

The 23rd Nara Prefecture Cooperatives Day Meeting held

Co-operatives in Nara Prefecture held the "23rd Nara cooperative day" gathering in Hotel Nikko Nara on Monday, July 13.

The gathering is held in commemoration of the International day of Co-operatives which is held every year in July.

The day is set to advance the co-operative movement and the cooperation among co-operatives in Nara Prefecture and to raise a platform where co-operative societies in the prefecture could interact with each other and think of the common issues to advance the co-operative movement in the region.

It was organized by consumer co-ops in the prefecture, JA Group and the forestry association. This year's gathering was attended by 100 co-operative officials.

After the opening remarks by Mr. NAKADE Atsunobu, chairperson of Nara Prefecture Agricultural Co-operatives Federation, a lecture was given by Mr. OKANE Yoshiaki a literary analyst, under the theme, "building the community by co-operatives".

He mentioned that Co-operatives unique strengths lie in the fact that they can cooperate in various activities.

Furthermore, he stated that an important feature about co-operatives is their fast adaptation to social changes and incorporating citizens voice in advancing their business, that makes co-operatives a unique organization required by the people in the community.



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International Day of Co-operatives held in Tokyo

The International Day of Co-operatives is an anniversary which the United Nations has authorized for the co-operative movement worldwide, observed on the first Saturday of July each year.

Among others, the day is set to promote peace and to increase awareness on co-operatives, as well as strengthen and extend partnerships between the international co-operative movement and other related organizations.

To celebrate this international anniversary, Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives (JJC) and Cooperatives Japan held the 93rd International Day of Co-operative Forum on July 30 in Tokyo.

About 300 participants consisting of co-operative staff and members nationwide, academics and the press attended the rally.

At the beginning of the rally, the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) theme for the 2015 International Cooperatives Day "Choose co-operative, choose equality" was introduced.

Dr. MIYAMOTO Taro, professor of Chuo University, Faculty of Law, gave a keynote speech with the theme, "opening the main axis of the future regional community development by co-operatives".

He mentioned that co-operatives face a new challenge of playing a leading role in community development. He stressed the need for cooperation among co-operatives and organizations such as the NPOs.

It was followed by a panel discussion under the theme, "Co-operative approach to widening inequality and disparity".

Panelists from Nagano Prefecture JA Azumi, Mr. SENKUNI Shigeru Chairman of the board of directors, Mie Prefecture Owase fishery cooperatives, Mr. IWAMOTO Yoshikazu Executive Director, Japan Workers Cooperative Association

Mr. FURUMURA Nobuhiro executive director, and JCCU Welfare Business promotion Department Mr. Ueda, Consultation lending business advisor, with Professor Miyamoto acting as coordinator.

While demonstrating their respective organizations practical case examples of social inclusion, opinions were exchanged as to how community networking could be expanded.

The occasion was also an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between co-operatives nationwide, and sharing common views regarding cooperatives contribution towards the sustainability of the region.



Keynote speech by Prof. MIYAMOTO Taro



Scene at the panel discussion

Fukushima Children's Recreation Project

Consumer Co-ops nationwide have been offering special summer vacation program to children in Fukushima area as part of the disaster area reconstruction assistance activities since 2012, aiming at helping school children and parents spend weekends and school vacations in areas remote from the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant.

This year also co-ops continue this special summer vacation program nationwide in 12 locations, in the period July 21 to August 21, 2015 in co-operation with the Fukushima Prefectural Consumers' Co-operative Union playing the secretarial role.

Since the start of this program 70,987 people including children and their parents have participated in the Fukushima Children's Recreation Program (until March 31, 2015).

In the fiscal 2014 (April 1 2014 to March 31 2015), the amount of funding from JCCU and member co-ops for this project is 50 million JPY and 21.5 million JPY from the Japan UNICEF Association, totaling approximately 71 million JPY.

In the fiscal 2013 the total funding from JCCU and member co-ops and the UNICEF was approximately 70 million JPY.



