

## Editor's Note

A new era, "Reiwa," has begun, and a new system started in November for IDACA under a new executive director. The time is approaching when IDACA will take off from the forests of Takao to the center of Tokyo. This facility, the surrounding natural environment, and the faces of the executives and employees will likely remain alive in the memories of each and every former participant around the

world.

It is important that organizations change over time. However, no matter how much the world changes, as long as IDACA remains active in the field of international cooperation, we feel that we must support the participants and continue to keep the traditions of IDACA, which has lived up to its motto of "giving utmost priority" to the participants.

### Request:

To all ex-IDACA participants

Dear Mr. and Ms. IDACA Alumni:

IDACA wishes, above all, that its ties with you remain solid and long-lasting. So, why not keep us updated on your recent status and how we can reach you.

Please write us if your place of work, your position or your address have changed. There is no specific form that you have to follow in sending the information, but the following may serve as an example. We would appreciate it so much if you could mail (or e-mail) or fax it to IDACA, for the attention of Eiko Oshita.

Name (nationality):	_____
Training course / Seminar	_____
Changes	_____
1) New address (home, telephone number and fax number):	_____
2) New place of work (office, telephone number, fax number, and e-mail address):	_____
3) New position:	_____

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# IDACA NEWS

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## IDACA Executive Director's Inaugural Message

### To Achieve Food Security in Asia

I assumed the post of Executive Director of IDACA on November 1, 2019. Since its establishment in 1963, IDACA has accepted 6,500 agricultural cooperative leaders and government officials from developing countries for training and has dispatched specialists to various countries in the world on short-term and long-term assignments. I received the baton from my predecessors who exerted efforts toward establishing these projects, and I feel very humbled.

Since joining JA-ZENCHU, where I hail from, I have worked in the field of advocacy on international agricultural policy issues, organized the Asian Farmers' Group for Cooperation (AFGC) in 1999 as a framework for discussing agricultural issues in Asia, and participated in the preparation of the establishment of the World Farmers' Organisation (WFO) in 2011. Recently, I have been serving as one of the Japanese members of the APEC Policy Partnership on Food Security.

Born to a farming household in Hokkaido,



New Executive Director Hirofumi Kobayashi receiving a memento from the leader of JICA Malaysia Marketing Course

I myself understand from experience how much hardship a farmer challenging globalization is going through. Under such circumstances, I have devoted myself to make sure that Japanese and Asian agricultural models can show their presence within the framework of global agricultural policy so that farmers

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can continue their businesses with pride.

As Executive Director of IDACA, I still believe that farmers' organizing and participating in business operations of agricultural cooperatives are one of the important solutions

for farmers to develop sustainable agriculture. With Asia, where the economy and society are evolving dynamically, as center stage, I intend to do what I can, thinking about how IDACA can contribute as a part of the JA Group.

## REPORTS ON TRAINING COURSES

### (1) FY2019 JICA Knowledge Co-Creation Program "Establishment and Development of Farmers' Organizations" Course

This training course was newly launched starting this fiscal year. Targeting countries in the early stages of the establishment of agricultural cooperatives, it is aimed at contributing to the promotion of the establishment of agricultural cooperatives in each country and strengthening their organizational capabilities by learning about case examples of organizational initiatives, while observing various organizations in rural areas.



Exchange meeting with Master Course students of JA National Education Center

#### Report from a Former Participant after She Returned to Her Home Country

A former participant who returned to her home country upon completing her training in July submitted a report in December about her subsequent activities.

The former participant is Ms. SHIRIMA Petronila John, Assistant Registrar of Cooperative Society and Head of the Promotion Coordination Section, Cooperative Development Commission, Tanzania Ministry of Agriculture.

"We have been making preparations to put what I learned in Japan into action. We will support the organization of cooperatives that will serve as models for supporting rural women in the country." Below are some examples of the activities

- 1) The 1st SME's Women MADIRISHA Cooperative Awareness Meeting

The purpose of the conference is to foster awareness of women's entrepreneurial initiatives for the production and sale of agricultural products through cooperatives. We created a model entrepreneurship organization at this meeting, registered it as a cooperative, and presented ideas for producing and selling various crops. We hope that Japan (IDACA) will provide further support for carrying this out.

