



## FFTC Agricultural Policy Platform (FFTC-AP)

Available online at: <http://ap.ffc.agnet.org/index.php>

### **Policy Analysis of Implementing Food and Agricultural Education and Promoting Consumption of Domestic Agricultural Products in Japan**

Wan-Yu Liu<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Forestry, National Chung Hsing University,  
Taichung 402, Taiwan

<sup>2</sup>Innovation and Development Center of Sustainable Agriculture,  
National Chung Hsing University, Taichung 402, Taiwan

E-mail: [wylu@nchu.edu.tw](mailto:wylu@nchu.edu.tw)

Effendi Andoko

International Bachelor Program of Agribusiness,  
National Chung Hsing University, Taiwan

#### **The Policy Content of Implementing Food Agriculture Education in Japan**

In recent years, with the development of Japanese society, the proportion of middle-aged people with metabolic syndrome has been increasing. In addition to the adult population, the problem of children's obesity also needs urgent attention. Therefore, under such a social background, the Basic Act on Food Education was released in 2005. Japan government has hoped to ensure reliable food and provide food education and food hygiene by promoting regulations on dietary education. Therefore, the promotion of children's dietary education has been achieved through the implementation of related experience activities and practices, such as teaching traditional food culture, activating local industry, increasing self-sufficiency rate of food and so on. By doing so, the quality of life and the living standard of economy and society can be improved by changing diet education. Previous works pointed out that the Japanese diet education basically emphasizes that agriculture should be equal to the diet to maintain the stability of demand and supply. The Japanese Cabinet Office has formulated a basic plan for feeding and breeding, which lists the following basic directions: (1) implementing food education in the family, school, and child-care nurseries; (2) committed to improving the dietary habits of each region; and (3) promoting communication between producers and consumers.

The basic concept of the Japanese Basic Act on Food Education are generally as follows:

(1) enhancing the physical and mental health of the people and cultivating rich interpersonal relationships; (2) expressing appreciation to the natural and related persons who provide food; (3) food education must be adjusted to meet geographical characteristics; (4) all nationals should be personally involved in the food production and conditioning process of various experience activities; (5) the traditional food culture should be maintained through the food education, campaign, enabling environmental conservation and crop production to be coordinated, and promoting the activation of the rural fishing village and the improvement of the self-sufficiency rate of grain; (6) the food safety and food stocks have been ensured through the introduction to food education. These ideas also become an important basis for the Japan Agricultural Cooperatives (JA) to set up the agricultural promotion strategies.

The promotion of food and agricultural education in Japan is roughly classified into the following three stages:

- Stage 1: Three kinds of agricultural education should be promoted simultaneously: supporting farmer markets, agricultural schools, and school education. The main places for implementation at this stage are the farmer markets and agricultural schools that the JA set up. The farmer market mainly regulates the relevant food and agricultural education activities periodically; while the agricultural schools draw food/agricultural education as the whole school regulation year. In addition, the JA also adopts the reservation method to support schools to hold workshops on food and agriculture education.
- Stage 2: This stage focuses on the exchange experience and travel experience activities of the food and agricultural education, to assist farmers in providing food materials to schools, and to use the communications among students, consumers, producers, towns, and cities to promote the concept of local production and local consumption (LPLC).
- Stage 3: This stage focuses on cultivating talents in food and agriculture education.

## **The Division of Responsibilities in Implementing Food and Agricultural Education in Japan**

To promote the planned policy on food and agricultural education, the basic plans of promoting food and agricultural education, and related matters, before the end of March 2015, Japan's central government, in accordance with the Basic Act on Food Education, assembled the Food Safety Committee, the Consumer Affairs Agency, the Ministry of Education, Cultural, Sports, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, and other related departments to convene the Food Education Promotion Conference to jointly determine the basic plans for promoting food education and to construct a support system for close cooperation.

Each promotion unit has its own responsible promotion project, and the Food Safety Committee and the Consumer Affairs Agency under the Japan Cabinet Office are mainly committed to promoting food safety. The Ministry of Education, Cultural, Sports, Science, and Technology in charge of the food and agricultural education from kindergarten-level to university-level students, mainly focused on three aspects: life education, food cultural education, and nutrition education. An example of promoting life education for students living ability and life routine education is in the White Paper on Food Education enacted by Japan, which requires people to go to bed early and get up early and maintains the habit of eating breakfast.