State of this year's summer vacation program

2014 JCCU "National Cost-of-Living" Survey

JCCU released a flash report about "Survey on Cost-of-Living 2014" through a registered monitor of co-op members from 46 consumer co-ops with an aggregate target of 1,416 households in a 12-month survey period from January 2014 to December 2014.

2014 was the year greatly affected by the consumption tax increase in April and continuing increase in prices. Consumption increased in March due to stockpiling and decreased in April. Households with more than 4 million JPY annual salary income tends to cut down their consumption. Their consumer confidence may have been reduced by the increase in consumption tax and in prices. On the other hand, for households with less than 4 million JPY annual salary income, it was difficult to cut down consumption expenditure since most of it was for essential products, which

resulted in the increase of the annual budget deficit.

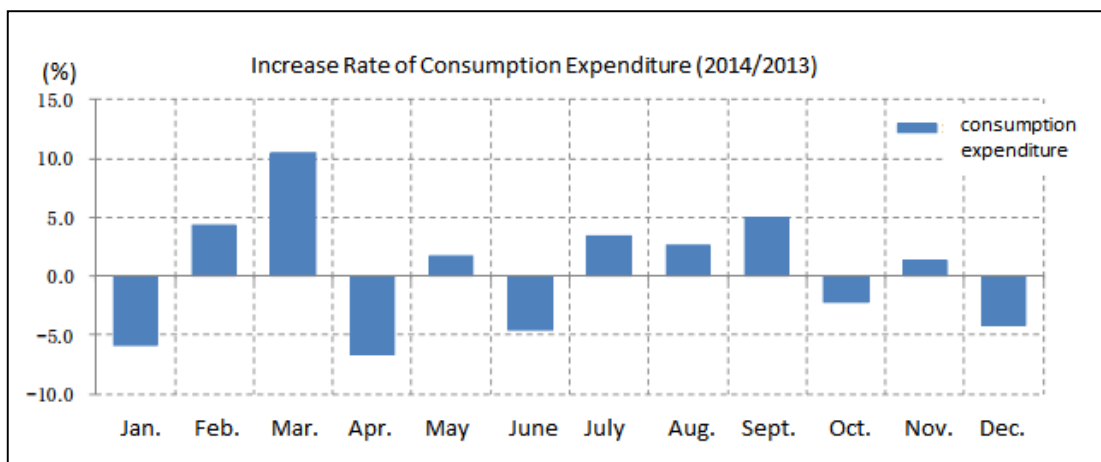
Average monthly real income was 630,452 JPY, increased by 1.2% compared to 2013. But average retirement income decreased by 3.1% while salary income increased by 2.7%.

Average monthly consumption expenditure was 411,033 JPY, recording an increase of 0.2%.

The slight increase is assumed to be caused by the increase in consumption tax and price.

However, increase of consumption expenditure by households with retirement income reached 3.9%.

Average of monthly non-consumption expenditure (tax and social insurance premium) was 121,585 JPY, increased 2.3%. The rate of tax and social insurance premium to real income was 19.3%, recording a year-on-year. Regional gap doesn't seem to be expanding.



Co-op Kagoshima launches E-money service

On July 16, 2015, Co-op Kagoshima in collaboration with Fujitsu FIP corporation and the Toppan Printing corporation commenced a "server-managed electronic money services" (E-money service) for Co-op Kagoshima members which is possible to use at all the stores of the Co-op. Co-op Kagoshima, operates 19 stores in Kagoshima Prefecture, with a total membership of 290,000.

Responding to members request such as "concern about the overuse of credit card", "request for a card that the member can decide the budget in a planned manner (without wastages) in order to make ends meet", "being troublesome for the exchange of coins at the cash register" and the like, the E-money service was launched.

The service is available on members card and Co-op gift card which have been equipped with a pre-paid function.

Members can charge the cards up to a maximum of 50,000 yen by 1000 yen unit.

With the introduction of this service a member reduces the time and effort to look for coins from his/her purse at the time of payment at the cash register checkout making payment to be done smoothly.

Members can also do their planned purchase by charging the budget amount.

In addition, Co-op Kagoshima, at the same time, has started accepting the original Co-op gift card that can be used to shop at the same store.