- 2) As part of the promotion of cooperatives, we held discussions on setting up a joint use facility for agricultural products/food processing by women's cooperatives.

The picture on the right is a scene of the meeting and the staff of the executive committee (former training participant at far left)



A total of 11 people from 10 countries in Eastern Europe, the Asia Pacific region, and Africa participated in the training course. Field study visits were conducted in Akita and Kumamoto prefectures, and while observing the unique agriculture and agricultural cooperatives in each region, the participants were able to gain a valuable opportunity to learn about organized activities in rural communities through watching the agricultural cooperatives supporting local communities and livelihood as well as engaging in production and marketing activities.

At the end of the training course, reports

were prepared on "What farmers, farmers' organizations, and agricultural cooperatives need" and "What the government (administration) needs." Taken up in the reports were such matters as "rebuilding an appropriate organization to support farmers' livelihood," "creating small organizations such as production groups," "the importance of leadership able to understand the needs of members of cooperatives," and "the role of government in creating an environment for fostering and supporting organizations and strengthening sound organizations."

### (2) FY2019 ICA-Japan Training Course on "Empowering Women in Business and Management of Agricultural Cooperatives"

Six women from Southeast Asia and South Asia participated in the above-titled training course for the purpose of "improving the capacity of rural women leaders" for about three weeks from July 22. They deepened their understanding on a wide range of topics from

Fukushima Mirai, the participants listened to briefings at such places as the grading center for "Akatsuki," a peach that is a representative fruit of Fukushima, the financial business center, and the day care center. The participants also interacted with the executive members of Fukushima Prefectural Council of JA Women's Associations and woman member farmers, so they could be exposed to the actual situation of the multi-purpose business activities conducted by JAs as well as such activities from the perspective of women. There was a participant who said: "Through the training, I was able to learn how the JA and women's associations are supporting rural women and got ideas that can be used in our country and cooperatives." In this way, each participant acquired new knowledge and went on their way home on August 11.



Participating in the Fukushima Prefectural Congress of Ie-no-Hikari Association

communication skills to agricultural cooperatives' business activities, the role of directors, and women's entrepreneurship.

In Fukushima Prefecture, where they went for field study visits, the participants had a good opportunity to observe the "Fukushima Prefectural Congress of Ie-no-Hikari Association" on the first day of their visit, enabling them to make a good start with all the participants being overwhelmed by the performances staged by the members of the women's association. After that, with the cooperation of JA



Visiting a woman member farmer of JA Fukushima Mirai and experiencing asparagus harvesting



### (3) FY2019 Training Course on “Fostering Coordinators of Food Value Chain” under the Project for Supporting Capacity Building in the Agricultural Sector in ASEAN Countries

In cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat and JA-ZENCHU, IDACA conducted the above-titled training course from July 9, 2019 to July 21, 2019. Participating in this course were 18 people from eight of the 10 member ASEAN countries except Singapore and Brunei.

This training course was aimed at having the participants learn primarily about the role of the agricultural cooperatives in building and implementing Japan’s food value chain and training personnel (coordinators) who can consistently advise and supervise each sector of the food value chain in the production, sales, and distribution of agricultural products, i.e., the creation of a feasible food value chain and a production-distribution-processing-retail system for promoting advantageous sales in ASEAN member countries.

Following a lecture on the overview of Japanese agricultural cooperatives, marketing business, role of food value chain coordinators, farm guidance, and agricultural product quality and safety (GAP, i.e., Good Agricultural Practice), the participants visited Tama Seika Co., Ltd. Like last year, field study visits were conducted in Ibaraki Prefecture, and the participants visited such JAs as JA Namegata,

Shiosai, JA Ibaraki Asahimura, and JA Shinhitachino. At JA Namegata, Shiosai, the participants learned about “yaki-imo senryaku (roasted sweet potato strategy),” while at JA Ibaraki Asahimura, they toured melon sorting facilities, and at JA Shinhitachino, they visited the direct sales shop “Sora-no-Eki Sorara” and a yogurt processing facility. At JA ZENNOH



At JA Shinhitachino “Sora-no-Eki Sorara”

