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Request for Email Address Registration for IDACA News Email Delivery

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 trainees who participated in 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:

Name

Country

Fiscal Year of Participation and Title of Training Course

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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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REPORT ON THE RECENT SITUATION

IDACA's Countermeasures against the Novel Coronavirus and the Situation in Various Countries

It was reported that the total number of people infected with the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Japan exceeded 137,815 on November 25, and experts warned that the pace of spread of the infection was accelerating. The invisible fear of viruses has changed our peaceful daily lives. With a voluntary stay-at-home request being issued and telework being recommended, foreign visitors to Japan, who have helped boost the Japanese economy, have disappeared from the city, and our training program which is a major pillar of our business, has also been hit.

Ever since the ICA Training Course on "Fostering Leaders for Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives" conducted earlier this year, we have not conducted any training courses that involve inviting the participants to Japan from overseas. Other training courses scheduled for this year have been canceled or postponed, and the training program has been changed to conducting the courses online.

According to the guidelines of the government and JA-ZENCHU, we are taking all possible infection prevention measures, such as encouraging our executives and staff members to take their temperatures before going to work, thoroughly disinfect their hands and fingers at work, disinfect with alcohol places that



The online "workshop" and "seminar" held in June and July, were commissioned by the ASEAN Secretariat, and conducted with attention paid to infection prevention.

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are frequently touched such as doorknobs, wear masks at work, work at home or commute in staggered working hours, and reduce the number of seats in dining halls so that they are not seated face to face in order to prevent infection there.

In addition, from May, we have been collecting information related to COVID-19 in various countries from where participants are scheduled to be invited to this fiscal year's training courses (infection status, COVID-19 countermeasures and immigration restrictions implemented by the governments of the various countries), as well as such information as the Japanese government's border measures and infectious disease risk levels in the various

1) Initiatives of Cooperatives in Nepal (Source from ICA-AP)

Based on the Corona Prevention Fund collected with the National Cooperative Federation of Nepal (NCF) playing the central role, the Cooperatives' Coronavirus Control Center (CCCC) was established within the Manmohan Memorial Medical College and Teaching Hospital on April 2 by using the Corona Prevention Fund. It is serving as the core facility for infection control measures in Kathmandu.

It has been reported that in Janakpur, agricultural cooperatives have started a vegetable delivery service in cooperation with the government, taking social distancing into consideration, and that consumers are very pleased with this setup.

Many of Nepal's dairy cooperatives, which collect raw milk from members of the cooperatives and sell it to milk factories owned by the county-level Central Dairy Cooperative Association, are facing difficulties. They lost the buyers of the raw milk

countries every week (every other week from the end of June) by referring to the websites of the WHO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and embassies of the various countries so that we can take prompt action when the situation improves.

Looking around the world, we find that the cumulative number of infected people worldwide exceeded 23 million on August 24, and there are no signs of the pandemic abating. Amid this situation, fellow cooperatives in the various countries have been making efforts to support the lives of their members and local residents, and we would like to introduce their efforts.

they collected because milk factories were closed down due to the government's lockdown. Even under such circumstances, there are forward-looking agricultural cooperatives such as Manu Dairy Cooperative that are trying to find alternative sales channels and secure income for their members in one way or another.



Cooperatives' Coronavirus Control Center (CCCC) established was within Manmohan Memorial Medical College and Teaching Hospital

2) Initiatives of Cooperatives in India (Source from ICA-AP)

In India, which has the third highest cumulative number of COVID-19 infections in the world following the United States and Brazil (as of August 20), many cooperatives are lending a helping hand to people in need by providing them with daily necessities (cereals, rice and lentil beans) free of charge.

In addition, there are some consumer cooperatives offering a low-priced service of delivering daily necessities to the front door, and this service has been well received by the general public who cannot leave their homes due

to lockdowns.

Moreover, the Indian Farmers Fertilizer Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) has carried out a nationwide awareness campaign under the slogan "Break the Corona Chain" in response to the situation where the spread of infection has not been stopped. In addition to informing the general public about the importance of such matters as practicing social distancing, sterilization, healthy eating and wearing masks, we distributed vitamin C tablets, medicated soaps, masks, disinfectants and more at various loca-

tions. Furthermore, IFFCO continues to operate fertilizer factories and delivers the fertilizers to each field using its own patrol vehicles even under the COVID-19 pandemic, so that farming will not be interrupted.

In addition, under the government's commission, the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. (NAFED)

is participating in a government program called "Food Security Plan for the Poor," through which 1 kg of pulses is delivered for three months to 200 million people who are in need due to the COVID-19 pandemic. NAFED collects the stored pulses from warehouses and storage companies, processes them, and delivers them to each state.



IFFCO distributes medicated soaps, masks, disinfectants, etc. to the public. (From News Chrome website)

3) Initiatives of Cooperatives in the Philippines (Source from FY2019 ICA-Japan training participants)

Special projects officer Maria Veronica Sierra of the Philippine National Confederation of Cooperatives (NATCCO), who participated in the FY2019 ICA Training Course on Fostering Coordinators to Build Food Value Chains, provided information about COVID-19 control activities at NATCCO, to which she is affiliated. The following is a report from Ms. Sierra.

