

Vinegar brewery Marukan to locate in Spalding County

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The Georgia Department of Economic Development announced Monday that Marukan, a Japanese leader in rice vinegar brewing, will locate its second U.S. brewery in Griffin, creating 15 jobs and investing \$13 million into the project.

“The fact that a global leader chose Georgia to locate its first east coast production facility is an indicator that our state is the right place for businesses to flourish,” said state Department of Economic Development Commissioner Chris Carr. “Our dynamic network of companies, interconnected transportation infrastructure and access to skilled talent continue to attract innovative businesses such as Marukan. We look forward to their continued growth here.”

The 100,000-square-foot brewing facility will support the company’s growing customer base in the Southeast. The manufacturing facility will produce, package and distribute premium rice vinegar using traditional brewing methods developed over three centuries.

The Griffin plant will more than double the company’s current production capacity, when combined with the Marukan brewery in California. Marukan will also work with students at the University of Georgia Griffin Campus to research opportunities for current and new products. Production is expected to begin in early 2017.

“It has been my dream and vision to build Marukan’s second U.S. plant in the east,” said Chairman Denzaemon Sasada. “This location in Griffin is ideal for our natural brewing method and we are very excited to join many other quality Japanese companies who have found a new home in Georgia.”

Marukan is the third company to locate in the Lakes at Green Valley, joining fellow Japanese companies Toppan Printing and Otsuka Chemical, at the The Lakes at Green Valley, the state’s first eco-friendly industrial park. Japan is one of Georgia’s top five investor nations and companies based in Japan employ more Georgians than any other international company in the state.

Headquartered in Kobe, Japan, and Paramount, California, Marukan has been brewing rice vinegar since 1649 and celebrated its 40th anniversary in the U.S. last year. Marukan is the nation’s leading maker of 100 percent organic rice vinegars which are popular in the largest health food chains such as Whole Foods Market, as well local independent natural food shops.

Scott McMurray, division director of global commerce at Georgia Department of Economic Development and Yumiko Nakazono, managing director of Georgia's office in Tokyo, worked with the Griffin-Spalding Development Authority to assist Marukan on behalf of the state of Georgia.

"Being selected by Marukan, with its nearly 400-year history of continuous operations, again validates the attractiveness of Spalding County and The Lakes at Green Valley as a top tier place to do business," said Griffin-Spalding Development Authority Chairman Chuck Copeland.

"Company officials from both their U.S.-based operation and Japanese corporate offices have been a pleasure to work with on this project," Copeland said.

"We are very happy to welcome Marukan into The Lakes," said Griffin-Spalding Development Authority Executive Director David M. Luckie. "This is a great project for our community and our new food center at UGA," Luckie said, "and we continue to be thankful for the terrific partnership with the state and particularly with the Georgia Department of Economic Development's Scott McMurray and Joseph Huntemann who worked this project with us."

Makers of the world's finest rice vinegar, Marukan Vinegar was founded in 1649 in western Japan. Historical documentation supports that it was the first company to sell rice vinegar commercially at that time.

Rice vinegar, which is a naturally occurring acetic acid derived from rice alcohol, or sake, has been used to prepare and preserve foods long before there was electricity or modern refrigeration. All Marukan products use the timehonored, slow-brewing Japanese process that creates the finest rice vinegar and ponzu sauces in the world.

In the Tokugawa Era (1603-1867) there was a saying that "Masamune means Sake and Marukan means vinegar," and as a guarantee of the unfailing quality of Marukan vinegar, the name of the company's founder, Suya Kanzaburo (Yasuhisa) was written on every barrel of vinegar produced.

Later the first character of that name was designed into the present the company's trademark, which has continued to stand as a guarantee of Marukan's traditional skill and constant high quality that chefs in the finest restaurants and everyday homes alike use to bring out the very best culinary flavor.