



---

## April 2011 Feature Story:

### “Japan and Blackcurrants”

April Feature Story

---

Last week we got confirmation from the Japan Cassis Association that the Japanese blackcurrant growing district and our friends there, in Aomori prefecture, are all OK. That was wonderful news. Perhaps the Japanese have the smallest commercial crop of any country member of the International Blackcurrant Association: but the Japanese industry has one of the largest ‘hearts’ and their passion for the ‘best berry for life’ is truly wonderful.

It was a Japanese scientist who jump-started the renaissance of the blackcurrant as one of the world’s most respected health foods. It was Japanese companies and research institutions, led by Meiji Seika, that then produced inspirational research that is benefitting us all.

The Japanese consumer continues to appreciate the blackcurrant in many forms: when we were in France last year we appreciated the huge success of premium French crème de cassis in Japan. A delightful blackcurrant & cream sandwich marketed by a leading Japanese bakery chain is the latest example. It was in Japan where global brand Häagen Dazs launched its blackcurrant ice-cream.

But pivotal to the on-going respect and appreciation of the beautiful berry is world leading scientific breakthroughs. Japanese scientists started the global focus on the blackcurrant and it’s good to see how the research is growing. In our March homepage cover story we looked at the work of New Zealand scientists and gut health. The latest research out is from the USA and looks at the use of blackcurrant extract in the prevention of liver cancer.

