

Policies of Development, Protection and Promotion of New Varieties and Technologies in Japan

Part 3

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Product Specific Policies

(3) Beans

(a) Current situation

While the quality of domestic beans is highly rated by the users, the problem is that their yield is low and sharply fluctuates from year to year. Therefore, stable supply at higher level is strongly desired.

Other expectation by users include higher protein content, lower rate of processing loss, improved suitability for processing, homogeneity of a lot and supply of beans with unique selling points such as locality or functionality.

(b) Basic directions toward creating products with "strengths"

The key is introduction of new varieties with higher and stable yield. However, even when a new variety with such traits exists, it takes time to introduce it because both demand and supply sides need to go through comprehensive evaluation of it and agree on using it.

In order to avoid this difficulty, it is effective to conduct targeted improvement of traditional varieties so that both sides can continue to use the traditional brands (e.g. traditional varieties such as Sachiutaka and Fukuyutaka, with improved pod shattering resistance (lower harvest loss), which was realized in a short period of time due to the use of genetic markers.)

It is also effective to facilitate such efforts by encouraging the set-up of local consortiums to unite relevant stakeholders.

(c) Policy targets

- Increase the acreage of planting new varieties of soybeans by four times (from 6,400ha to 25,600 ha) in the next 10 years.

(4) Vegetables

(a) Current situation

As household consumption of vegetables has been decreasing, commercial demand such as food manufacturing and restaurant consumption now account for more than half of domestic demand for vegetables.

As lower prices are required of vegetables for commercial use, imported vegetables are used by many food manufacturers. In order to respond to lower prices and increase the share of domestic vegetables, it is necessary to reduce production cost through the introduction of new varieties with improved traits and new technologies such as mechanization of the production process and rationalization of the distribution system.

(b) Basic directions toward creating products with "strengths"

- Development of new varieties for meeting diversified commercial demand

In order to supply vegetables with required size, yield and processing suitability and loss rate, it is necessary to develop and disseminate new varieties (e.g. Hokko One onion with low processing loss rate due to its vertically long shape, traditional Akihime napa cabbage with improved disease resistance developed with the use of genetic markers.)

- Reduction of production cost and labor saving through mechanization and introduction of other new technologies (e.g. introduction of cabbage harvester and steel cage containers.)
- Formulation of production areas through branding of vegetables with traditional locality or functionality

(c) Policy targets

- Increase the production of designated vegetables for commercial use (from 815,000t in 2008 to 1,327,000t in 2020.)

(To be continued)

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