"Even in the Philippines, there are no signs that the spread of COVID-19 infection will subside, and we are facing a very difficult situation. At NATCCO, to which I belong, I have done my utmost to support the members of cooperatives and the cooperatives to which they belong. The group I am in charge of is the MICOOP group under the umbrella of NATCCO, which consists of 81 cooperatives. We support the group's COVID-19 related activities and monitor the health conditions of its staff. Under the direction of NATCCO, we have been providing food packs to specific areas in the Manila Metropolitan District in collaboration with PBSP (Philippine Business for Social Progress) and an NGO called Bayanihan Musikahan (in Tagalog, Bayanihan

means mutual aid, and Musikahan means music). Although this partnership is informal, it was organized as a countermeasure against the spread of COVID-19 infection. Through this partnership, we united three cooperatives to provide agricultural products to slum areas.

The three cooperatives involved are as follows:

1. Taloy Farmers Multipurpose Cooperative (TAFARMCO): 100 member farmers provide 54 tons of vegetables for home delivery. This activity created jobs and brought additional income to the community as packaging was required.
2. Pangasinan Savings and Credit Cooperative (PASCOOP): 50 members and fishermen provide 5 tons of dried fish.
3. Golden Pance Multipurpose Cooperative (GOPANCO): 100 member rice farmers provide 71 tons of rice. This method eliminates the usual intermediaries, helps many farmers who have faced difficulty selling their produce due to strict transport restrictions, and has served to distribute rice to more than 12,000 families in need of food.



Vegetable bagging work



Work to produce dried fish for food aid purposes



Rice delivery work



Beneficiaries expressing their gratitude in front of the delivered vegetables

The activity to directly connect agricultural products of the cooperative member farmers with the market is also one of the projects that NATCCO wants to carry out in the future.”

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, there are many people throughout the world struggling in the frontline not fearing the risk of infection, including medical workers, civil service

employees implementing COVID-19 countermeasures, farmers, delivery companies, clerks at supermarkets and drug stores, and people who work in the public transportation sector. Let us all survive this unprecedented crisis, not forgetting our gratitude and respect for these essential workers.

REPORTS ON TRAINING COURSES

(1) FY2019 ICA-Japan Training Course on “Fostering Leaders for Management and Development of Agricultural Cooperatives”

This training course is conducted under the commission of ICA and aims at strengthening the capacity of core leaders of agricultural cooperatives and farmers’ organizations (or administrative officers in charge of farmers’ organizations) in developing countries. Six people from Bhutan, Cambodia, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Nepal and Sri Lanka participated in the training course.

The participants arrived in Japan on February 25, 2020, after learning about such matters as the basics of cooperatives in Thailand. The next day, they visited the Sagamihara Kyodo Hospital of Kanagawa Prefectural Welfare



MAFF Counsellor Kojima (second from the right in the front row), who gave a lecture on Japan’s global food value chain strategy, and participants

Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives to check their health conditions.

Lectures were generally conducted as planned, but due to the high risk of COVID-19 infection, it was decided that study visits, etc. would be canceled and an alternative program would be prepared. The planned visit to JA Yokohama was canceled, but the JA’s Kita General Center, and our institution were connected via the internet to provide the lectures remotely.

Although field study visits in Fukuoka Prefecture were also canceled, the staff in charge used on-site training materials created with the full cooperation of JA Group Fukuoka and DVDs borrowed from the latter to brief the participants on the businesses and initiatives of JA Fukuoka Chuokai, JA Fukuoka Education Cen-

ter, JA Zen-Noh Fukuren, Fukuren Co., Ltd., JA Itoshima, JA Fukuoka Yame, and Fukuoka City Central Wholesale Market, which the participants were scheduled to visit. We also hastily requested Mr. Hiroaki Kojima, Counsellor at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, to give a lecture on “Global Food Value Chain” promoted by the government.

The participants attended the training course straightforwardly without any complaints. Finally, they drafted their own “action plans” for strengthening their country’s agriculture and agricultural cooperatives, and returned home safely on March 14, four days earlier than planned. We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who cooperated in this training course amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

(2) “Online Workshop on GAP Certification in ASEAN Member Countries”

Promoting understanding on internationally accepted GAP certification in ASEAN countries is also extremely important for strengthening the food value chain within the ASEAN region. Therefore, the ASEAN Secretariat held an “online workshop on GAP certification” for the purpose of promoting understanding on GAP certification by introducing lectures on global trends regarding GAP certification, case examples of private companies that handle GAP-certified agricultural products, and efforts of GAP-practicing farmers, as well as through exchanging opinions with each country.



Site of online workshop at IDACA

This training course was held with funds contributed to the ASEAN Secretariat by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan. The ASEAN Secretariat commissioned JA-ZENCHU, and IDACA conducted the workshop.

Since it became difficult to hold this workshop in Japan due to countermeasures to prevent COVID-19 infection, 10 ASEAN member countries and the ASEAN Secretariat (Indonesia) were connected online, with the online base set up at IDACA and conducted for two days from June 23 to June 24, 2020. Twenty-three GAP promotion administrators and private companies from 10 ASEAN countries participated and created/announced future issues and directions for GAP promotion as their future plans.

