



## 《Greetings from the President》



**YAMANO Toru**  
President of IDACA  
(President of JA Zenchu)

In August 2023, I was elected the 16<sup>th</sup> president of JA ZENCHU and president of IDACA.

First of all, I would like to express my condolences to the victims of the Noto Peninsula Earthquake of 2024 and my deepest sympathy to all those affected by the disaster.

IDACA, which is responsible for the JA Group's international cooperation activities, was established in 1963 through the efforts of Mr. Yasushi Hasumi, the first president of JA ZENCHU, as "a place for leaders engaged in the cooperative movement in developing countries to provide learning opportunities within the agricultural cooperative movement in our country and to foster solidarity in the international community," and last year marked its 60th anniversary.

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Since its establishment, we have accepted more than 6,700 participants for our training program, which is the core of our business. The network of IDACA's former participants has spread to about 135 countries around the world, including many Asian countries.

We will continue to contribute to the development of the cooperative movement in Asia and other countries and to coexistence with the rest of the world through training programs in cooperation with ICA (International Co-operative Alliance), JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), and other organizations. And we will make further efforts to help IDACA participants to develop a good understanding of Japanese agriculture and JA.

In addition, in recent years, we have been strengthening our cooperation with international organizations and the implementation of projects using the IDACA network to take advantage of the strengths of our organization. We have been conducting workshops on climate change with the World Farmers Organization (WFO), a member organization of farmers' organizations around the world, until last year, and this year we will conduct a joint research project with the International Grains Council (IGC), an intergovernmental organization, on the status of food security in the Asia-Pacific and Africa.

IDACA's international cooperation projects are thus highly regarded by the Japanese government and various international organizations, and there are international expectations for IDACA to fulfill the role it has.

Recognizing our role as a member of the JA Group, we will promote projects that contribute to the international community by establishing and expanding IDACA's image as a hub for information and human networks among agricultural professionals in Asia.

# -IDACA NEWS-

**In Commemoration of IDACA's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
Former Employee: Mr. Hiroshi Terunuma (December 1979 – March 2023)**

Congratulations on your 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

For about 43 years, I was in charge of training programs related to agricultural cooperatives for foreign participants. Japanese agricultural cooperatives are engaged in a wide range of activities for their members in addition to agriculture-related and credit businesses, and the participants have had a great impact and contributed to the development of agricultural cooperatives in their countries.

After 2000, in addition to acceptance training, I was involved in agricultural cooperative development work in Romania for six years. The country experienced democratic development of agricultural cooperatives amidst the turbulent transition from a socialist to a market economy, as well as the country's entry into the European Union.

IDACA's training facility moved from Hachimanyama, Setagaya-ku to Aihara-cho, Machida City in 1986, and the environment changed dramatically. When the facility was moved from the urban area to the suburban area near Takao, the impression was that participants were able to spend more time in a relaxed rather than a lonely environment, and that interaction among the participants had increased.

IDACA is doing important work contributing to the SDGs, and I wish for its continued growth.



# -IDACA NEWS-

## Introduction of Board Member for FY2023

The IDACA Board of Directors, Auditors and Councilors for fiscal year of 2023 are listed below. (as of March 1, 2024)

Board Member	Name	Organization & Position
President	YAMANO Toru	Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (JA-ZENCHU), President
Executive Director	KOBAYASHI Hirofumi	Academic Expert (Current Executive Director of IDACA)
Director	KUWADA Yoshifumi	The National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations (ZEN-NOH), Senior Executive Vice President
Director	KONDO Shuichi	National Mutual Insurance Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives, Managing Director
Director	YAGI Masanobu	The Norinchukin Bank, Representative Director and Managing Executive Officer
Director	HIROTA Taketoshi	The Japan Agricultural News, President
Director	YOSHINO Koji	Nokyo Tourist Corporation, Managing Director
Auditor	NAKAMURA Junsei	National Welfare Federation of Agricultural Cooperatives, Senior Executive Director
Auditor	KINOSHITA Haruo	Association for Education and Publications on Agricultural Co-operatives, Senior Managing Director
Councilor	BABA Toshihiko	Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (JA-ZENCHU), Senior Executive Director
Councilor	IWASAKI Eiji	Japan International Cooperation Agency, Vice President
Councilor	FUJIOKA Norio	Japan Association for International Collaboration of Agriculture and Forestry, Executive Director
Councilor	YAMAKOSHI Akihiro	Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union, Manager
Councilor	INAGAKI Teruya	National Chamber of Agriculture, Executive Director
Councilor	NAKAHIRA Kazunori	National Federation of Fisheries Co-operative Associations, Senior Managing Director

# -Business Reports-

## **Attended Grains Conference 2023 hosted by International Grains Council (IGC)**

Mr. Kobayashi, Executive Director, attended the Grains Conference 2023 hosted by the International Grains Council (IGC) on June 12-13, 2023.