The goal of food cultural education is to raise people's understanding of the traditional food culture, including how to use chopsticks correctly, to have proper and elegant dining etiquette, to establish family taste, to pass on the recipe, and to pay attention to the culture of

food and drink. On nutrition education, the Japanese Food Guide Spinning Top and the Japanese Dietary Framework were developed to escape from the domination of the western nutrition and to emphasize the concept of terroir and culture to replace the traditional food pyramid.

The food and agricultural education system, according to the Basic Act on Food Education, is roughly divided into five parts: central government units, local public organizations, food, and agricultural education-related educators, food production related personnel, national, and so on.

The current food and agricultural education in Japan includes five main topics: (1) food education for adolescents; (2) food education for a diversified life (3) food education to build healthy living patterns; (4) food education for cultivating environmental caring concepts; and (5) food education for traditional culture inheritance. In order to achieve the above five objectives, Japan's government particularly emphasizes the supporting measures of the plan, such as: emphasis on the career food education program from children to the high age group; and cooperation between the central and local public groups, educators, agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, and volunteer groups. By integration of government units, across various areas of the hierarchy, a more complete responsibility planning and division of labor is established to facilitate the implementation of the food education programs.

According to Article 9 in the Basic Act on Food Education, the central authorities have the responsibility to set up relevant food and agricultural education strategies and to implement them. The Japan Cabinet Office set up a Food Education Promotion Conference, the main responsibility of which is to develop food and agricultural education-related promotion plans, to consider the important issues of the Food and Agricultural Education Promotion Plan and practical implementation of the measures. Each prefectural government in Japan sets up a Prefectural Food Education Promotion Conference, for formulating prefecture-related food education programs and implementing them. Each municipal government sets up the Municipal Conference on Promoting Ten Education to implement food education.

In Japan, local public organizations focusing on issues related to food and agricultural education, such as the Japan Agricultural Cooperatives, are required to cooperate with the public policy of the central government in accordance with Article 10 of the Basic Act on Food Education, set up autonomous strategies, and implement them. In the production of agricultural products related personnel, including agro-forestry and fishery producers, food-related industries, should be in their own relevant backgrounds to promote the right food education.

According to the Basic Act on Food Education, the relevant personnel should improve their knowledge of food safety, food nutrition and so on, and help to promote their education. Based on Regulation 13 in the Basic Act on Food Education, people (including families, schools, children, kindergartens, various social workers, etc.) must strive to integrate a healthy dietary life into their daily eating habits and actively participate in the relevant dietary education promotion activities.

According to the Basic Act on Food Education, the Japan Cabinet Office organizes the Food Education Promotion Conference, which brings together the representative staff of the units involved in food and agricultural education, including the Prime Minister, the relevant department head (including Chief Cabinet Secretary, Minister of State for Special Missions (Food Safety), Minister of Internal Affairs and Communications, Minister of Justice, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Finance, Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Minister of the Environment, and other aspects), scholars, experts, as

well as the public (Deputy Chairman of Japan Franchise Association, Chairman of Japan Food and Life Association, consultant of JA National Women Organization Association, Secretariat of National Consumer Group Liaison Office, Editor of Life Report Department of Mainichi Newspaper Co., Director of National Institute of Health and Nutrition, President of Japan Dietetic Association, Deputy Chairman of Japan PTA National Council, Chairman of National School Dietetic Association, President of Hattori Nutrition College, Mayor of Iida City in Nagano Prefecture, Chairman of Japan Skills Associations) and so on, a total of 26 people.

