

Recreation project for Fukushima children

This project has been financed partly by the donations received from co-operatives worldwide through the "Japan Disaster Recovery Fund" launched by ICA.

After the accident at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, parents and children in Fukushima have been living under great anxiety because of radiation fears, and many parents do not allow their children stay outside.

Under this project children including preschool are taken out for recreation during the weekends and school vacations (picture above).

This provides children with a chance to play freely outside and parents with the chance to relieve stress and fatigue.

The School Library 'GENKI' Project

The tsunami-attacked schools lost their school library and this project is to raise funds for the renovation or commissioning of new school library for the schools.

The Cooperative Development Foundation (USA) donated towards the recovery goal of Japanese Consumer Co-ops and this donation is being used as part of the funds for the project.

The photograph below shows JCCU Board Member, Ms. Ogura Hisako (left) presenting a note of the amount to Ootsuchi North Elementary School.



Earthquake Relief Fund

Your donation has made a difference

Just after the tragic earthquake on March 11 2011, JCCU launched a fundraising campaign with its member co-ops to assist the affected co-ops in the disaster areas.

The ICA President Dame Pauline Green also launched a Global Appeal for funds for the victims of the Earthquake and Tsunami.

During the period of the fundraising, co-operatives worldwide extended contribution through ICA. Official report has been given during the ICA GA in Cancun last November.

Besides that, JCCU acknowledges contributions from Singapore National Co-operative Federation and iCOOP Korea to the disaster victims and from Coop Italy Nordest designated donation to Miyagi Co-op in the disaster-hit area.

We greatly appreciate the generosity and cooperation of those who have supported us, as well as the dedication and leadership of the ICA President, Dame Pauline Green for the institution of the Global Appeal for funds.

Although JCCU fundraising campaign has ended, the reconstruction of the affected region will take years.

Meanwhile more than ten thousand people are still living at evacuation temporary housing and thousands of people have evacuated because of radiation problems caused by the Fukushima Dai-ichi Nuclear Plant.

Your charity drive has encouraged the affected co-ops to take further actions to support the victims and JCCU hopes that the co-ops and the victims will return to normal life as early as possible.

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Once again, thank you very much for your support and dedication to helping those in need in Japan. JCCU continues to show interest in supporting the longer-term recovery and reconstruction process of consumer co-ops in Japan.

Amount of contribution:

The total amount of the contribution is 37.8 million JPY, which is equivalent to about US\$476,000.

The following is a list of projects funded by the donation.

1. Repair work on earthquake damaged Iwate Co-op Head Office.
2. Half payment of decontamination apparatus purchased by Co-op Fukushima.
3. Funding of Fukushima Children Recreation Project.
4. The School Library 'GENKI' Project.
5. Purchase of Food Radiation Meter.
6. Repair work on earthquake damaged Miyagi Co-op's "Aitopia" members meeting room.



The above billboard (in Japanese) explains that ICA's donation was used to repair the earthquake damaged Iwate Co-op Head Office.

Co-operative theory course

To provide the opportunities for young people to learn about co-operative and to get them inspired about co-operative model of business in line with International Year of Co-operatives, the IYC National Committee organized co-operative lectures at a number of universities in Japan.

At the Faculty of Humanities in University of Ibaraki three days lectures were given by Mr. Toyokuni KAKURAI, Chairperson of the Ibaraki Prefectural Central Union of Agricultural Co-ops and Mr. Yoichi SATO, the chairperson of the Consumer Co-op Federation under the title "Co-operative Theory" to the second year students.

The lecture emphasized the role of cooperatives in economic and social development and the basic definition of co-operative, that co-operative is a voluntary organization of people gathered for a common purpose.

The course will be run 15 times throughout the year until March 31 2013.

At each course the agricultural cooperative union and the consumer co-ops will dispatch lecturers.

Inspection of store outlet is also performed together with a tour of farmer 's market.

A report is submitted at the end of a school year, and two units can be acquired.

The picture below shows the signing of MOU for the commencement of the course at the University of Ibaraki. In all the course has been organized in 6 universities in Japan.



IYC 2012 Round-up activities

With less than 3 months to do, there are many IYC events and activities taken place on national and prefectural levels.

On September 19, the Nagano Prefectural IYC Committee organized a festival that attracted 12,000 participants including co-op stakeholders and the general public.

This festival is part of the activities intending to raise co-ops visibility in the region.

The festival brought together co-operative sectors in the region to demonstrate their partnership and appeal to residents about the significance of co-operatives in the region.

