



Understanding Japan as an Export Market

A strategic briefing for Mexican agricultural exporters

日本
市場

Japan Market

Population, Economy & Land

4th

Largest Economy
in the World (GDP)

USD \$4.38 trillion (2026)

122M

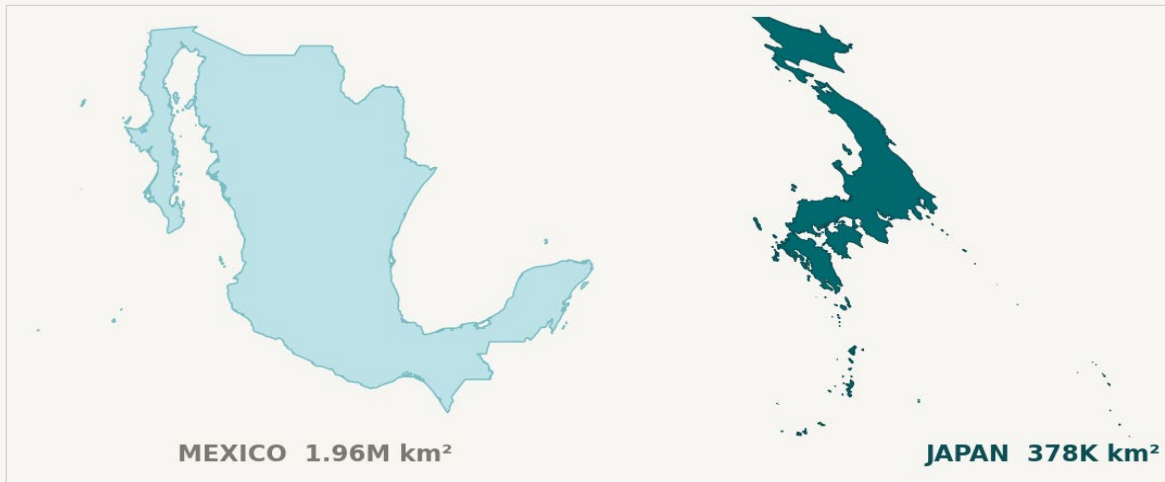
People — 12th
Most Populous

706K births vs. 1.58M deaths (2025)

5x

Mexico is 5x larger
in land area

Japan: 378K km² | Mexico: 1.96M km²



Population Density

338 people/km² in Japan vs. 68 in Mexico. Japan packs a Mexico-sized economy into 1/5th the space.



Births vs. Deaths

705,809 births vs. ~1.58M deaths in 2025 — deaths outnumber births more than 2 to 1. Population shrinks by ~875,000/year.



World's 4th Consumer Market

Japan's GDP of \$4.38T (2026) makes it the 4th largest economy — larger than the entire UK.

Aging Society & Food Dependency

#1

Oldest population
in the world

29.8%

Aged 65+
(vs. 7.2% Mexico)

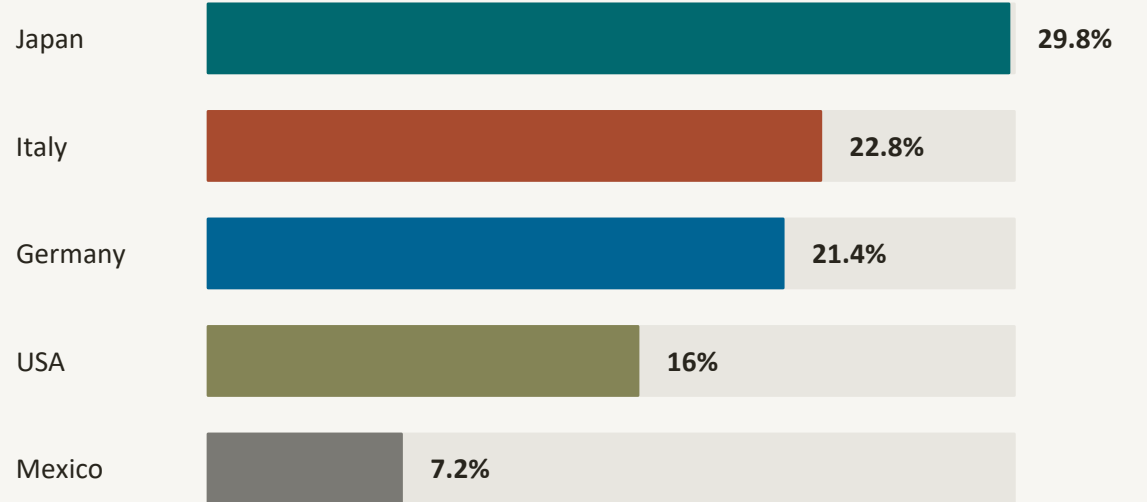
62%

Food import dependency
(calorie basis)

