

From Vegetable Farms to Schools

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To let the young generation eat more healthy food, the Council of Agriculture has assisted the New Taipei City Government to establish the Organic Vegetable Supply System, which integrates farm production, logistic supply, and catering service to provide stable supply of their needed food by contract farming. It is expected that schools will then play a part in stretching organic vegetable consumption into students' homes. From September, 2013, New Taipei City Government offered 346,000 students in 280 primary and secondary schools meals made of organic vegetables once a week. In 2014, students will receive GAPs (Good Agricultural Practice certified vegetables four days a week with the purpose of being able to enjoy certified and nutritious lunch every day. This increase in consumption will further drive production, which will encourage more farmers to adopt GAPs production or even organic farming. The idea is to let consumers transform Taiwan's agriculture into a safe and healthy industry.

From vegetable farms to schools, every batch of vegetables can be traced for safety

In order to ensure that safe vegetables are provided in school lunch meals, the COA cooperated with New Taipei City Government to supply the needed vegetables with individual farmers by way of "contract farming." Weekly regular sampling inspections are carried out to check the pesticide residue of contractual plantation, and only those that pass the inspection can be accepted to supply for school meals. In addition, in order to enforce the complete and traceable mechanism of GAPs, the COA will assist New Taipei City Agricultural Products Marketing Co. to incorporate the GAPs traceability function into its current Organic Vegetable Supply and Coordination Management Information System, making it possible for parents to check information on suppliers for every batch of vegetables from production, marketing, distribution to the central kitchen, and finally, to the school.

Direct supply from contractual farms to the table, organic and safe vegetables are superior in quality and quantity

Till the end of 2013, there were 5,951 hectares of certified organic farmlands. Eight distribution firms were matched with 98 organic vegetable farmers producing in an area of 243 hectares. Every week 145 tons of vegetables are distributed to New Taipei City schools. As for the GAP, the total production area by the end of 2013 was 25,649 hectares. Eight GAPs suppliers were matched with 850 contractual farmers producing in an area of 434 hectares. Each week 450 tons of vegetables are supplied to New Taipei City. The contractual farming system ensures that the producers assume responsibility for the quality and safety of their products. Only conscientious farmers can grow healthy and safe vegetables for our next generation.

In addition to New Taipei City, six countries (Yilan County, Taoyuan County, Taichung City, Hsinchu County, Miaoli County, and Pingtung County) have also subsequently adopted organic nutritious lunch meals. By the end of 2013, a total of 511,000 students in 662

primary and secondary schools enjoyed their organic lunch meals at school. Thus, the COA also urges other counties to join the project in order to let the next generation eat more healthy food.

(Data Source: Council of Agriculture)

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