Upon the opening of the festival, followed by performance of 'Taiko' drums (Japanese traditional drums), the festival received messages from three dignitaries including Mr. Ryuichi Harayama the Director of Planning, Nagano Prefecture who is also the acting Mayor.

During the festival an award ceremony was held in which JA Azumi was awarded the "Award of Excellence" following the "Community Contribution Contest" organized by the IYC National Committee.

There were also performance of singing and dancing by the executives, regular employees and co-operative stakeholders in the prefecture in addition to various exhibitions such as sample and sales of special products from Nagano including processed food, vegetables and fruits.

There was also a corner for health check organized by the Health and Welfare Co-op.

One of the IYC legacies seen clearly so far is the bringing together co-operative sectors across Japan particularly at the local level through IYC events and symposiums.



12,000 participants gathered for the festival



'Taiko' performance

Co-operative Contribution to the Community Contest

As part of the activities to commemorate the International Year of Co-operatives, the IYC National Committee organized a contest under the title "Co-operative Contribution to the Community Contest".

The purpose of the contest was to collect a wide range of various co-operative activities, put them together and publish through various means to enhance the visibility of co-op as demanded under IYC2012.

The contest was opened to the general public and received 215 applications from 122 organizations.

Out of the number of applications the committee selected eight.

On July 18, 2012 at the 90th commemoration of the International Day of Co-operative held in Tokyo, the "Co-operative contribution to the community contest" award ceremony was performed.

The eight winning organizations presented their work to an audience of about 1,000.

Out of the eight winners four were from the consumer co-operatives.



Contest award ceremony

Local Revitalization Project by Co-op Okinawa

In order to support the independence of food in the Okinawa prefecture, Co-op Okinawa in collaboration with the industries in eleven municipalities such as the fisheries, the agriculture and others took advantage of local produce as raw materials for product development.

Since the commencement of production 26 items have been developed totaling 500 million JPY, which has a great impact on the economy of the region.

Taking advantage of this project, the network between producers, the chamber of commerce, the government and consumers have been established in the region.

Part of the proceeds realized in this business is used to support education, making life worthy for the elderly, tree planting and part to solve problems prevailing in the region.



Miyagi Food & Reconstruction Project Network

Miyagi Co-op established this network on July 2011 with the co-operation of farmers, fishermen and employees of the food industry in Miyagi Prefecture to create a business chance for the area after the area was devastated by the earthquake and tsunami. It has more than 182 supporter organizations.



Project example, bean harvesting

Improving Co-op's visibility through community contributions

Japanese consumer co-ops have been making communities safer and healthier places to live for years. With this year's theme of increasing co-ops visibility under the 2012 IYC, co-ops are impacting on their communities, raising awareness with members and the general public about the indispensability of co-ops in the society.

Concluding "Watching Agreement" with Local Governments

Some of the recent activities include "Community watching agreement" with the local government.

JCCU is utilizing the expertise of home delivery business in particular to develop various projects that incorporate the perspectives of welfare to solve actual situation in each region in line with the contents of the agreement with the local government.

Currently 23 consumer co-ops are participating in this program with the service serving as a security checking and watching system for the users.

If co-op delivery staff notices any abnormalities with any of the users during delivery he or she will contact the user's emergency number registered in advance with the local government.

As of July 2012, co-op is watching a total of 59 municipalities in the country.

Co-op hopes to strengthen ties within the community through communication with members to reduce isolation of elderly.

Meal Delivery Service

As part of co-op's life support and welfare activities, a new business model that provides total management and support for home delivery meal operations, ranging from menu ordering to processing and delivery has started.

The service is mainly for the elderly who live alone.

Co-op Yamaguchi first started the 'Dinner Delivery' service in June 2007 but now the number of co-ops engaged in the service have expanded to 38 in 34 municipalities with daily delivery of 51,000 meals nationwide as of October 1, 2012.

Five days a week from Monday to Friday, several kinds of services such as "lunch box course" and "side dish course" are available in the price range of 500-600 yen per meal.

In order to expand the number of users, co-op carefully considers the salt and calories, and the revision of menu from time to time.

Mobile Shops

A new business (moving shops) is being promoted by consumer co-ops nationwide for people who live in areas of inconvenience shopping as well as families with small children and also the elderly who for some reason cannot go out for shopping.

The first moving shop was started by Fukui Prefectural Co-operative in October 2009.

