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2016 New Year Reception Held

The Japanese Consumers' Cooperative Union (JCCU), the Japan CO-OP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation (JCIF) and the Japanese Health and Welfare Cooperative Federation (HeW COOP JAPAN) co-organized a new year reception on January 12 as a means to raise co-ops visibility through the exchanges with the various participants. More than 1,100 people, including co-op stakeholders, the media, academics, co-operative organizations, leaders from various institutions including cabinet members, political parties and representatives from the Member of Parliament attended.

Following the opening address by Mr. ASADA Katsumi, President of JCCU, the Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) Mr. SHIOZAKI Yasuhisa took turn and expressed that he still expect co-ops to continue to play its role in the community by keeping the supporting efforts towards the reconstruction of the Great East Japan Earthquake and other social issues such as the childcare and elderly support activities.

In addition Mr. OKUNO, Chairperson, JA-ZENCHU (Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives) and Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives representative called on the various co-op organizations to exercise a collective effort through strengthening ties between them to contribute to the development of the local communities.

Finally a toast was proposed to declare the opening of the New Year.



New Year's Message: ASADA Katsumi, President - JCCU

I would like to extend New Year Greetings to all our Co-operative members, staff members, stakeholders and Co-operative colleagues around the world.

Let me take the opportunity to convey my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the overwhelming support received from you all that pivoted the success of our business and activities in the fiscal 2015.

Review of 2015

Following the consumer tax increase from 5% to 8% in 2014, coupled with the increase in the cost of social security and the rise in prices by the depreciation of the Japanese yen, insecurity in co-op members living continues to deepen.

JCCU and member co-ops, through business and activities, will continue to make effort to improve the livelihood of members and their security in the community under these severe conditions.

2015 marked the 55th anniversary of the release of JCCU CO-OP brand products. In the same year, reform of the brand was launched with a new brand message and a new package design to meet the request of members and to strengthen CO-OP Product competitiveness.

March 11 2016, will mark the fifth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake. Consumer co-ops nationwide through the "Co-op Action Campaign" continued working on the reconstruction assistance of the affected areas, strengthened direct interaction with the victims of the disaster and further promoted businesses and activities to support members living.

In addition, co-ops continued to expand support for the elderly and the community members living alone through the "Regional Protection Agreement" with the local governments which

allows co-op to confirm the safety of the elderly and report any risk situation to the office of the local government in the town or village for appropriate action to be taken. The number of Regional Agreement covers about 45% of all the municipalities nationwide.

The year under review also saw consumer co-operatives nationwide deepening ties and expanding network with the local community by strengthening participation in the community development together with co-op members, various local organizations, NGOs and the local governments.

On the international front, one of the major events was the sending of delegation to the NPT Review Conference in New York in April, by consumer co-ops nationwide, to demonstrate co-op's wish towards the abolition of nuclear weapons. The year also coincided with the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Challenges in 2016

In 2016 fiscal year, in order to achieve the targets set forth in "Co-op Vision 2020", JCCU will formulate the 13th three-year plan for the consumer co-ops in Japan which will finally be approved at the 66th Annual General Assembly in June.

Consumer co-ops will take a full advantage of our total power to contribute to the improvement of members' livelihood through our businesses of retailing, insurance and welfare. We will further strengthen ties among various kinds of co-ops nurtured through the International Year of Cooperatives to pursue the goal to realize a new society where smiles and trust abound. In this year also let us all remain committed in fulfilling every need of our members.

JJC releases Co-operative PR Video

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) started a "global cooperative campaign" from November 2015, calling on cooperatives in each country to produce videos emphasizing on "why co-operatives now" that would introduce the activities of the cooperative.

The Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives (JJC) has released YouTube channel entitled "Co-operative enterprises build a better world" to promote the activities of Japanese co-operatives.

In addition to Japan, in the same channel, the co-operatives in the United States, India, Argentina have also created video.

Below is the link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCaKLpem980rJdAtTpITeliw>

"CO-OP x Red Cup Campaign" donation presentation held

The 2015 campaign "CO-OP x Red Cup Campaign" was launched from October 1 to November 20, 2015 with 11 target CO-OP product items in which one yen from the sale of target items is donated to WFP for the school lunch program in the Republic of Ghana.

During this period, a total amount of 3.86 million JPY was realized. On January 21, a donation presentation ceremony was held at JCCU headquarters in Shibuya, Tokyo, where the amount was presented to the Japan Association for the World Food Program (JAWFP) to support the school lunch program in Ghana.

Mr. SUZUKI Kunio, Secretary-General for JAWFP (L), received the donation from SHIMADA Hiroyuki, CEO of JCCU (R).