The card which is in three values, ¥ 500, ¥ 1,000, and ¥ 5,000, can be purchased in the Co-op Kagoshima stores.

Members can now utilize the Co-op gift card for various purposes such as gifts or appreciation.

The service is only available to Co-op Kagoshima members.

“UNICEF Love Walk”

Iwate Consumers' Co-operative Union organized "the fifth UNICEF love walk in Iwate" which was hosted by 3 groups of associations; the Iwate Prefecture Committee for UNICEF, the Iwate Prefecture Walking Association and the Morioka Walking Association on May 24.

It was participated by 220 people from 7 cities and 3 towns.

Participants comprising of elementary school, junior high and high school students, college students and vocational school students, married couples and parents, divided into two courses, 10km and 5km after stretching exercise, and walked happily along Nakatsugawa promenade and returned safely to the Morioka castle remains park square where they departed.

Fundraising was organized to be donated to UNICEF. A total amount including the participation fee amounted to 81,300.

Miyagi Co-op also organized "UNICEF Gathering 2015" on May 30 in Sendai, which was participated by 300 people, to inform the citizenry about UNICEF activities and to promote participants interest about the variety of UNICEF events that are happening in various parts of the world and to support UNICEF fundraising activities.



News in Brief

"Cooperatives Symposium" held in Milan, Italy

From July 12 - 14, 2015, in Milan, Italy, the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), Confcooperative (one of the three largest cooperative Federation in Italy), the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (JA-ZENCHU), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), jointly organized a symposium titled "Co-operatives: Empowering people for sustainable development and zero hanger".

The three-day symposium was aimed to provide opportunity for co-operative representatives to network and exchange views on key issues, such as supporting rural communities, environmental sustainability, food waste, supply chain security and trade agreements.

About 200 cooperators from 22 countries including the ICA President, Dame Pauline Green, attended the symposium.

On the 13th, a panel discussion was held under the theme "Sustainable Production and Consumption: Avoiding food losses and food waste in the supply chain" with aggressive

debate by five panelist including Mr. Huseyin Polat, Senior Adviser, National Cooperative Union of Turkey, Mr. Julien Fremont, Member of the Board, Terrena, France Agricultural Cooperatives, Mr. Piero Mendicino, President of Italian Agricultural Cooperatives, Mr. Robelt van Otterdijk a representative from FAO and Mr. Takeshi Miyaji, Director of JCCU Environmental Policy Promotion Office.

Prior to the panel discussion, the case examples of the Japanese consumer co-operatives food waste recycling initiatives were reported such as promoting the use of waste cooking oil for biodiesel fuel by Co-op Sapporo, the Eco-feeding system of Miyagi co-op (livestock feed made from food residue as raw materials), the compositing of food residue by Osaka Izumi Co-op and the biomass power generation of Co-op Kobe.

JCCU will continue to cooperate with cooperatives and cooperative-related organizations in Japan and abroad to transmit efforts of various social issues.

University Co-op launches e-book with specification viewer

As part of the National Federation of University Co-operative Association's effort to support university education and to promote active learning of students and teachers deployment of e-TEXT lesson, the Federation is scheduled to launch e-book (textbook / reference books / specialized books, etc.) with specification viewer based on DECS (Digital Educational Contents Support) i plan, from October 25, 2015.

The viewer will help lectures to be conducted at the university in a professional manner. For example, 1) it will enable faculty staff to relay to students, the approach of lectures before and after,

2) strengthening students independent learning and 3) ensuring bidirectional of 1) and 2).

The main functions of the viewer includes:

- 1) test functions and usage log analysis,
- 2) skewer search and self-made note Sticky & marker bookshelf customized and two-screen display,
- 3) annotations (sticky notes, marker, bookmarks, handwritten notes).

The DECS plan focuses on contribution to the education innovation that students nationwide could benefit from.

The specification viewer has been developed by the National Federation of University Co-op Association in partnership with Sharp Corporation and Dai Nippon Printing Co., Ltd.

The viewer can be used on devices such as iOS, Android, Windows and MacOS.



Scene of university class utilizing electronic textbook

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