The main feature of the service is that the route and time is decided in advance. Varieties of assortments including vegetables, fresh produce, fish, and meat products are available based on users request.

The service domain include not only the sparsely populated areas, but also in the cities with shopping difficulties. By this co-op is exerting its influence on responding to the needs of a greater majority of members nationwide.

This service is being provided in 16 municipalities with the participation of 17 co-ops and total use of 77 cars/vans as of September 11, 2012.

Co-ops in the affected areas of the Great East Japan Earthquake, are using this service to extend help to members, particularly earthquake and tsunami victims still living in temporary housing.

Operating of mobile shops are also responsible for regeneration of the local community".



Scene of members buying from a mobile shop



Toyota Co-op moving shop (Meglia Van)

ICA-AP Regional Assembly, Kobe-Japan.

The 10th ICA-AP Regional Assembly will be held in Kobe, Japan from November 26-30 at the Kobe International Conference Center.

About 260 co-operators from 18 countries have so far registered to attend the meetings.

The tentative program of the meetings is summarized below:

The major events on 26th include ICA-AP Regional Board Meeting, Agriculture and Research committee meetings and the Women's Forum and Committee Meeting.

On 27th, there would be seminar on the promotion of co-op tourism and consumer co-op meeting.

Another exciting event on the day would be the women's Exchange meeting.

On 28th, the joint opening ceremony of Co-op Forum/General assembly would be held.

The meeting will receive greetings from the Government representative, the Governor of Hyogo Prefecture and the Mayor of Kobe.

It would be followed by the 7th co-operative forum with the theme "The Role of Co-operatives in Disaster times".

The Regional Assembly itself would be held on 29th. The meeting would give the update of IYC activities and impressions. It would consider the kind of legacy IYC might be and the role of co-op to facilitate IYC after Dec 31st.

Registration of participants and hotel reservations have been completed.

We look forward to meeting all participants in Kobe late November.

Wishing you a safe journey and a fruitful meeting.

News in Brief

Radioactive cesium was not detected in about 99% of household meals according to the survey conducted by JCCU

The Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) has released the latest update of survey regarding the level of contamination by cesium in daily home diet.

From 2011, JCCU has been conducting investigation on the "radioactive material intake from domestic meal" and the results for the first half of the fiscal 2012 (May 28 to September 25) has been summarized.

Although the research zone in 2012 (18 prefectures) is the same as 2011, in order to see the actual condition in detail, the total number of meals (from Tohoku to Kanto) was increased from the previous 250 to 334.

The two-day meals from each household (total of 6 meals and between-meal snack) is made into one sample, mixed altogether and examined for cesium levels using a germanium semiconductor detector.

The detection limit for the measurement of cesium 134, cesium 137, potassium 40 and iodine 131 was 1Bq/kg.

Based on this reference value only iodine 131 was found to exceed the limit while the rest fell below.

JCCU, therefore, concludes that during the period of the investigation, 99%, representing 331 out of the 334 household meals collected for the investigation did not contain radioactive substances beyond the detection limit.

The three meal samples in which the value exceeded 1Bq/kg were from Fukushima (2) and Miyagi (1).

It can be recalled that during the investigation in 2011, 11 samples out of 250 were detected to contain radioactive substances more than 1Bq/kg.

In this present investigation the number of cases and the detection rate are lower than the previous results.

Moreover, the highest value detected in 2011 (11.7Bq/kg) has reduced sharply to 3.2Bq/kg in this period of investigation.

JCCU assumes that if the family or someone continues to eat the same meal as the sample of the three households in which radioactive cesium was detected to be more than 1Bq/kg for a year, their internal exposure dose from the meal is presumed to be between 0.019mSv - 0.047mSv which is also less than 0.14mSv obtained in 2011.

Reference to the standard value (annual maximum permissible dose of 1mSv), enforced in April this year, it is evident from this survey that the estimated internal exposure dose from the meal is between 1.9% to 4.7% which is significantly less than the permissible dose regulated by the Japanese Government.

Even-though all the meal samples were detected to contain radioactive potassium the value was between 10-48Bq/kg, which is equivalent to one year internal exposure dose of 0.040mSv - 0.32mSv. This result is almost same as the previous investigation.

JCCU in collaboration with its primary co-ops would continue this investigation to fully comprehend the situation and disseminate the right information to members and the general public.

JCCU hopes that through this investigation people's anxiety about food products especially from Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures would cease and that the problem of radioactive material in food be calmed down based on this scientific evidence rather than personal emotional argument.

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