



ALUMNI PROFILE

THRIVE
TOGETHER
WITH AUSTRALIAN DAIRY

KEI TOMITA



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Product Development –
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**Japan Scholarship Program
Participant: 2003**

Which company were you working with and in what role when you participated in the Scholarship program?

Company: Shoei Foods Corporation

Department: Dairy Products and Fats and Oils Department

Role: Import purchasing and sales

How long have you been working with your current employer?

It will be 11 years in 2017.

What does your role involve?

Cheese production (Mozzarella, Caciocavallo, Raclette, Gouda, Camembert, Feta, Haloumi, Washed-rind cheese)

Product development (breads, cheesecakes, etc., with a focus on cheese, prosciutto, sausages, etc).

What did you learn from the program?

I learned about what cheese is through the practical cheesemaking lessons, and I also learned and sensed that cheese is ingrained in Australia as a part of its culture.

Also, with the knowledge gained from the cheesemaking practical, on the factory visits, I was able to understand the processes to a certain extent, even on an almost completely closed-off large-scale cheese production line.

What was the best part of the program?

In terms of the Australian cheese factories, I had only heard about them in pre-departure briefings at my company. Being able to actually go to the factories of multiple companies and actually see and feel their products for myself is something that I could only have experienced on the Scholarship Program.

Also, at the time, I was still a very raw recruit at my company, so being able to get to know people from other Japanese companies in our common category of dairy manufacture and cheese and to communicate with them also left a deep impression.

How has participating in the program helped with your career?

After experiencing practical cheesemaking training on the Scholarship Program, I became captivated by the appeal of the "mechanisms in which cheese is formed." As a result, I am now working in cheese manufacture. Japan has always had a very vibrant dairy farming industry and fermented foods have always been popular, so I hope to contribute to ingraining cheese more deeply as "culture" in Japan as well.

What elements of the scholarship program do you still draw upon regularly for your career/role that you currently hold?

I draw upon it a lot. In terms of cheesemaking, even today, more than ten years later, I still have occasion to look back over the hand-outs from the Scholarship.

I draw on what I learned in the Scholarship cheesemaking practical in my current work of cheese manufacture and development. Neil-Sensei's words, 'Syneresis is the most important process,' are firmly burnt into my brain.

My knowledge of Australian cheese and dairy manufacturers deepened, so in my current product development work, when we are developing cheesecakes and the like, I often have opportunities to use Australian-made cheese.

How important is it to be part of the alumni program now after completing the scholarship program?

I am a bit far away, so I am not able to participate very often, but the alumni events are a good opportunity to meet a variety of people, both Australians and Japanese people, and people in the same industry, and people in other industries. For this reason, I would like to participate in the alumni program as much as I can.

Would you recommend the program to other people? If so, Why?

I would definitely recommend it.

The Scholarship is not only an opportunity to learn about the Australian dairy industry and acquire a basic knowledge about cheese. Through the cheesemaking practicals and the factory visits, you can actually experience the products with your five senses, and hear from the manufacturers in their own words. I think that opportunities like these are extremely valuable.

At the time, I was still very green, so I often look back, somewhat belatedly, and think that I should have listened more properly and looked more closely.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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