Ibaraki Headquarters, the participants visited the Pesticide Analysis Center, Pearl Rice milling plant, and VF Station. At the JA Ibaraki Prefectural Union, there were briefings by the Prefectural Union and the

Ibaraki Prefectural Government’s Agricultural Policy Division on the marketing strategy for Ibaraki agricultural products. The participants took the observations and lectures seriously, and individual participants drafted their own action plans. In addition, JA Group Ibaraki hosted an exchange meeting between the participants and the executives and employees of the JA Group, which the participants had visited this time, and being able to interact with the JA’s officials and employees while enjoying the local delicacies of Ibaraki such as Hitachi beef became an invaluable, memorable event for the participants.

### (4) FY2019 ICA-Japan Training Course on “Fostering Agricultural Cooperatives for Food Value Chain”

Targeting semi-developed countries in Southeast Asia where organizing agricultural cooperatives has relatively progressed, the above-titled training course was conducted from August 19, 2019 to September 11, 2019, with the marketing business, distribution system, and food value chain of agricultural

cooperatives as the theme.

This time, six people – one each from India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Mongolia, the Philippines, and Vietnam – participated in the training course and learned about case examples of Japan’s agriculture, agricultural cooperative system, and production, distribution and sales

of agricultural products through lectures and observations.

The field study visits took the participants to Iwate Prefecture where they visited related facilities of JA-ZENNOH Iwate to deepen their knowledge on the distribution of agricultural products and livestock products including rice, and also JA Iwate Hanamaki to gain an understanding of the businesses of JA multi-purpose cooperatives and their organizational activities, as well as the specific flow of activities from production to collection, distribution, and sales. In particular, while observing the actual site, the participants received briefings on how the JA communicates with its members.

On the day after the visit, the participants were blessed with the opportunity to participate as observers at the “Ie-no-Hikari Cooking Festa” held at the main office of JA Iwate Hanamaki, and they sampled many local dishes made by the members of JA women’s asso-

ciation. Thanks to the kindness of the members of JA women’s association and JA’s officials and staff members, all the participants, with being much excited and impressed with their experience, completed their field study visit in Iwate.



Surrounding JA Iwate Hanamaki President Takahashi in front of the main office; General Affairs Manager Takahashi performed “Shika-odori,” a traditional performing art! (Far left)

## OVERSEAS BUSINESS TRIP REPORT

### FY2019 ICA/IDACA Follow-up Guidance and Survey Program (Mongolia)

This project, which is being carried out jointly with the International Cooperative Alliance Asia and Pacific (ICA-AP), is broadly divided into “on-site surveys” and “questionnaire surveys.” This is a report on an on-site survey that was held from September 30 to October 6 in Mongolia.

The point of contact was the National Association of Mongolian Agricultural Cooperatives (NAMAC), an agricultural cooperative organization at the national level in Mongolia; NAMAC supported coordination in various areas such as making arrangements and communicating with former participants. Most of the former participants from Mongolia who were the subjects of this survey have been implementing action plans in close cooperation with dairy cooperatives, veterinary cooperatives, and farmers’ groups, where they work, contributing to the promotion of the cooperative movement in addition to improving the income and livelihood of cooperative members by utilizing the knowledge and experience they gained through training courses.

#### 1. Current state of cooperatives in Mongolia

The Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia is in charge of cooperatives in Mongolia, and 4,377 cooperatives have been registered as of 2018. The majority of them are agricultural cooperatives and dairy cooperatives. The Law on Cooperatives was first drafted in 1995 and has been amended several times since then, existing in



Former participants at NAMAC



its current form today. During our visit this time, it was shortly after an amendment was submitted to the Mongolian parliament, so that cooperatives would find it easier to procure funding. In addition, the third phase of the national program on the development of cooperatives (2019-2024) was also just approved, and various events were being planned to increase awareness of cooperatives and increase production.

Meanwhile, cooperative officials say that while they are aware of the difficulty in encouraging people constantly on the move seeking natural pastures due to Mongolia's unique form of agriculture known as nomadic animal husbandry to form organizations, and that they believe that cooperatives will play an important role in achieving the "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)," the current situation is such that understanding of cooperatives has not progressed among officials in charge of cooperatives and at the private sector level.

