

## “CO-OP Kirakira Step” received the 9th Mothers Selection Award

Seven CO-OP Brand Products including “CO-OP Kirakira Step-Ice Cube made of Domestic Vegetables” series was awarded the “9th Mothers Selection Award”.

“CO-OP Kirakira Step” is a food brand for infants jointly developed by Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union and Co-opdeli Consumers' Co-operative Union.

The award system, which is an initiative aiming to realize a society friendly to mothers in the child-rearing period through the promotion of product development and services is sponsored by NPO corporation Japan Mothers Association. It was founded in 2009.

Mother-friendly goods, services and facilities are elected by voters from child-rearing mothers.

The series was highly evaluated by the following features: use of domestic vegetables, simple processing without any food additives, time-saving and highly versatile specification, and user-friendly package.

“CO-OP Kirakira Step” mainly focuses on frozen food for infants and kids. Under the supervision of a national registered dietitian, JCCU has designed the optimal size, texture, ingredients selection.

Also, recipe recommendation according to the child's age can be accessed on JCCU's website. It is responding to the growing needs for child rearing households.



## 2017 ICA Global Conference & General Assembly held in Malaysia

ICA's Global Conference and General Assembly was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 13-17 November 2017.

The theme of the conference was “Co-operatives: Putting People at the Centre of Development”. Various presentations from a number of speakers were made on the possibility of cooperatives to realize the “Sustainable Development Goals” (SDGs) raised by the United Nations.

Delegates from JCCU including HONDA Eiichi – President, attended the meeting which was participated by approximately 1,800 participants from around the world.

The Global Conference before the General Assembly held from 15-16 Nov., composed of seminars and workshops under four themes “learn” “experiment” “network” and “explore”. Many reports were presented and followed by exchange of opinions.

At the General Assembly held on November 17, the ICA president and global board members were elected.

Mr. Ariel Guarco (Argentina·COOPERAR, the Co-operative Confederation of Argentina) was appointed as president, while under the support of the Japanese co-operatives, Mr. TORU Nakaya president of the Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (JA ZENCHU) stood as a candidate and won to become ICA Director.

In the Keynote Speech at the General Assembly, Dr. Linda Yueh (World Economic Forum Member) gave a lecture on America First, the rise of the middle class worldwide, international trend and issues. Also at the GA, HONDA Eiichi President of JCCU reported that Japanese co-operatives are working on 'Hibakusha Appeal (International Signature Campaign) as part of the co-ops

peace activities towards building a peaceful future without nuclear weapons. He therefore, urged peace loving co-operators to join the “Hibakusha Appeal”.

On Nov. 14, Global Co-op Committee (CCW = Consumer Co-operatives Worldwide) held its general meeting, followed by election of the new executive committee members. Prof. Peter Stefanov President of Central Cooperative Union (CCU), Bulgaria and HONDA Eiichi, President of JCCU were elected as President and the Vice President respectively.



Prof. Peter Stefanov, in his inception speech shared his view of the role of consumer co-ops in recent times. He mentioned that “The challenges facing consumers co-ops in the world today are greater because of the extraordinary dynamics of new technologies, global crises, open markets, excessive trade and excessive consumption. In this context, co-operative leaders play an important role in preserving the essence of our business model, which provides adaptability and flexibility in solving many social problems and economic challenges and thus helps create a better world.” Reference: CCW 2017 GA Report. <http://www.ccw.coop/news/87-CCW-2017-General-Assembly-and-Joint-ICAO-Seminar.html>.”

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# The role of consumer co-ops in achieving a sustainable society (Exclusive Interview)



HONDA Eiichi (R), President of JCCU, Ms. KUNIYA Hiroko (L) News Caster

JCCU and member co-ops are promoting efforts aimed at "realizing a sustainable society" as raised in "The Ideal of Japanese Consumer Co-ops Movement for the 21st Century" formulated in 1997.

Co-operatives are recognized as one of the major stakeholders expected to keep advancing activities towards the achievement of the goals of SDGs set forth in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2015.

President of JCCU HONDA Eiichi, had an exclusive interview with Ms. KUNIYA Hiroko, a news caster for NHK, to report the progress, policies, and details of consumer co-op's initiatives in achieving a sustainable society.

## Aiming at solving social problems

### HONDA:

JCCU and member co-ops are engaged in a variety of initiatives through co-op businesses, aiming at helping to change the current Japanese society to a type where no one could be left behind. You have an international perspective and had been working on social issues at NHK's "Close-up *Gendai* (modern day)". What kind of image do you have for co-operatives?