According to previous works, taking Qunma Prefecture as an example, the author discussed the members of the organization of the Education Promotion Committee of each prefecture. Taking Qunma Prefecture as an example, the members include:

1. Central government unit: Director (President) of Food Safety Bureau of Qunma Prefecture Government and Manager of Food Safety of Qunma Prefecture Government.
2. Academic unit: Gunma University (College of Education, Medical School), and Takasaki University of Health and Welfare.
3. Medical unit: Qunma Prefecture Dietetic Association, Qunma Prefecture Dietary Life Improvement Promotion Liaison Association, Qunma Prefecture Heart and Blood Vessel Center, Qunma Prefecture Medical Association, Qunma Prefecture Dentist Association, Qunma Prefecture School Dietetic Association.
4. Education unit: Qunma Prefecture Private Kindergarten Association, Qunma Prefecture Primary and Secondary School PTA Federation, Qunma Prefecture Public Kindergarten Chairman Association, Qunma Prefecture School Meal Education Association, Department of Technical and Family Studies of Qunma Prefecture Primary and Secondary School Education Research Institute, Family Department of Qunma Prefecture Senior High School Education Research Association, and Qunma Prefecture School Meal Association.
5. Producer- and consumer-related units: Qunma Prefecture Life Liaison Association, Qunma Prefecture Consumption Cooperatives, Qunma Life School Movement Promotion Association, Qunma Prefecture Auction Market Federation, Qunma Prefecture Catering Living Hygiene Industry Association, Qunma Prefecture Milk Marketing and Agricultural Cooperatives, Qunma Prefecture Milk Promotion Association, Qunma Prefecture Supermarket Association, Qunma Prefecture Agricultural Cooperatives, Qunma Prefecture Headquarter of the National Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives.
6. Related groups: Qunma Prefecture Life Research Group Liaison Agreement Association, Qunma Prefecture Rural Life Consultant Agreement Association, Qunma Prefecture Agricultural Women Network, the Maebashi Area center of Kanto Regional Agricultural Administration Office, Qunma Prefecture Dietetic Culture Research Association, Qunma Prefecture Regional Women Group Federation, Qunma Prefecture Cook Association, Qunma Prefecture Slow Food Association, Qunma Prefecture Conservation Agreement Association.
7. Media unit: Citizen Media Association, *Jomo Shimbun* newspaper, NHK Maebashi TV Station, Qunma FM radio station.

## **Implementation of Food and Agricultural Education Regulations in Japan**

On June 17, 2005, Japan's government announced the Basic Act on Food Education (with 4 chapters and 33 articles), designating the concepts, purposes, planning, and related responsibilities on food education. Its legislative purpose is to implement the 25<sup>th</sup> article of

the Constitution of Japan to regulate the right of national health. Article 1 of the Basic Act on Food Education stated at the outset that the purpose is to cultivate a healthy body as well as mind and a rich personality in the whole life of a national and to achieve a healthy national life and a prosperous society.

In 2006, the Japanese Cabinet Office was based on the Basic Act on Food Education to formulate the 1<sup>st</sup> Food Education Promotion Basic Plan. Since it was implemented, June at each year is regarded as the food education month. In this month, the central government, local government and related organizations organize food education publicity activities further promote food education. During this period, food education is held throughout the prefecture. The 19<sup>th</sup> day of every month is the food education day, on which the prefectures and municipalities will hold various activities of promoting food and agricultural education. Hokkaido, for example, held a nutrition consultation courses on that day, and dietitians respond to a variety of nutritional and dietary counseling issues and distributes promotion brochures; Asahikawa City Food and Life Improvement Agreement Association produced toys for food education, prohibited and promoted them to the media . By the end of March 2015, 47 prefectures in Japan had enacted and implemented the Prefectural Food Promotion Plans. The 1,741 municipalities in Japan (equivalent to townships, county-administrated cities, districts in Taiwan), of which 1,323 (76.7%) had completed the formulation of the promotion of Municipal Education Promotion Plan; 17 prefectures has completed it in 100% of the prefecture-administrated municipalities, another 17 prefectures completed in 75%~100% of the prefecture-administrated municipalities, six prefectures has completed 50%~75%, six prefectures completed 25%~50%, and one prefecture only completed 25% of the prefecture-administrated municipalities. In addition, the number of volunteers involved in the promotion of food education has increased every year, from kindergartens, school, family and other communities.

