

## ICA President, Dame Pauline Green visits Japan

The United Nations declared 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives as a means to increase awareness of co-operatives and to promote its growth. As an opportunity to consider future activities (post-IYC), a lecture was organized on June 21, 2013 by the Japan Cooperative Insurance Association (JCIA), which was attended by representatives of ICA and ICMIF (International Cooperative & Mutual Insurance Fed.). There were a total of 93 attendants from JCIA member organizations and employees as well as from co-operative affiliates.

During the session, the ICA President Dame Pauline Green discussed the ICA Blueprint for a cooperative decade and what local co-ops can do to address the issues in the blueprint over the next ten years. The ICMIF Chief Executive, Shaun Tarbuck spoke about the latest trends in cooperative mutual insurance organizations in the world.



Earlier on Dame Pauline Green had met the JCCU President, ASADA Katsumi and Mr. BANZAI Akira, Chairperson JA-ZENCHU for some exchanges regarding ICA GM in South Africa and the Global Leadership Circle.



## The 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual General Assembly of JCCU held

On June 14<sup>th</sup> 2013, the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) held its 63<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly in Tokyo.

668 registered representatives attended the general meeting (449 in person, 9 by proxy, and 206 by document).

The meeting was honored to receive congratulatory messages from many dignitaries including Dame Pauline Green, the President of ICA, Mr. INOUE Masahiro, Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW), and Mr. BANZAI Akira Chairperson, JA-ZENCHU (Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives).

At the meeting, all the six bills including "the Co-op nationwide 12<sup>th</sup> three-year plan", the 2012 business report and the 2013 business plan and budget were passed by a majority vote.

Upon opening, the President of JCCU ASADA Katsumi offered his sympathy to the people affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, and mentioned that the living conditions of the affected areas is still severe and requires the continued support from all people including the government to deal with the situation.

He mentioned that in 2012, the value of co-ops was confirmed once again through the co-op nationwide support for the reconstruction of the disaster areas and the launch of the International Year of Cooperatives.

In conclusion to his address, he called on co-ops across the country to join forces to fulfill the visions for 2020 and to continue to extend support to the victims of the earthquake disaster.

Apart from that, there was a constructive discussion in regards to a wide range of themes including reconstruction aid, peace efforts, activities to strengthen business management, and the strengthening of business solidarity.

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Opening Address by ASADA Katsumi



Mr. INOUE Masahiro's congratulatory message



Appointed New Managements:

(R-L) TAI Shuuji (Vice President); SHIMADA Hiroyuki (MD/CEO) who replaces YANO Kazuhiro and WADA Toshiaki (MD) who replaces HAGA Tadashi.

## Miyagi Co-op starts money lending business

Miyagi Co-op with its headquarters in Sendai will begin to provide loans mainly for members who carry multiple debts.

The loans being offered will have an annual interest rate of 9% and maximum loan limit of 3 million yen.

After approval by the Miyagi prefecture local government is given, business is planned to start on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

Miyagi Co-op has been considering this plan from last year, and at the representative general meeting on June 12<sup>th</sup>, the plan was approved.

Information desks, run by the life support department, will be opened in Sendai's Miyagino ward.

Five advisors will conduct hearing on loan applicants' situation and offer advice.

If the applicant is found to be capable of repayment, loan application will be accepted.

Advice at information desks will be free, and offered to non-members as well.

However, in order to receive a loan, one must become a member.

Repayment can take place during a time frame of up to 10 years of 12 payments per year. About 630 loan cases are anticipated this year.

Miyagi Co-op is considering the prospect of securing the loan capital to issue bonds in order to answer to the expectations of the many people in Japan who are currently experiencing troubling times.

The money lending business is part of Miyagi Co-ops social effort to provide security to the people thus leading to the realization of a society where smiles abound.

## Mr. INOUE Masahiro, MHLW, interview about Co-op



Mr. INOUE Masahiro  
Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW)

**Q1.** What do you think about the role of co-op in Japanese society?

**A1.** Consumer Co-operative develops the real consumer-oriented goods and service by the power of citizens' cooperation. Consumer Co-operative contributes to increasing a quality of life which only private sector cannot do.

**Q2.** What advancement have you seen in Co-op this year?

**A2.** MHLW has been discussing with JCCU on some topics regarding changes in social conditions surrounding co-ops and related issues concerning members' needs. Such discussions led to some changes in the Consumers' Livelihood Co-operative Society Law, which allows co-ops to demonstrate its role.