Regarding NAMAC, the apex organization of agricultural cooperatives, it is the third largest NGO in Mongolia in terms of activity size and membership. Established in 1967, it was reorganized in 1992 after a transition from socialism to democracy, and it now has 22 branch associations, 10 secondary cooperatives, 630 primary cooperatives, and 150,000 individual members.

## 2. Interviews with Former Training Participants and Visits to Cooperatives / Farmers' Groups (Excerpts)

### • Visiting the Bayakhoshuu Farmers' Group



Visiting the Bayakhoshuu group

This is a group consisting of 10 men and women who have gathered for the purpose of securing income after their retirement. The group, which was organized following a

greenhouse project by Caritas Mongolia, an international NGO, is now engaged in cultivation, processing and selling agricultural products, as well as develops household goods such as clothes and shoes.

Mr. Giikhnanan, a former training participant, serves as a coordinator, using his knowledge and experience gained through ICA training to provide guidance to the group on farming, sales, and organizational operations. Specifically, it consists of looking at the market prices of harvested vegetables to determine when to sell them, and encourage farmers who have little income in winter to make soap using sheep oil.

In addition, Mr. Giikhnanan also gave guidance to the farmers' group to develop this group as cooperative with nine or more members, which is a requirement for forming cooperatives, so that they can register as cooperatives in the future, and provided support for participation in events with the aim of increasing their sales capabilities. Members were saying that as a result, active exchanges started among the members, resulting in sharing information with each other to enhance their skills and abilities, and vegetable cultivation leading to savings and increasing income by about 1.5 times compared with before. In addition, they were saying that it became possible to educate children on agriculture, thus producing positive effects.

### • Visit to Suun Dalai Tsaltsal Dairy Cooperative (hereinafter referred to as Suun Dairy Cooperative)



At Suun Dalai Tsaltsal Dairy Cooperative

Located two hours away from Ulaanbaatar, Suun Dairy Cooperative was organized as a producers' group in 2009 and became a cooperative in 2013. It is operated by 16 members

of the cooperative and four staff members, and mainly collects, processes and sells raw milk.

All raw milk brought in by the members of the cooperative as well as by nomads is processed into 8-12 types of dairy products, including ice cream and curd (dried dairy products), and sold to shops and schools in Ulaanbaatar and the neighborhood. This dairy cooperative was the target of the action plan of former training participants Ms. Tuul and Ms. Otgonbolor, and it is engaged in work to improve dairy product quality and sanitation control, creation of added value for dairy products, and expansion of sales opportunities. Ms. Tuul said, "In Japan, quality is considered important, and all members of the cooperatives follow rules in shipping agricultural products." She conducted training by incorporating this idea, and sanitation control has been enhanced by working on increasing the production of raw milk and changing raw milk storage containers from plastic to metal. She also supported the establishment of a COOP shop for the purpose of expanding sales destinations.

According to Ms. Tseermaa, the cooperative's president, "We were not well known when we were a producers' group, and we had no sales outlets, but after we became coopera-



At a "ger," a traditional Mongolian portable residence (visiting a member of the cooperative)

tive, we were able to receive training, the capacity of the organization as a whole increased, and people started recognizing us. As a result, the sales volume of processed goods increased, and the income of the cooperative's members has improved."

In addition, we visited the Mongolian National Cooperative Association, which is an ICA member organization, the Cooperative Fair sponsored by the Mongolian Commodity Exchange, the "United Private Veterinary Clinics of Mongolia," which is an organization to which the former participant belonged, and the Borjigon Tuya Herders' Cooperative.

Attention!

## IDACA News Email Delivery Will Start Soon! Your registration is requested.

Since IDACA published the first issue of IDACA News in 1971, IDACA News has been continuously delivered by postal mail to participants who joined IDACA training courses, but with the spread of SNS and the Internet, we are now building a system to send the news by email, which is scheduled to start with the January 2021 issue.

Therefore, if you want to continue reading IDACA News, please register your e-mail address. Please send the following information to

[news-idaca@j.email.ne.jp](mailto:news-idaca@j.email.ne.jp):

Name	
Country	
Fiscal Year of Participation and Title of Training Course	
Email Address	