In Basic Act on Food Education, Articles 1 to 9 are the basic concepts, which clarifies the relevant basic concepts, the duties that relevant units should take, and related measures. Articles 16 to 18 are the regulations of setting up relevant program-driven conference organizations. Starting from Article 20, the countermeasures on relevant food and agricultural education are described. For example, the central government and local public organizations need to promote relevant food and agricultural education in some places like schools in order to help young children set up the right concept of food and agriculture, cultivate appropriate instructors, establish a complete education system, and so on, and to enable people to experience the relevant activities to enhance their knowledge and experience. For producers, the related units are required to establish a bridge of communication with consumers (Article 23), to activate agriculture, forestry, fishery, and husbandry industries, and cooperate with local production lines to strengthen the teaching and experience of production, manufacturing, processing, and other engineering procedures of agricultural, forestry, and fishery products, so that people can actually participate in, and enhance the level of education knowledge related to food and agriculture through these participation experiences.

Japan has formulated and implemented numerous laws on promoting food education, but the main axis is the Basic Act on Food Education. Then, according to the Basic Act on Food Education, the food education is promoted by the Cabinet Office, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare, and other central departments. Local public organizations, educational institutions, etc. are connected and cooperated to implement food and agricultural education in Japan. The Cabinet Secretariat and Cabinet Office Business Amendment was approved in 2015 and began in 2016. The jurisdiction of the Food Education Promotion Conference is changed from the Cabinet Office to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; and this ministry convened the third Food and

Agricultural Education Promotion Basic Plan, and this plan is carried out from 2016-2020.

## **Implementation of Food and Agricultural Education Promotion Plan in Japan**

The Basic Act on Food Education is based on six modern Japanese food problems and is promoted by extension. At present, the problems of Japanese diet include a lack of appreciation towards food, irregular and unhealthy eating life, increasing diseases due to unhealthy habits, decreasing reliability on food safety, a loss of natural traditional diet culture, and increasing distance between producers and consumers.

The basic education plan for food and agricultural education is divided into three periods. The first basic plan of food and agricultural education aims to let the people "know" the education, and focus on how to publicize the concept of food and agricultural education so that people can develop a more correct diet concept. The second basic plan is to make the goal of the promotion as a practice or rehearsal stage, in the hope that the people not only have the right diet concept, but also need to integrate the taught concepts of food and agricultural education into daily life, and to implement the concept of food and agricultural education. The third basic plan aims at expanding the practice: promoting food education for adolescents, food education for diversified cultural life, health, food education for life extension, from production to consumption, understanding the diet cycle, how to reduce the production of food wastes, as well as how to care for the environment and other ideological education part, the traditional diet culture of the inheritance of education and other major projects.

### **Food education for adolescents**

In 2004, Japan amended the "School Education Act" to include the Nutrition Instruction, so that the school dietitians can become qualified teachers, who not only take the management tasks of school meals but also collaborate teaching with the teachers of other relevant subjects, to help promotion of food education. In recent years, because of the increase in the proportion of adolescent obesity in Japan, other undernourished people also accounted for an in negligible proportion. Therefore, the third basic plan of food and agricultural education aims at young people and promotes their diet education, including improvement of eating habits, regular meals, increasing the time to dine with family members, implementation of school meals, and use of local food materials. In order to achieve the above goals, the food and agricultural education at schools is an important task in the promotion plan. The government has pushed for plans to enrich the school's education system. The food and agricultural education and the related changes in Japanese primary and secondary schools have been implemented. In addition to the Basic Act on Food Education, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology set the "School Education Act", "School Feeding Law", and "Learning Guidance Essentials", which provide schools the basis for implementation, including selection of food materials for school meals, the relevant dietary education and teaching, how to teach students to understand the right diet knowledge, in-person visits to the sites of food production, so that students can establish a correct diet concept and healthy living habits through such a process of experience.

The agricultural education experience learning activities in rural areas in Japan can be divided into two types: educational farms and leisure experience. Educational farms are targeted at young children, and provide at least two or more agricultural operations for a given crop for a period of more than two years. The leisure experience takes the adult as the main object, and has various forms, e.g., "Citizen Farm", "Stagnation Garden", the "Agricultural School" established by civic organizations, and so on.

According to the School Feeding Act, since 2005, all public primary and secondary schools administrated by prefectures in Japan have been mandatorily allocated with dietitians. With the allocation of dietitians, the schools take dietitians as the center to proceed the relevant food education curriculum design and related support. Dietitian teachers are required to have "Education Staff Certificate" of "Education Staff License Act" or the dietitian license of "Dietitian Act". The allocation status of dietitian teachers in public primary and secondary schools has been increasing. Japan's diet education has been progressing in a step-by-step manner, taking into account the implementation level. As a result, the number of dietitian teachers rose from 34 in 2005 to 5,356 in 2015, which shows the effectiveness of agricultural education in Japan. The government can also use these statistical standards to conduct regular policy reviews and policy adjustments. If there is no effective part, timely corresponding review and promotion can be made to increase the efficiency of policy implementation.