Consumer Co-ops held 2016 National Policy Debate Meeting

The Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union, (JCCU) and the Japan CO-OP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation (JCIF) co-organized a policy meeting for consumer cooperatives nationwide on January 12-13 2016 in Tokyo, attended by 420 persons.

The meeting was attended by board members and executive officers from co-ops across the nation to discuss the 2016 fiscal year business plan and policy development to have a common understanding about the task to pursue in the New Year.

Mr. ASADA Katsumi, President of JCCU, gave an opening remark and expressed his sympathy to the victims of the landslide and flood damage caused by last year's typhoon No. 18.

He appealed to co-ops to further advance support efforts towards the reconstruction of the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster areas and to promote active participation in the local community to bring security to the community members.

In a keynote speech by Mr. SHIMADA Hiroyuki, CEO of JCCU, he mentioned reaching the end of the 12th three-year plan of co-op vision 2020 and raised the priority issues in the next three-year plan which is being formulated by JCCU.

He also reported on the CO-OP product brand innovation situation and future prospects.

Taking turns, the Managing Director of Japan COOP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation, Mr. OGIHARA Takashi, also presented a tentative three-year business plan of the organization for the period 2016-2018.

During the plenary session, which divided into three groups, participants actively debated on some of the key issues in the 13th three-year plan to deepen understanding about the task to pursue in 2016. The discussions include "solving social problems through co-op business", "further strengthening of ties" and "maintaining sustainable business structure" respectively.

JCCU donates to Typhoon 18 victims

In September 2015 "Typhoon 18" hit hard three prefectures in Japan namely, Ibaraki, Tochigi and Miyagi causing landslide and flooding victimizing many people.

JCCU called on its member co-ops nationwide to organize an urgent fund-raising to support the victims between September 18 to November 30. Members of 73 consumer co-ops responded generously to this request by raising 160 million JPY.

Presentation ceremonies were held in the three prefectures where the monies were donated to each municipality.

The right picture shows the ceremony held in Ibaraki prefecture. SATO Yoichi, chairperson of Ibaraki Consumer Co-operative Union (second from

About 100 people discussed each theme.



Mr. ASADA Katsumi



Mr. SHIMADA Hiroyuki



Mr. OGIHARA Takashi

right) presenting a note representing the amount of fund raising designated for the victims in the prefecture to HASHIMOTO Akira, the Governor of Ibaraki Prefecture (third from left).



Dietary (Food) Education Session Held for school kids

JCCU and member co-ops have been organizing dietary education program for school kids and their parents as part of the co-ops effort towards promoting a healthy eating lifestyle. The program includes learning session and practical cooking experience that could not be obtained from the regular classroom studies.

One of such sessions was organized on December 11 2015, by Ibaraki Co-op in response to the request from the Hokota City, Ibaraki Prefecture, Tomoe first elementary school. Seventy-four school kids from the first grade to the sixth and 55 parents attended the session which was held in the school's gymnasium.

A board member and food education supporters of the co-op were the resource persons who gave a lecture on the theme "Let's eat vegetables produced locally for local consumption" emphasizing on the nutrition value of vegetables.

The lecture was followed by food tasting of lotus soup and Japanese mustard spinach cake and finally with some quiz about vegetables.

There was a feeling of satisfaction by the participants at the end of the session.



Participants receiving lectures



Quiz time

Japan CO-OP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation (JCIF) wins Recognition

The Service Productivity & Innovation for Growth (SPRING), an independent organization, backed by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), conducted the fifth survey to collect data to estimate the Japanese Customer Satisfaction Index (JCSI) for 2015.

JCSI is a national cross-industry benchmarks of customer satisfaction which was established for the purpose of competitiveness reinforcement.

In 2015, the survey was conducted for seven different industries namely, supermarket, electronics stores, household goods stores / home center, life insurance, property and casualty insurance, the credit card companies and the international aviation. Customer evaluations of the quality of goods and services from a total of 89 companies were investigated. The total number of respondents from this survey were over 120,000 people making it the largest customer satisfaction survey in Japan. In the category of life insurance, consisting of 13 companies, Japan CO-OP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation (JCIF) which offers insurance products to co-op members through the various community-based retail co-ops came first in 5 indexes, namely, customer expectation, perception quality, perception value, customer satisfaction and the recommended intention based on customer evaluations of the quality of goods and services

received from the company. Customers receiving services from JCIF gave the company a JCSI benchmark of 81.9 for the customer satisfaction, surpassing the second scoring company in the private sector, (prefectural mutual insurance) at 80.4.