### KUNIYA:

In my image, Co-op is an organization that stand in consumer's point of view to raise a platform to connect consumers and producers for a common interest and as well provides services and products that embraces food safety and security.

### HONDA:

Providing safe and secure food is the primary aim of consumer co-ops, but it is also a major objective of the co-op to solve social issues in accordance with the needs of members living.

### KUNIYA:

SDGs' idea is to simultaneously solve social, economic and environmental problems. The economy and the society are built by maintaining a large earth system, however, the sustainability of the most very important earth system as a whole is now in danger.

It has come to a stage where the society, consumers and organizations must have a clear understanding of the issue and act accordingly.

Japanese consumer co-ops have 28 million members and I think it is a very good organization to make a big movement.

### HONDA:

Consumer co-op is not just an established organization in which members are affiliated with, rather all the members play a leading role in the overall businesses and activities of the co-op. The value of consumer co-op can be shown when each member think and act voluntarily to change their own lives and the society. So talking about SDGs, the best way to proof the true power of consumer co-op is making each member say "I think SDGs is really good. I'm in."

### KUNIYA:

I see. As a consumer co-op, how to promote the change of consciousness of consumers/members who choose goods and services is very important.

## Ethical lifestyle: (Turning to ethical consumer)

### KUNIYA

Twelve out of the 17 objectives of SDGs concern sustainable production and consumer security. Among them is the third target that aims to halve the disposal of food by 2030. Already in France, a law that forbids supermarkets from discarding any excess foods that could be eaten has been enforced. Such foods are directed to people in need through food banks etc. Japan, the United States and France are the three major food wastage countries. Except Japan, the other two countries have a high food self-sufficiency rate, but Japan accounts for less than 40%. Food disposal is 28 million tons in Japan. Among them, "food loss", which is throw away but could still be eaten is approximately 6.32 million tons. This is twice the amount of food aid being given worldwide. For example, if consumer co-ops nationwide could conduct a campaign with the banner "You will be a champion to reduce food waste by half", the significance of the existence of consumer co-op will be enhanced.

### HONDA:

Many consumer co-ops are already working on food banks and other activities. Still, considerable amount of food is discard in our members' daily lives. Some co-op store staff says that it is really painful to see unsold food beign thrown away.

### KUNIYA

Japan is a country of abundant rain. However, the country imports food made using water resources and soils in many other countries. I believe there must be a way of doing business that addresses the thought of ethical way of living and ethical consumption.

### HONDA

Until now, there has been a thought that if good products could be procured cheaply worldwide or domestically, it would be good for consumers. However, actual living does not consist only of consumption. Consumer co-ops have been engaged in "Sanchoku" activities since the early 70s. This system involves a tie-up between producers and consumers for the production of fresh food and uses the system as a platform to deepen mutual understanding between consumers and producers through exchanges. We think that if people can find work to do in the community, earn some money and become a good consumer that is when we can say good living is established.

### KUNIYA

We need to promote the idea of interlinkage (mutual cooperation).

## Promote activities by fusing with other organizations

### KUNIYA

MDGs, the predecessor of SDGs, set a goal of halving 1.9 billion people living on less than 1 dollar 25 cents a day, down to 840 million. On the other hand, other problems such as disparity and regional bias have been born. In Japan, the rural areas are suffering economic decline. To address such problems the SDGs becomes indispensable. For example, creating businesses that does not emit carbon dioxide, but favors the employment of women and disabled persons. How can we all have such consciousness? Are consumer co-ops nationwide working on these issues?

### HONDA



Now, in Japan, one out of every six children is said to be suffering from poverty. I think the government alone cannot solve the problems. There are also non-profit organizations etc. that are developing small-scale but very unique ideas. From now on, I think, it is important for co-op to connect with these various organizations. I believe that if non-profit organizations (NPOs) that are beginning to emerge in the regions are nationally connected in common terms, it will become more powerful.

### KUNIYA



I think, consumer co-op has the potential to nurture food banks across the country, or there seems to be many useful ways such as spreading the know-how of existing NPOs to become models in food bank efforts nationwide.

### HONDA

I think the possibilities are infinite. The local government has opened the door to we consumer co-ops and NPOs. I think it is becoming activity-friendly environment to operate.

## To enrich living "mutual help"

### KUNIYA

Through the supply of 4,500 CO-OP Brand Products, consumer co-ops cooperates with various business operators. Can consumer co-ops become a platform to address the environmental problems that business operators are trying to address?

