

JAMA Update

VOLUME 9 N°5
JUNE 1999

Japanese Automakers Face Many Challenges

*JAMA Annual Assembly
In Tokyo Reviews Policy*



The Tokyo Motor Show Should Revive Interest in Car Market

The Japanese auto industry is evolving rapidly. Last year more vehicles were produced outside Japan by Japanese automakers than were exported out of Japan. Recent international capital tie-ups are also changing the character of the industry. Both these trends illustrate how the automobile industry is changing rapidly as globalisation progresses.

	1998 (change from 1997)
Total Domestic Vehicle Production	10,049,792 (down 8.4%)
Exports	4,528,875 (down 0.5%)
Overseas Production	5,867,079

Economic Recovery

How the industry is reacting to this trend was a central theme behind the JAMA Annual Assembly held in Tokyo on 20 May. With the industry reviewing the disappointing economic situation of Japan and the need to restructure production while the car market remains stubbornly low. The industry hopes that with government reforms of the financial sector and increased public spending, the economy will start to show signs of recovery later this year after five consecutive quarters of negative growth.

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**by Peter Nunn
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ASV

**A Monthly Review
of the Japanese Motor
Vehicle Industry**

New Models to boost Demand

JAMA still forecasts that the domestic vehicle market will grow by 3.1 per cent in the 1999 financial year. Sales have been boosted by increased mini-car sales, but the industry hopes that demand will also be driven by replacement demand and by the introduction of new models. Many of these new models will be shown at the Tokyo Motor Show to be held this Autumn.

“Sales have been boosted by increased mini-car sales”

Policy Challenges

JAMA chairman Mr Yoshifumi Tsuji, and JAMA president Takao Suzuki spoke publicly after the assembly, emphasising some of the challenges facing the industry: promoting international dialogue and co-operation; environmental and safety concerns; exploiting information technologies; and promoting the industry's views in the debate about the place of the automobile in society. This issue of News From JAMA highlights some of these challenges. ■



Korea

Regular talks have started with the Korean automobile association, KAMA, with a meeting scheduled to be held in June this year, in Fukuoka City, the major city of the southern island of Japan, Kyushu, about half way between Seoul and Tokyo.

Asia



Practical learning and training facility in Tokyo

Within the framework of Automotive Dialogue of APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), JAMA is taking part in discussions between governments and industry on ways to support the auto industry in the region, particularly during this time of economic trouble. At the end of July a conference will be held in Bali, in Indonesia, with an emphasis on developing training programmes and encouraging the adoption of international standards and other deregulation proposals.

International Dialogue Can Only Become More Important

JAMA believes that these activities can only grow in importance as the automobile industry globalises. To prevent unnecessary disputes, mutual understanding has to be improved, the push for market access liberalisation needs to be encouraged by the anticipated Millennium Round trade talks, and a healthy world trading system with fair trade rules, under the aegis of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). ■

“To prevent unnecessary disputes mutual understanding has to be improved”

Topic I

International Co-operation and Dialogue

JAMA Has a Busy Schedule

Promoting international co-operation and dialogue within the international automotive industry is a central policy of JAMA, as it aims to increase mutual understanding in the industry and to provide a discussion forum for subjects of common interest such as international standards harmonisation and safety and environmental issues. And JAMA has set itself a busy programme.



Europe

In Europe, JAMA together with CLEPA, representing the European automotive suppliers association, held the Fourth JAMA/CLEPA Business Conference in April, hosted and organised by RAI and FABRIMETAL, the Dutch and Belgian associations representing automotive suppliers. Preparations are already underway for a fifth conference to be held in November 2000, in Strasbourg and jointly organised by French and German associations FIEV and VDA.

Regular discussions are also being planned with the European automobile association, ACEA following a presidential meeting last year and another being planned during this Autumn's Tokyo Motor Show.



America

In the USA, JAMA is planning to organise a conference in February 2000 with American suppliers, represented by MEMA in Las Vegas. Both organisations will also hold a high-level liaison meeting to discuss common issues this October, in Yokohama, Japan.

JAMA is also talking regularly with The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, the newly named association representing American car producers.