The conference was subtitled "Achieving food security for importers in volatile world markets", and Mr. Kobayashi was invited as a panelist for the session "Improving Productivity and Sustainability in the Grain Sector". In the same session, he explained the objectives of the institution and raised issues related to the pursuit of productivity and sustainability and the importance of market information/networking among stakeholders. He also commented that access to smart agriculture is key for the future.

## **Attended World Farmers' Organization (WFO) Annual Meeting**

The annual meeting of the World Farmers Organization (WFO) was held in Sun City, South Africa, on May 21-24, 2023, and Mr. Kobayashi, Executive Director, attended the meeting.

Separately, we exchanged views with the WFO Secretary General on the schedule of WFO training at the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) training, and on a joint project with the International Grain Council (IGC).

## **Concluded Partnership Agreement with University of Environment and Sustainable Development (UESD)**

On August 2, 2023, IDACA signed a partnership agreement with the University of Environment & Sustainable Development (UESD), Ghana.

Based on this collaboration agreement, we will enhance our business, including training and research, as a new project.

# -Business Reports-

## International Grains Council (IGC) and IDACA launched joint project (Workshop held in Bangkok)

On December 19, 2023, the International Grains Council (IGC) and the IDACA held a workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, funded by the Government of Japan.

Recognizing that the global food market needs to be prepared to withstand shocks, IGC and IDACA conducted interviews with producers, cooperatives, traders, food processors, and consumers to learn about regional conditions, including how participants in the rice supply chain in Asia, Africa, and Oceania are using market information, in advance of the workshop. Interviews were conducted through a questionnaire, and discussions among the attendees were deepened based on the results of the survey at the workshop.

A similar workshop was held in London in February for other grains such as corn (maize) and wheat.

### <What is International Grains Council (IGC)?>

The IGC is headquartered in London and has 28 member countries and the European Union. The IGC calculates and publishes the Grain and Oilseed Index (GOI), prepares reports on grain markets, and holds grain conferences to promote international cooperation, facilitate trade, and exchange information on the international grain trade.



# -Reports on Training Courses-

## FY2023 JICA Training Course on “Establishment and Development of Farmers’ Organization”



JA Kamiina Grading Center  
(Nagano Pref.)

Finally freed from the restrictions caused by COVID-19, 10 participants from 9 countries from Asia and Africa participated in this training. One of the participants from African region said, “Finally, my dream has come true, and I am here in Japan.” In the past few years, the number of participants from African region has been gradually increasing.

The training started on July 17 and ended on September 1, based at JICA's Tsukuba facility, with field trips to Nagano and Miyagi prefectures. In Nagano prefecture, the participants learned about the organization and business initiatives of agricultural cooperatives, mainly through training at JA Kamiina, exchanged opinions with leaders of production committees, and deepened their consideration of organized agricultural initiatives through visits to member farmers and production corporations. In Miyagi prefecture, with the cooperation of the Miyagi Prefectural Government, Miyagi Agricultural High School, and JA Sendai, we had the opportunity to learn about policies, business plans of agricultural cooperatives and their efforts in processing business and 6th industrialization, human resource development in the agricultural sector, and examples of female entrepreneurship.

This year was a particularly hot summer, and although the trainees were surprised by the heat, their stay in Japan seemed to be a memorable one.



Harvesting Green Onions at Kitanohara Farm  
(Nagano Pref.)

# -Reports on Training Courses-

## FY2023 JICA Training Course on “Establishment and Development of Farmers’ Organization” <Message from Participant>



Mr. Chungu Chibimbi (Zambia)  
Senior Marketing Development  
Officer, Agribusiness and  
Marketing, Ministry of Agriculture

The training course was well laid out and structured with the facilitators providing the participants with detailed lectures. The lecture sessions were easy to follow through as the presentations were very clear and included illustrations, pictures and videos. The facilitators were extremely friendly allowing participants to freely express themselves and seek clarity. The training program also included extensive travel across Japan providing a better picture of the situation on the ground including the much needed exposure.

Our stay at Nagano city was amazing that the city had a cosmopolitan feel and was well developed. We learned a great deal during our stay having an insight of how the city managed the agricultural sector through research, production, processing, storage, distribution and marketing. The visits to the JA, the apple, flower, peach farms and the country elevator was very informative. We also took time to visit a warehouse where we witnessed the auctioning of various agricultural products.