According to the director of Health and Physical Education Section of Ibaraki Prefecture, Ibaraki Prefecture is the largest agricultural prefecture in Japan excluding Hokkaido. In Ibaraki, 92% of the primary schools and 70% of the secondary schools have set up food and agricultural education. The dietitians make use of the lunch period to explain the nutrition components of the food materials used for lunch and the production origin, to directly affect students on the concept of food and agricultural education.

Japanese Cabinet Office also promotes food and agricultural education and produces flyers divided into general flyers and children flyers. From the government aspect, the officers and the relevant committee members carry out the food education promotion conference, further formulate and implement the food education basic plan, and then issue the plan to the relevant local government for implementation. Local public organizations hold the prefectural food education promotion meetings to formulate and implement the food education basic plan, and the lower-level municipalities hold the municipal meeting to formulate the municipality food education plan, and then issue the plan to the municipalities for implementation. The stakeholders and groups are involved in the stakeholders on child protection, education/conservation/medical/health, agriculture/forestry/fishery/husbandry, food-related enterprises, and various groups. On the eating status of Japanese nationals, the ratio of pupils that are accustomed to skipping breakfast gradually increases; the adults at the age of 20-30 years have the largest ratio among adults that do not eat breakfast. The above problems faced by Japan imply the importance of food and agricultural education.

In the promotion of agricultural education for children, in addition to the above-mentioned promotion of the Division of Labor, there are illustrations to help children understand the normal meals, cherish food, have a balanced diet, know the importance of choice of healthy ingredients, and that if it does not comply with the above dietary principles, it will lead to health problems and symptoms, in order to publicize the importance of agricultural education. It is also stated that the aim of the Agricultural education program is to be able to balance the children dietary.

According to the director of the Consumer Administrative Food Education Section of the Consumer Security Bureau of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, the Japan government intends to target out-eaters as the third goal of food education. The young people in Japan have a high percentage to be out-eaters, and hence the Japan government mainly hopes that the industry serving out-eaters and the catering industry to join the agricultural education, allows the industry to make various combinations of food, for example, the cereals providing starch, the staple food providing protein, and the vegetables providing fibers. The food provided should include the main course, staple food, and side dishes so that consumers can more easily achieve food balance.

## **The conversation between producers and consumers**

Conversations between producers and consumers start from production to consumption, understanding the diet cycle, how to reduce the production of food wastes, and how to care about the environment and another ideological education part of agriculture. In 1997, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology set up the Educational Reform Plan to formally integrate the agricultural, mountain, and fishing villages into the learning venues of food education and began to pay attention to children and primary and secondary school natural experience activities. Such activities will be integrated into relevant agricultural education and teaching.

In 2002, the Japanese Cabinet Office, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and Ministry of the Environment jointly formed the program of symbiosis and convection (*Kyosei to Tairyu*) among cities and agricultural, mountain, fishing villages, and cooperated with local public groups to jointly hold the experiences of agricultural, mountain, and fishing villages as well as green leisure tourism, which takes municipalities as the center to promote and create recreational and leisure villages and to strengthen the rural reception system.

Green leisure tourism in Japan was becoming more mature and diverse. There were activities such as the implementation of symbiosis among cities and agricultural, mountain, and fishing village. As well exchange program, through the urban residents and farmers in the rural fishing village. It educated consumers to understand the sources of agricultural products and further trust in food safety. In addition, in 2008, the “Studying Agriculture in Agricultural, Mountain, and Fishing Villages” exchange program allows primary school students to have long-term accommodation experience activities to stay in the agricultural, mountain, and fishing villages. Through in-person participation, primary school students can understand the life of the agricultural, mountain, and fishing villages, and learn to cooperate, form an independent judgment, and have social abilities to deepen students’ understanding of the agricultural, forestry, and fishing industry.

