non-tariff barriers on products such as crude and refined canola oil and pork products which act as impediments on Alberta's capacity to export to Japan.

EDUCATION

- In March 2011, the University of Alberta (U of A) English Language Program (ELP) began to undertake a number of fundraising projects to support Japan following the earthquake. The latest is a new bursary program to support 10 students from areas most affected by the disaster. ELP was among one of the first Canadian groups to return to Japan following the earthquake.

- Alberta has developed curriculum for 9 year (Grades 3-12), 6 year (Grades 7-12), and 3 year (Grades 10-12) Japanese language and culture learning programs. Fifteen school districts throughout the province offer these programs for close to 2,000 students.
- Since 1982, the University of Lethbridge has administered a university-wide exchange program with Hokkai Gakuen University in Hokkaido. As of 2009, over 400 students and over 100 professors have participated.
- For the past 13 years Lethbridge College has partnered with the Nippon Institute of Technology (NIT) in Tokyo to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) training and two year diplomas to NIT students.
- Since 1995, the University of Calgary (U of C) Faculty of Education has had a Cultural and Pedagogical Exchange Program with the Hokkaido University of Education. Approximately 120 students from Canada and Japan have participated in this program.
- The U of C maintains student exchanges with the Hokkaido University of Education, Kansai Gaidai University, Ryukoku University and Waseda University.
- The U of C Japanese Language and Culture Group Study Program provides students with a valuable opportunity to further their study of Japanese language and culture in an immersion setting near Tokyo.
- Grant MacEwan University signed student exchange agreement with Nagoya Gakuin University in February 2009.
- Mount Royal University (MRU) has been partnered with Gifu University since 2002. Approximately 25 students per year from Gifu spend two semesters studying English in the Languages Institute. MRU is also partnered with Mukogawa Women's University (2006), and Hirosaki University (2004), and students are exchanged in both directions on an annual basis.
- The U of A has six student exchange partners in Japan and numerous other agreements with Japanese institutions related to teaching and research.
- The U of A works with the Hokkaido Board of Education to provide training to English language teachers.
- The U of A has established the Prince Takamado Centre for Teaching and Research which facilitates teaching of Japanese language and culture and co-ordinates a Prince Takamado Japan-Canada Memorial Fund which supports student mobility and cultural exchanges between Canada and Japan.
- Each year, independent of exchange programs, approximately 150 high school students from Japan come to study in Alberta schools. This represents about 10 percent of Alberta's foreign student population in the K-12 education sector, independent of exchange programs.
- Each year, approximately 60 Albertans are employed by the Japanese government's Japanese Exchange and Teaching (JET) Programme to teach English in Japan.
- Over the last 35 years, about 100 Alberta students annually participate in short-term cultural exchanges with the Yamate Gakuin high school in Yokohama, Japan. The program also sees about 200 Japanese students come to Alberta schools annually for short-term visits during the spring.
- Under the Alberta-Hokkaido Regional Exchange program, the Hokkaido government annually provides two teachers to Alberta to help develop Japanese language programs in Alberta schools.
- The Japanese government, through an agreement involving the Japan Foundation, provides a Special Advisor on Japanese language and culture to Alberta Education.
- May 2010: The Premier along with the premiers of British Columbia Saskatchewan led a joint NWP trade mission to Japan and China to promote opportunities between Western Canada and Asia.

DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION

- Japan's Ambassador in Ottawa is His Excellency Kaoru Ishikawa.
- A Japanese Consulate was established in Edmonton in 1967, becoming a Consulate General in 1972. The office is now located in Calgary and has jurisdiction for Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, and Nunavut.
- The Japanese Consul General in Calgary is Mr. Susumu Fukuda.
- Canada's Ambassador to Japan is Jonathan T. Fried. The Embassy is located in Tokyo. There is a Canadian Consulate in Nagoya, as well as Canadian trade offices in Kitakyushu and Sapporo.
- Alberta has maintained an office in Tokyo since 1970.

RECENT VISITS

- November 2010: The Minister of Intergovernmental, International and Aboriginal Relations undertook a mission to Japan and South Korea to promote Alberta's economic, cultural and intergovernmental relationships. While in Japan the Minister represented Alberta at 30th Anniversary celebrations with Hokkaido.
- October 2010: The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, along with his British Columbia counterpart, led a New West Partnership (NWP) mission to Japan. The Ministers also joined the Canadian Agriculture Minister in bilateral meetings with the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and the Japanese Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

