



Promoting Policy of Rice for Feeds

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INTRODUCTION

Rice has occupied the position of national food for a long time in Japan, and the Japanese has taken the large part of their carbohydrates from it. Rice has been utilized for human consumption, and only the disposal of it has been used for feeds.

As the consumption of rice is dropping, about 40% of the area of paddy fields cannot be utilized to plant rice for food. In order to improve the utilization of paddy fields, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) is promoting rice farmers to change their planting from rice for food to rice for feeds. The MAFF makes generous support and persuade farmers, staff of local governments and members of local agricultural cooperatives in order to promote planting. The group of the Japan Agricultural Cooperative (JA) also promotes its planting because the decrease in the amount of rice for food means that its price would rise and it contributes to the stability of farmer's management. Then, the payment for rice for feeds was located in the most important countermeasure against the market liberalization caused by the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement.

The payment for rice as fields is generous as we mentioned below in the translation. This payment, however, would be categorized as the amber box under the agreement of the World Trade Organization (WTO) because it strongly induces the expansion of rice production. This fact has not caused any problems yet, but the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has already paid attention¹. We have to keep in mind that this policy could be attacked by overseas countries on behalf of international disciplines.

¹ The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service said that “with MAFF’s strong push to use rice for feed, rice used in compound feed exceeded one million metric tons in MY2014/15 for the first time on record, at the expense of wheat and corn.” (<http://www.fas.usda.gov/data/japan-japan-grain-and-feed-update-october-2015>)

In this article, I will summarize and translate the MAFF's document which was published to explain the recent state and promoting policies of rice for feeds². This translation is not the official publication by the MAFF. I do not translate parts of tables and figures to avoid duplication.

TRANSLATION

Promotion of Rice for Feeds

- The Basic Plan of Food, Agriculture and Rural Area³ which was enacted by the Abe cabinet on 31 March, 2015, stipulates that the government makes efforts to expand the production of rice for feeds to 1.1million tons by 2025. It also clarifies that the government makes necessary support, for example the direct payment for the utilization of paddy fields, in order to achieve the above objective.
- Since 2008 when the support for non-staple food rice⁴ began, the output of it has tended to increase. Between Rice Year (RY) 2014 and 2015, it increased from 71,000 hectares to 125,000 hectares. The rice for feeds, especially, increased from 34,000 hectares to 80,000 hectares centering on *Tohoku* and *Kanto* districts (Table 1). The amount of decrease in rice for food has been made up for by the expansion of non-staple food rice, especially rice for feeds.
- The payment depending on the amount of production was introduced as the incentive towards the practice to improve yield. This ranges from 55,000 yen (yield is below 380kg) to 105,000 yen (above 680kg) per 10are. Additional payments are paid to producers who practice double cropping (15,000 yen), sell their rice straws directly to livestock farmers (12,000 yen) and plant high-yielding varieties (12,000 yen).
- Two types of high-yielding varieties are authorized by the government.
- “High-yielding varieties” which have been invented in order to utilize as feeds and have already been certified as high-yielding by the government's experiments.
- “Special authorized varieties” which directors of the Regional Agricultural Administration Offices (RAAO)⁵ authorize, applies from prefectural governors.

² If you wish to read by original language, refer to the MAFF's website (http://www.maff.go.jp/j/seisan/kokumotu/pdf/meguji_271006_01.pdf).

³ The basic Plan of Food, Agriculture and Rural Area is formulated once every five years, based on the Act of Food, Agriculture and Rural Area which was enacted in 1999. It is a medium-to long-term vision which shows the direction of agricultural policies.

⁴ Non-staple food rice means one which Japanese do not consume by cooking directly, including for flour, feed, whole crop silage, bioethanol and so on.

⁵ The RAAO are local branches of the MAFF which are established at seven regional blocks.

- In order to expand the production and the utilization of rice feeds, regional block meetings at each of the RAAO and promoting organizations at each prefectures (except for Tokyo), has been established in 2014. They are composed of regional governments, public research organizations, agricultural related organizations and organizations related to livestock and feed industries.
- Around 600,000 tons of rice feeds is supplied to livestock farmers and compound feed enterprises now. It is expected that about 4.5million tons of rice feeds could be supplied without bad influences to the physiology of livestock and the quality of product.

Table 1. Trend in the production of non-staple food rice

(thousand ton, thousand hectare)

	RY 2008		RY 2009		RY 2010		RY 2011		RY 2012		RY 2013		RY 2014		RY 2015	
	Planned Output	Planted Area	PO	PA	PO	PA	PO	PA	PO	PA	PO	PA	PO	PA	PO	PA
Sum	12.4	12.3	40.7	18.1	114.9	37.1	228.8	65.6	224.1	68.1	142.5	53.7	210.5	71.1	459.6	125.5
Rice for Flour	0.6	0.1	13.0	2.4	27.8	5.0	40.3	7.3	34.5	6.4	21.1	4.0	18.2	3.4	22.9	4.2
Rice for Feed	8.0	1.4	23.3	4.1	81.2	14.9	183.0	34.0	183.4	34.5	115.4	21.8	178.5	33.9	421.1	79.8
Rice Plant for Whole Crop Silage	-	9.1	-	10.2	-	15.9	-	23.1	-	25.7	-	26.6	-	30.9	-	38.2
Rice for Bioethanol	2.4	0.3	2.3	0.3	2.9	0.4	3.0	0.4	2.8	0.5	2.6	0.4	2.4	0.4	-	-
Rice for Export	0.4	0.1	0.9	0.2	2.2	0.4	1.6	0.3	2.5	0.5	2.8	0.5	6.1	1.1	8.5	1.5
Rice for Sake	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4.4	0.9	7.1	1.4
Others	1.0	1.3	1.1	1.0	0.7	0.5	0.9	0.5	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.5	1.1	0.5	0.0	0.3

Date submitted: March 25, 2016

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: March 25, 2016