## **Heritage education for traditional food culture**

In order to allow the next generation to inherit the traditional diet as well as the important food culture, Japan strengthens the national consciousness of traditional food and drink by local public group volunteers, schools, and the full-time cooking courses. Volunteers are recruited from the local communities in the rural education sector. The aim is to assist in the preservation and transmission of the traditional food culture through volunteer activities, in the hope that the original culture (e.g., the large celebrations of the relevant annual festivals, and the fundraising and activities hosting assisted by volunteers and local groups) can be passed on.

The school side will be accompanied by the seasons and festivals of various places. There are different food in schools, like New Year's food, rice cakes, and vegetable porridge; red bean dumplings to greet the gods; adzuki-bean porridge used for the Lantern Festival; the *mame-maki* used for the day before welcoming the spring; vinegar rice, clam soup, white wine, and diamond cake used for Daughter Festival and Peach Blossom Festival; sweet tea and glutinous rice dumplings to enjoy the flower blossom; vegetarian food, glutinous rice dumplings, noodles, and dessert used for the Bon Festival; chestnut rice used in Double Ninth Festival; Soba noodles in New Year's Eve. The special traditional dietary culture of these festivals is also presented in the school's lunch so that the students can learn the traditional

culture through different school meals and feel the special atmosphere of celebration or festivals.

The local public welfare associations, such as the Japanese Chef Association, also promote the popularization of food education activities in various regions, such as the kitchen of parent-child cuisine, or the cook classroom activities, and hope that the relationship between family members can be strengthened by arranging the activities of parent-child joint cuisine. They can also take care of their elders and learn traditional skills, through such activities to pass them on to the next generation. Parents and children can not only experience the process of cooking but also learn how to make healthy meals in the process and cook the food ingredients in a healthy way. By doing so, the traditional food heritage can be inspiring to them and the concept of “food origin elimination” can be promoted.

### **Promotion of the concept of local production and local consumption**

In ensuring the stability of the food supply, the Japan government tries to improve consumer safety and comfort to eat, promote the rural six-level industrialization policy, and establish food and agricultural cooperative relations. In order to ensure safety and ease of eating, the government measures include improving food safety. By establishing and enforcing a food security supply system, such as expanding the origin of processed food and raw materials to ensure consumers' reliability to food and strengthening quarantine and prevention systems for animal and plant imports.

The establishment of a cooperative relationship between food and agriculture includes promoting the food education, enhancing the cooperative relationship between local production and local consumption (LPLC) and agriculture/commerce/industry, promoting the function of the food industry, strengthening the constitution and expanding the overseas market, and promoting the national movement of food self-sufficiency rate. On stabilizing the food supply, in response to the increased risk of international food supply and demand, the Japan government has taken countermeasures including establishing risk countermeasures in various supply stages of the food chain, promoting overseas agricultural investments, contributing to the global food stability guarantee, stabilizing the supply and efficient use of fertilizers.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan, due to the Japanese's concern for environmental issues, consumers' awareness of food safety, and consumers' distrust of food safety, the Japanese government attempts to promote mutual understanding between consumers and producers through the LPLC activities. In the past, the Japan Agricultural Cooperatives (JA) mainly adopted the "common marketing model of agricultural products", which adopts the methods of mass production and mass marketing to supply agricultural products to wholesale markets. However, in recent years, this model has been gradually transformed as direct supplying products from producers to large-scale retailers such as supermarkets and hypermarkets, or cooperated with the LPLC activities to deliver the agricultural products directly to the "markets of the direct sales from production place" and "farmer's markets" of the JA for sales, to create a mutually trusted consumer environment. Using local agricultural products to supply local primary and secondary schools as students' breakfast or lunch ingredients can expand the market of domestic agricultural products.

On February 28, 2006, the Japanese government held a public hearing on the promotion of the LPLC in which experts and scholars in various industries were invited to give talks and discussion on the relationship between LPLC and agriculture, culture, economy, food education, food security, and Japan's future development, so that the public can understand the reason why the government promotes LPLC. At the same time, the participants with the

outstanding performance of hosting the LPLC activities were praised and awarded publicly. Thereafter, since 2008, the "LPLC professionals" have been selected by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries of Japan annually. In addition to publicly praising them, the concrete methods and contributions of their executing LPLC activities are promoted.