**Q3.** How do you rate the effort of Co-ops during the 2012 International Year of Co-operatives?

**A3.** It seems that cooperation among co-operatives had not been advanced sufficiently in Japan partly because each co-op sector is controlled by different regulation. However, IYC gave a good opportunity to facilitate communication and collaboration among co-operative sectors.

The Japanese government also informed the public of the importance of co-operative to increase its visibility.

I think it is important to continue the effort of increasing co-op visibility through cooperation of co-ops nationwide.

**Q4.** What do you expect from Co-op in the future?

**A4.** With regards to the changing social structure and reducing interaction among people in the community, I expect consumer co-operative, as a mutual organization, to implement schemes that would strengthen bonds between people and solve various social challenges through its business and activity.

**Q5.** What kind of support do you think the government would like to carry out from now on for the development of co-op?

**A5.** The sound operation and management is important for co-op to play its role and develop its business. MHLW intends to set the rules, which respond the changes in social conditions, and to implement adequate supervision based on communication with the co-op sector.

## Fukushima Consumers' Co-op Union received commendation for Superior Consumer Support from the Prime Minister

The commendation for superior customer service is publicly awarded to an individual, a group, or a team, which has achieved a remarkable achievement. Awarding such achievements progresses and protects the customers' interests, thus this commendation is awarded annually.

In 2013, Fukushima Consumers' Co-operative Union assisted in "Fukushima's children health preservation project" and "Soil Screening Project" and received the Prime Minister's Commendation. The commendation ceremony occurred on May 27<sup>th</sup> at the Prime Minister's official residence.

Besides Fukushima Consumers' Co-operative Union winning the Prime Minister's commendation for superior consumer support, other co-ops also received similar awards.

The Cabinet Office Minister Extraordinary Award went to Consumers' Co-operative Green Co-op Kumamoto.

The "Best Consumer Supporter Chapter" award went to both Ishikawa Consumers' Co-operative Union and Wakayama Consumers' Co-operative Union.



From left: Anan- Secretary General, Consumer Affairs Agency, Kumagai- Chairman and Sato Managing Director, Fukushima Consumer Co-op Union



## Co-op Kobe elects new chairman of board of directors

Co-op Kobe, the third largest consumer co-operative in Japan elected a new chairman of the board of directors at the normal board of directors meeting held on June 22, 2013. The new chairman in the person of Mr. YAMAGUCHI Kazufumi (71) was chosen to succeed the previous chairman, Mr. SAKURAI Kenichi who resigned on account of his age.

Mr. Sakurai was a former official of the Ministry of Trade and Industry (currently the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry) and later took on appointment as the deputy chairman of Co-op Kobe's Co-operative college until June of 2007 when he was appointed as the Chairman of Co-op Kobe.

Mr. Sakurai supported the founding principles of Co-ops as well as supporting the movement to help victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake. He also led the merger of Osaka North Co-op and Co-op Kobe in April of 2011.

Mr. Yamaguchi came from Kobe's newspaper company, and in 2007 he assumed office as the director of Co-op Kobe. He worked as Executive Director of an NPO in Kobe, which support issues in relation to community development.

Mr. Yamaguchi commented "Co-op Kobe's present condition is severe, but the staff carry the future prospects so the organization can continue supplying goods and services for the sake of the members."



YAMAGUCHI Kazufumi

## Consumer Co-operative U-Co-op opens a new store

On May 29, U-Co-op opened a new store in Fujisawa city in Kanagawa Prefecture. The store, which has 1,551 square meters floor space and a parking space for 133 cars and 121 bicycles, will continue to offer products for many years to come to help the lives of local residents. Business hours are from 9:00 to 22:00.

The store named "Cucina" is an Italian word meaning my kitchen. The store is likened to a kitchen with an emphasis on the provision of taste and freshness to serve the needs of members.

### Store features:

The store aims at serving members with a heart and remains unique in provision of wide range of rich assortments including enhanced side dishes and fresh fruits and vegetables with reasonable price. Moreover, the store will continue to reach members with life supporting messages and information to let members feel the sense of excitement in shopping with co-op.

The store has rooms for tenants who operate baby and children's products, bakery, cleaning, and English conversation school.

The store is built based on eco-store concept to be environmentally friendly.



The store has been installed with solar panels for power generation, which supplement power supply in the store. In addition, it is equipped with high efficiency light reflector to improve illumination intensity in the store as well as using lots of glass windows that allow the passage of natural light to enhance store illumination.

The store employs energy savings measures by adopting the scroll inverter refrigerator in refrigeration equipment, and also the use of LED lighting for the reduction of power consumption.