### HONDA

I say yes. Our main focus is to target the livelihood of the local people and supply safe and quality products that will enrich their lives. We want to incorporate the concept of mutual assistance among them.

The idea that all human activities should not be pursued alone is the basic idea of cooperatives. There is a possibility of growth indefinitely if co-op business is built up this way, and by this alone we could change our own lives.

In the future the effort will also contribute to developing and emerging countries.

### KUNIYA

I think that it is possible with consumer co-ops having wonderful infrastructure. The most difficult thing is whether or not each and every member and staff of consumer co-ops can think of this way.

### HONDA

Our greatest strength is our members. I'm really excited about how each of them, as a member of the society, think and act, not with profit-and-loss arithmetic but for sustainability for everyone.

Thank you for your precious time.

## Request for nursing care remuneration revision in 2018

On November 28, 2017 HONDA Eiichi, President of JCCU paid a courtesy visit to Mr. KAMOHARA Motomichi Administrative Vice-Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare and submitted a "Request for 2018 Revision of Nursing Care Compensation Rate".

The Social Security Council Nursing Care Payment Subcommittee debate is underway to compile the details of 2018 revision.

In Japan, establishment of integrated care system is highly needed. JCCU, on behalf of consumer co-ops nationwide which are closely tied to its members' lives submitted this request.

It is based on the viewpoint of businesses and activities of consumer co-ops to support community-building in each areas of their business location.

The request includes, strengthening measures to promote integrated care system, the establishment and evaluation of independence support service, strengthen measures to secure and retain care workers and to strengthen services that support users' home life.

## JCCU receives award on "Radioactive Substance Intake Survey"

From 2011, JCCU has been conducting investigation on the "radioactive material intake from domestic meal".

Since the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011 members anxiety about radioactive contamination of food has not ceased, serving the purpose for the continuing investigation, to find out the actual situation scientifically.

A paper that summarizes the results of the survey from 2011 to 2014 has been published and received the 2016 " Best Paper Award" by the Japanese Society for Food Hygiene and Safety at a ceremony held on November 9, 2017.

The Japanese Society for Food Hygiene and Safety is an organization that aims to contribute to academic and cultural development not only by communicating, tie-up and promoting research on food hygiene, but also disseminating research results.

In the survey compiled in the paper, two-day meals from 260 households was made into one sample, mixed together and examined for cesium levels using a germanium semiconductor detector. JCCU received the award based on the experts evaluation that there is no example of such a large scale survey of intake of radioactive materials anywhere in the world.

JCCU will continue to conduct investigation in the future and disseminate the right information to members and the general public.



Award receiving ceremony

## News in Brief

### Sustainable palm oil conference held

On November 6 2017, the "Sustainable Palm Oil Conference" organized by the Executive Committee of JaSPOC (Japan Sustainable Palm Oil Conference) was held in Tokyo.

The conference aimed at considering the way of procuring palm oil toward 2020.

Approximately 370 people including companies, organizations, NGOs, and media-related persons participated in the conference in which reports on 'sustainable palm oil procurement' by companies, human rights/environmental NGOs, investors, etc. were given followed by a panel discussion.

The keynote lecture was given on the theme "Business and SDGs" by Professor OKI Taikan Senior Vice-Rector of United Nations University/ a Professor of Graduate School and a special advisor to the President of the University of Tokyo.

Professor OKI mentioned that efforts to SDGs is not a philanthropic project or a contribution but a core business.

Although it does not always work out, but it is important to keep on walking.

In the afternoon, a panel discussion with the theme "Procurement of Palm Oil aiming for 2020" was held.

Eight speakers from different organizations including Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) reported their respective practical cases and exchanged opinions on the subjects.

FUTAMURA Chikako, Director of JCCU Member Relations Division who participated as one of the speakers, reported that CO-OP CLEAN CO., Ltd, a subsidiary of JCCU joined RSPO in 2006 followed by JCCU in October 2017.

She mentioned that with the strong wish of JCCU to realize a sustainable society, the organization as a retailer continues to think what they can do at the job site of retailing and try to change the society through production and consumption.

Also, an opinion was expressed and welcomed by the speakers as a common recognition, that "procurement of sustainable palm oil is not a problem that one company (one organization) can solve.

Efforts to expand sustainable palm oil to society is not a competitive field. The whole supply chain should expand consumer and society's recognition and cooperate with each other to execute it."



FUTAMURA Chikako Director of JCCU Member Relations Division (middle)



State of the Panel Discussion



AOTAKE Yutaka, Operating Officer of JCCU/Co-representative of the Executive Committee of JaSPOC, making a closing remark.

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