The policy content of Japan government's promotion of LPLC includes: (1) directly selling agricultural products to direct sellers (outright trafficking); (2) utilizing the agricultural products and assisting in the development and production of the processed products; (3) increasing the ratio of school lunches and company restaurants in using local agricultural products; and (4) strengthening communication with local consumers and holding agricultural experience activities.

The relevant policy bases includes: (1) food, agriculture, rural basic plan in March 2010; (2) six level industrialization (the law on how agricultural, forestry and fisheries activate local resources to open new ventures and promote the utilization of local agricultural products) in December 2010; (3) the basic policy of promoting the utilization of local agricultural products in March 2011; and (4) the local resources utilized by agriculture, forestry and fisheries, to create new ventures and promote the use of local agricultural products in March 2011.

In addition, the central government of Japan and the local governments jointly promoted the LPLC activities and formulated regional LPLC promotion projects. Among them, some of the tourism industries are combined with the LPLC and leisure agriculture and integrate LPLC activities into the activity schedule of bed and breakfasts.

In 2004, the Japan government carried out a survey on the status of implementing "LPLC" of agricultural products. According to this survey, the number of direct sellers in Japan was about 2,982 in 2014, of which 37% belong to JA, 11.8% for JA's members, 16.6% for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector, and 34.6% for other groups. On the residence place of buyers, the residents in the municipalities of direct sellers and the adjacent municipalities accounted for about 70%, the general passenger and tourists accounted for about 30%. 10,000 to 50,000 is the largest number of people buying products in direct sellers in one year, about 30.8%, followed by 10,000 people who accounted for about 28.4%, five million to 100,000 people about 17.3%, 10 million to 200,000 people about 13.9%, 20 million to 400,000 people about 7.2%, and 40 million people above accounted for 2.4%.

In the processing plant of agricultural products, the number of national processing plants in Japan was about 1,686 in 2004, and the number of plant respondents surveyed was 1,107, of which JA accounted for 56.3%, farmers or legal persons accounted for 11.8%, and agricultural enterprises outside the farm accounted for 31.9%. Average annual sales of processing plants are about 3.13 billion yen.

On the local agricultural products used by primary and secondary schools (school meal), the proportion of vegetables account for 87.9%, which is the highest of total use, rice accounted for 59.6%, which is the second highest, the fruit category accounts for 46.4%, ground yam accounted for 43.9%, and milk, dairy products, eggs, etc. accounted for 27%.

On the buyers of local agricultural products, the buyers related to school meals accounted for 47.2%, the JA accounted for 43.2%, general retailers accounted for 39%, and other farmers accounted for 38.7%.

The Japan government believes that the LPLC activities must be based on mutual understanding and trust of the relevant units, and all units should cooperate on matters including:

1. Producers should provide fresh, safe, reassuring agricultural products that meet consumers' diversified needs. In addition to engaging in production, the agricultural producers also convey value to consumers to shorten the distance between "eating" and "agriculture".

2. Consumers can communicate with producers to understand the production process of agricultural products and the distribution process. Consumers not only buy the agricultural products that are produced locally but also need to have the ability to distinguish the freshness or quality of agricultural products, so the citizen farms or the experience farms are very important.
3. In school meals, local agricultural products should be used as much as possible, and the menu should be designed in harmony with local food.
4. Urban residents are less likely to buy local agricultural produce and should take the time to purchase them from direct sellers, and to pay attention to seasonal agricultural products, contributing to the promotion of regional agriculture.
5. From the aspect of marketing, agricultural products may not have even quality, but have its value and function for a healthy diet life and the inheritance of regional culture. Therefore, the marketing operators should make every effort to assist local agricultural producers to convey the value of local agricultural products to consumers, in order to shorten the distance between consumption and agriculture and to strengthen the marking of origin places or promote the characteristics of local agricultural products.
6. In order to promote "place of origin", the producers, consumers, individuals, JA, and administrative units need to establish communication channels and cooperate with each other. The administrative units of the government authorities should support the efforts of producers, consumers and logistics operators in LPLC, in order to effectively improve the effects of LPLC activities.

Date submitted: Aug. 8, 2018

Reviewed, edited and uploaded: Oct. 30, 2018