1.15

Fertility rate — record
low in 2024

Global Aging Comparison



Household & Birth Rate Trends

Avg. household size (2024)	2.23 persons
Single-person households	34% of all HH
Annual births (2025)	705,809 — record low
Births vs. deaths	<1 birth per 2 deaths
Population by 2100	77 million

Japan's Agriculture Is In Crisis

69.2 yrs

Average age of a Japanese farmer (2024)

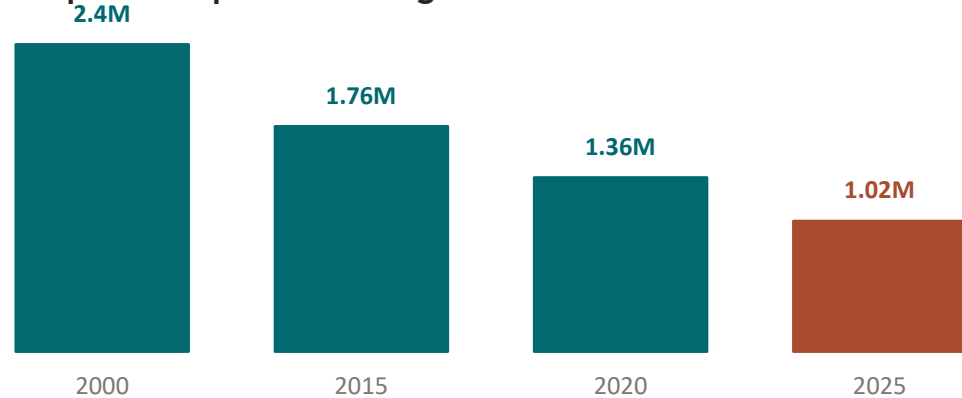
71.7%

Of all farmers are aged 65 or older

-25.1%

Drop in self-employed farmers in 5 years (2025)

Collapse of Japan's Farming Workforce



▼ Red bar = 2025: largest single-period decline on record (-25.1%)

Farmland Shrinking 36%

From 6.1M hectares (1961) to 4.2M hectares by 2020 — projected to fall to 2.7M hectares by 2050.

No Successors

120 family farms disappear for every one corporate entity added. Few young Japanese want to farm.

Abandoned Fields

257,000 hectares of abandoned farmland — over 60% is too degraded to restore.

Self-Sufficiency to Fall to 29%

From 38% today, calorie-based self-sufficiency is projected to drop further to 29% by 2040.

Doing Business in Japan

Japan is one of the world's most mature, sophisticated consumer markets — where quality, trust, and precision are non-negotiable.

Breaking In Is Hard

Closed Networks

Buyers operate in tight corporate alliances. Outsiders start at a disadvantage — a trusted local importer is essential.

Start Small — Build Up

The Japanese way is incremental. A small trial order is the entry point. Prove yourself, then volume grows naturally.

Yen Weakness & Price Pressure

A weaker yen has made imports more expensive. Japanese buyers are more price-conscious than a decade ago — value must be clear.

What Japan Demands

Consistent Quality & Specs

Every shipment must match the sample. Zero tolerance for spec variation — one failure can end the relationship.

Presentation Matters

Packaging, labeling, and product appearance are judged as seriously as taste. First impressions are lasting.

Speed & Accuracy

Respond fast. Deliver on time. Send exact quantities. Slow or imprecise responses signal unreliability.

Once In — You Stay In

10-20 Year Relationships

Japanese buyers rarely switch suppliers. A proven track record earns consistent, long-term orders.

Quality & Story Win

Japanese buyers value origin, craftsmanship, and narrative. A strong product story commands loyalty that price alone never can.

Network Effect

One satisfied importer opens doors across their entire network. Referrals are the best entry tool.