This is the third consecutive time that JCIF has come first in the survey.

The results ascertain the trust and satisfaction of co-op members receiving services from the co-op stores and the home delivery outlets. Co-op will continue to strive to provide products and services that will satisfy everyone and maintain this recognition in the future.



Iwate Co-op wins Eco-shop best practice award

Iwate Prefecture in cooperation with the municipalities is implementing the "Eco shop Iwate Certification System" where shops such as retail and restaurants in the prefecture are certified as "Eco-Shop" having met the requirement set forth in the certification system.

The system recognizes shops adopting good environmental practices in the prefecture such as garbage reduction and recycling activities and awards certificate of commendation.

Out of the 240 shops certified as eco-shop, Iwate Co-op together with 5 other organizations were awarded the 2015 fiscal year "Eco-Shop Best Practice Award" at a ceremony held on December 15, 2015.

By using the eco-shop certification mark the consumption behavior of co-op members are highly influenced and the practice has become a role model for other stores to follow.

The award enhances good image of the co-op that also leads to increase of members loyalty.

The eco-shop concept meet the need of the members without compromising the state of the environment.



TANNO Shunichi Iwate Co-op Environmental Business Promotion Office, (second from the front row, right) took part in the awards ceremony.

49th ICA-AP Committee on Consumer Co-op Held in Malaysia

The ICA-AP Consumer Committee held the 49th ICA Committee on Consumer Cooperation for Asia and the Pacific in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on December 1 2015. ANGKASA (Malaysian Co-operative Movement, Malaysia) hosted this meeting, which was attended by 8 committee members and 11 observers from 9 different countries.

Following the opening addresses given by Mr. AMANO Haruyoshi, chairperson of the committee, Mr Haji Nasir Khan Yahaya, CEO, ANGKASA, and Mr Balu Iyer, Regional Director, ICA-AP, Ms. NISHIMOTO Yuki secretary of the committee, reported on the activity of the committee and the activity plan for the fiscal 2016.

Committee members also made presentations of their recent activities and business results, which were followed by active discussions.

The major events were seminars on consumer protection that discussed the problems among consumers in Asia and the Pacific such as the increasing obesity and its associated diseases by Ms. Indrani Thuraisingham, head of Consumers International Office for Asia Pacific and also a lecture on the theme "The issues among Consumers' Policy in Japan" by Ms Hisa Anan, former Secretary-General of Consumer Affairs Agency.

The committee had a fruitful discussion and review that would serve good purpose for the participants.

The next committee meeting will be held in New Delhi, India, in conjunction with the Regional Assembly in November, 2016.



Participants pose for a group pic.

News in Brief

Study Session on Regional Environmental Protection

On December 5 2015, Co-op Kagoshima and a local NGO (Kusunoki Shizenkan = Kusunoki Nature Museum) engaged in environmental preservation activities in the area, organized a study session on the shores of Arai city which has the advantage of being close to the sea and the mountains and being a home to many living creatures but where their habitat are being threatened.

The study session which included practical experience through making of pinecones and cleaning of the shores of Arai-city Shigetomi, was organized to support the activities of the local environment. Twenty-six people from Co-op Kagoshima including 6 family members participated in the event.

As part of environmental initiatives, Co-op Kagoshima has been calling on their members for cooperation in environmental fund raising by placing donation boxes in the store outlets. The donation has been used to support the activities of local environmental organizations.

In this study session, part of the proceeds was presented to the NGO to support their environmental activities. Mr. HAMAMOTO, received the donation on behalf of the NGO.



Co-op Committee donate to "Food Bank Niigata"

On December 16, Cooperatives Festival Executive Committee, consisting of Japan Agriculture (JA), Prefectural Consumer Co-operative Union and other co-operative unions of different sectors in Niigata Prefecture donated new rice worth 45,500 yen to the "food bank Niigata" to support people, groups or welfare facilities in the prefecture who need food help.

At the 17th Cooperative festival held on October 25, the Executive Committee carried out charity auctions on the food offer from each cooperative which participated in the festival. The food purchased from the auction was donated to the food bank.

Through the Niigata Prefecture Life Support Center the items will be redistributed to the appropriate recipients.

Besides, JCCU also extends food bank support to Okinawa, Hiroshima, Miyagi and Ibaraki prefectures.

This program was started in 2010 as part of Co-op's social responsibility from the point of view of social disparity, poverty, issues on food and support for environmental activities.



Co-op Plaza
3-29-8, Shibuya, Shibuya-ku
Tokyo, Japan 150-8913
<http://jccu.coop/eng/>
email:kokusai@jccu.coop

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