The Automobile in Society - Intelligent Transport

Exploiting Information Technology



The Promise of ITS

ITS holds the promise of solving some of the problems associated with modern roads, namely congestion and accidents and revolutionise how we use our roads. Its potential benefits include:



Automatic highway toll collection

- so cars do not have to stop so reducing accidents and improving traffic flow.



Highway control and collision prevention systems

- radar and similar systems will control traffic lane changing and the distances between vehicles on highways, so making them safer. In the future, there is the prospect of achieving automatic driving on specially designed highways. For example, vehicles can be grouped into batches, with reduced driving distances, and automatically guided down highways at constant speeds.



Greater transport efficiency

- by having exact information on the location of a commercial vehicle, operators will be able to administer their logistics more efficiently by reducing the number of vehicles with empty loads or small loads. The same type of operational control can be applied to emergency services, increasing their reaction times and decreasing traffic disruption.



Efficient traffic control

- greater accuracy in assessing and monitoring real road conditions will result in more efficient control by traffic signals. By combining navigation systems and variable roadside display boards vehicles can be guided onto specified routes.



Disaster and crisis control

- in the event of largescale disasters like earthquakes, information can be gathered quickly about usable and damaged roads and used to guide the rescue services and enforce priority access controls.



Travel, Traffic and Driver Information

- users will be able to get real time information on road conditions and avoid traffic jams. Information will also be available about public transport facilities whether land, sea or air, so one can select and combine different forms of transport according to your needs. ■

Japan is working hard to exploit information technology for the road transport sector by putting into place an Intelligent Transport System (ITS) and JAMA is playing its part by co-operating with government agencies and related associations. ITS aims to utilise state of the art information technologies to connect road users, roads and vehicles. It holds the promise of greatly improving the efficiency of the road transport system with accompanying economic and environmental benefits.

“ITS aims to utilise state of the art information technologies to connect road users, roads and vehicles”

Advanced Safety Vehicles (ASV's)

The Receiving End of ITS

All the Japanese automakers are actively developing ASV's. Vehicles which exploit the latest information technologies and can be adapted for ITS (see previous article). They will contain technologies, which will automatically brake the car if you are getting too close to the car in front and alarms to rouse drivers if they are falling asleep at the wheel. They represent a revolution in car safety. ■



Essay

by Peter NUNN

Tokyo's Parking Meters

If you drive in Tokyo, sooner or later you'll come face to face with one of those knotty little day-to-day problems. With space at a premium, the problem is where to park. Sure, Tokyo has its fair share of underground car parks, as well as tower block parking lots and strips of bare tarmac where you simply park and pay. But the piece de resistance has to be the capital's army of infra-red parking meters. These are truly a work of art. For a city hooked on high tech, it seems only appropriate that Tokyo's seemingly humble parking meter should be one of the smartest in the world.

“For a city hooked on high tech, it seems only appropriate that Tokyo's seemingly humble parking meter should be one of the smartest in the world”

There's no guesswork here. The meter is onto you the moment you arrive. It also knows the very second you drive away. If the FBI invented parking meters, this is what they'd be like.

How does it work? Simple, really. Pulling up next to one of these grey, 125 cm meters breaks the infra-red beam, which then sets the digital clock running. You are then invited to put ¥300 into the meter and this gives you one hour. What happens if, say, the ¥300 is not immediately forthcoming? The meter designers have thought of that. A small red “hasn't paid” light burns brightly on the front of the meter to alert the world at large. The designers have also devised another little red light that comes on should you leave your car parked for a fraction longer than 60 minutes.

Pity the parking meter police have no sense of humour. Once your hour's up, the rules say you have to move on. The meter spaces are only available from Monday to Saturday, 9am to 8pm. The meter also accepts ¥100 coins... and ¥100 coins only.

Looking to the future, a little flexibility on the meter front might not be so bad a thing. A Tokyo meter that accepted different coins, that allowed you to park for, say, 5-10 minutes without asking you to cough up ¥300 would be an idea. Who knows, maybe the authorities are already working on just such a concept to make parking in Tokyo just that little bit easier on the soul. It would get my vote.

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