As a GAP-certified practicing farm, Mr. Tomohide Saito’s farm in Tomisato City, Chiba Prefecture (production of komatsuna—Japanese mustard spinach—and contract sales with supermarkets, etc.), the situation of actual practicing of GAP at the farm was pre-recorded and presented online, and we had Mr. Saito come to IDACA on the day of the workshop to answer the participants’ questions directly.

It was a fairly tough schedule over a two-day period, ranging from the presentation of country reports to the future plans, but despite this being the first online training course conducted by IDACA, we were able to achieve the prescribed purpose with the enthusiastic cooperation of the participants.

(3) ASEAN “Online Seminar on Capacity Building in Agricultural Cooperatives for Developing Food Value Chains”

The seminar was a combination of listening to lectures, watching recorded videos and doing exercises. During the online seminar, we changed the field study visits normally conducted during regular training courses to watching recorded videos, but we also created a system where participants could participate with a sense of realism as much as possible and engage in question and answer sessions. In addition, we allocated a group discussion time to create future plans with two to three participants from each country participating in the discussions.



Seminar opening ceremony (IDACA)

In addition, taking into consideration that the participants were not accustomed to web conferencing and equipment operation, we decided to have IT staff from among the staff of the National Focal Points of the various countries present during the seminar period as support staff. We also supported the purchase cost of web cameras, microphones, and connection cords as web conference equipment.

Each country participated in the online seminar while being careful about infection amid the spread of COVID-19 infection.

Unfortunately, in the Philippines, it was a time when moving to urban areas was prohibited, so the Philippines' participation was shelved this time. It was also decided that Singapore would not participate because it was difficult to secure relevant participants. We would like to thank the participants, the National Focal Points, ASEAN Secretariat, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, lecturers, and JA Group Ibaraki for their cooperation in participating in the online seminar up to the end under such

critical circumstances.

As an outcome of the seminar, future plans were created in eight countries. Since the status of development of agricultural cooperatives is different for each country, some countries start by fostering agricultural cooperative organizations in order to build a food value chain, while in other countries, agricultural cooperatives actually contribute to the construction of food value chains. In order for small-size farming households based on family labor to follow the trend of the global food value chain, it is important to strengthen agricultural cooperative organizations and cooperate with private companies and foreign companies to create a win-win relationship. Strong and stable agricultural cooperative organizations will reduce the investment risk of private companies and increase their willingness to invest.

In addition to various methods of marketing agricultural products, this seminar emphasized the need for food safety and diagnosis of pesticide residues. At the seminar, we introduced such matters as farming guidance by agricultural cooperatives, initiatives toward GAP, recording of production history and the issuance of pesticide residue inspection certificates of JA Zen-Noh Ibaraki Analysis Center that scientifically prove that the production history is correct, as well as activities promoted by Japanese consumer cooperatives such as contract cultivation with JA regarding the purchase of reduced-pesticide agricultural products, and there was a big response from the participants.



Prerecording at JA Zen-Noh Ibaraki "Pocket Farm DokiDoki"

REPORT ON THE DISPATCH OF AN EXPERT Upon Receiving Advice on the Promotion of Agricultural Cooperatives in Georgia

In 2020, Mr. Hiroshi Terunuma, an expert at IDACA on Agricultural Cooperative Development, visited Georgia for a month to introduce to us the activities of agricultural cooperatives and the current situation in Japan. We have asked him to assess the future development potential and prepare relevant recommendations. During his stay, he met with representatives of Agricultural Cooperatives in different regions of Georgia and familiarized himself with their activities, studied the legislation of Georgia and the structure and directions of the Agency's activities. Mr. Terunuma held a training seminar for the staff of the Agency, where he provided comprehensive information regarding Japanese and international experience on development of cooperatives. He developed and provided us with relevant recommendations on further steps for the development of agricultural cooperatives in Georgia. During his visit, the possibility of the Agency's specialists to visit Japan and share Japanese experience was discussed.

It should be noted, that Mr. Terunuma's visit, as a highly experienced, qualified and sociable expert, contributed to new views and understandings for the development of cooperatives. He shared his international experience which reassured us of the need to develop a cooperative system and further stimulate promotion, establishment and expansion of agricultural cooperatives in Georgia.



Ilia Tamarashvili
Director of Agriculture and Rural
Development Agency (ARDA),
Ministry of Environmental Protection and Agriculture

We are expecting Japan, in the framework of the scheduled training programs for the specialists of the Agency, to provide us knowledge on the state policy in the field of cooperatives, historical process of cooperative development, existing support programs and activities of cooperatives operating in the agricultural field. We are sure that this will contribute to accumulation of our experiences in this field, to familiarize and to be able to compare with cooperatives in other countries. We are wishing to adopt successful models and policies suitable to the reality of Georgia for improvement of the legal frameworks and work out projects on development programs by using effective and modern technologies.



Seminar at the Agriculture and Rural Development Agency