In the fiscal 2013 the store targets about 650,000 customers with expected turnover of about 1.4 billion yen.

## Launch of "CO·OP Sefta NEXT"

JCCU will release on July 1, 2013, a new powder detergent "CO·OP Sefta NEXT" having detergency at low doses (10g per 30L water) that can drop dirt well with one rinse.

In general, washing powder detergent has higher cleaning power than the liquid type, however, it is not the popular "one rinse" type of detergent.

The new release "CO·OP Sefta NEXT", is in response to members request for a new washing powder which has "higher detergency" and capable of removing dirt in "one rinse" even in small quantity.

Three main features of "CO·OP Sefta NEXT"

### High detergency:

Generally most of the detergents in the market use between 20-25g per 30L water, however by adopting cleaning ingredient MES (alpha-sulfo fatty acid methyl ester sodium) CO·OP Sefta NEXT uses only 10g per 30L water and still has good washing effect of dropping dirt easily.

### One Rinse is enough:

With the combination of selected surfactant one rinse is enough. By this washing time can be shortened as well as saving energy and water.

### Compact size:

The package is compact and could be handled with one hand. Even though the size is compact it can perform wash for 50 times.

### CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction in the manufacturing process:

By reviewing the manufacturing process and adopting a new manufacturing method the "dry blend process", we succeeded in reducing about 70%, the CO<sub>2</sub> emitted during the production of powder.

Other features include:

The prevention of moisture, securely closed and removes odors.



500g (measuring spoon is included) 348 JPY

## A group of (TICAD V) participants inspected Pal Green Farm

The 5th Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD V) took place in Yokohama, Japan, from 1 to 3 June 2013 to address issues that leads to sustainable growth and building resilient societies in the African continent.

On June 4, a group of 22 TICAD V participants who are professors from 8 universities in Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, and who belong to the "graduate school business of Sustainable Development in Africa" paid a study tour to "Pal Green Farm Co. Ltd." an associated company of the Consumer Co-operative Pal System Chiba to familiarize themselves with the current state of agriculture in suburban areas.

They inspected the PAL Green Farm where BMW (bacteria-mineral water) technology is being applied for land cultivation. BMW technology neither uses agricultural chemicals nor chemical fertilizer, but rather utilizes the action of the bacteria-mineral decomposition that leaves the land healthy for cultivation.

After the inspection the delegates were given the chance to exchange their opinions.

In Africa where urbanization is progressing quickly, improvements in agricultural technology, the city and the farm village is becoming an important issue.

Inspection of the PAL green farm, which is a type of city farm practice, was a useful experience for the participants.



## Rice Planting Experience for Students and Kindergarteners

In Japan, rice is the stable food, and is an important food that forms the basis of Japan's unique culture. However, majority of people live in the urban areas and are not aware of how rice is planted and harvested.

Tokushima University Co-op and the Naruto University of Education in cooperation with Sasaki farm organized rice-planting event for university students who are committee members of the Tokushima University Co-op and associated kindergarteners of the Naruto University of Education.

In all 50 people took part in this event. The university students were challenged by using rice-planting rulers to plant the rice while the kindergarteners did it along with their parents. The student committee that operates the cafeteria at the Tokushima University is interacting with the Sasaki farm about "the importance of food".

This year, about 15 members of the student committee planted rice using old-fashioned rulers. A student whose grandfather has a farm said, "I now understand the troubles of harvesting. I will go help my grandfather during the rice harvest."



This is the first time kindergarteners have participated in this event, which is an initiative to promote rice planting to the infants.

## JCCU receives delegates from iCOOP Korea

On May 22 and 23, 12 delegates from COOP SERVICE Co. Ltd, a subsidiary company of iCOOP Korea visited three Co-op Net logistic centers and a co-op store in the Kanto area.

Prior to the observation of the logistic facilities the participants received explanation on Co-op Internet platform "e-friends" and its related IT system at the Inzai logistic center.

The logistic facilities visited include Inzai freezing Distribution Center, the Okegawa chilled items Sorting Center, and Koshigaya dairy foods Distribution Center.

The participants had the chance to exchange views with the host regarding the operation and the system of management at the facility.

Delegates were impressed about various safety measures put in place, such as the prevention of dew condensation and wind chill from the air conditioner etc.

Again, the delegates had the opportunity to observe co-op eco-store, learn about various energy saving measures and ways to improve refrigeration efficiency.

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Delegates receiving explanation during the visit.



\*e-friends is a centralized online shopping service developed by JCCU in 2000.

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