While in Miyagi we visited an agricultural high school which provides quality knowledge to pupils in agricultural practices. It was shocking to learn that the young learners were exposed to various agricultural research practices including environmental conservation. The tour of the school was concluded with the exclusive moment of each participant been accorded an opportunity to plant a pine tree at the school grounds. Participants then headed to the site of a former school building damaged by the tsunami, where they learned of the hardships faced by the children and people of the town during the disaster and were filled with sad emotions. The trip to Miyagi ended with a traditional meal of onigiri and miso soup at a restaurant which was run by the women. The participants enjoyed the meal using chop sticks which was fun and memorable.

The training experience and stay in Japan were enjoyable, and the acquired knowledge is highly valued and likely to be implemented in each respective country.



Agricultural Direct Sells Shop  
Tanabatake Takasago Store  
(Miyagi Pref.)



# -Reports on Training Courses-

## HDR Project FVC Japan Tour in FY2023

Selected Students from Cambodia and Laos participated in the “Field Study on Food and Agriculture Industry in Japan 2023” from August 20th to August 29th August, 2023. The field study was affiliated with the “Project for Human Resources Development Project in Food - Related areas through Partnership with Universities in ASEAN Countries (HRD Project) - Phase 3”. The program was a 10-day intensive course attended by 8 students, 2 professors and 2 government officials from Cambodia and Laos. A total of 12 participants were selected from each country to participate in this intensive course program in Japan.

### <Student from National University of Laos>

It may be challenging to fully grasp the entire training course within a short period of time, and I can understand more when I get the opportunity to experience it firsthand. Time is important for a valuable and memorable learning experience. I would like to have a course like this that is both short-term and long-term for acquiring more knowledge. Thank you so much for the opportunity. I feel great to have received it and am happy to have joined this program.

### <Student from Royal University Agricultural, Cambodia>

Overall, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to learn and participate in learning more about this task. What I have learned is all important knowledge that can help not only me but also a more developed country, whether in food production or agriculture. Thank you so much for sharing and for the warm welcome every second.



JA Kinosato Farmer's Market "Mekke-mon Hiroba"  
(Kinokawa City, Wakayama Prefecture)



# -Reports on Training Courses-

## ICA/Japan Training Course on “Capacity Building of Rural Women on Their Roles for the Vitalization of Rural Economy in FY2023”



At JA Shinshu Ueda Direct Sale Shop  
(Nagano Pref.)

Commissioned by the International Co-operative Alliance Asia-Pacific (ICA-AP), IDACA conducted an ICA training course for women from September 1 to 14, 2023, with the aim of improving the status of rural women in Asia and the Pacific and promoting entrepreneurial activities that lead to higher income.

This was the first face-to-face training in three years and the first

time IDACA accepted ICA participants since moving to its new office.

Seven women leaders from India, Kiribati, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Thailand, and Vietnam participated in the training in Japan, following the viewing of lecture videos delivered in advance in their home countries and the on-site inspection training in Thailand.

During the field trip to Nagano prefecture, we learned about the JA Group's role in the local community, agricultural processing and marketing efforts by rural women, women's participation in rural development, and environmentally friendly agriculture. The knowledge and information gained from this study was used as a reference for action plans to be developed to improve issues in their own countries. In addition, the participants had the opportunity to attend a gathering of the Nagano Prefectural Council of JA Women's Associations, exchange views with President Kubo, National Council of JA Women's Associations, and engage in cultural exchange with members of local JA Women's Associations, making this a memorable field trip for all of them.



Cultural Exchange Meeting with JA Azumi  
Women's Association (Nagano Pref.)

# -Reports on Training Courses-

## ICA/Japan Training Course on “Capacity Building of Rural Women on Their Roles for the Vitalization of Rural Economy in FY2023” <Message from Participant>

The past 2 weeks have been a wonderful, amazing and educative experience as we had a field-based training, case studies learning and visits to agricultural cooperatives in Nagano prefecture, Japan. The most important observation that I can see is that the roles played by Japan Agricultural Cooperatives (JAs) in protecting and supporting the Japanese farmers for development of agriculture in Japan.

Japan has a very systematic JAs from primary level to the national level. It was a very meaningful experience to learn about how JA has successfully well-implemented the food value chains starting from production, packaging, grading, shipping, marketing and distribution, in addition to playing financial (mutual insurance, credit and saving), educational such as farm guidance activities, supplying and purchasing, medical and welfare services for their members.

Apart from that, from the case studies learning and observation, Japanese rural women participation in social and economic activities, especially in farming, is the key to the success of JA as empowered women are involved in decision making of farm management of JA. Through sustainable agricultural production based on the community, family farmers play an important role in contributing to the whole community in Japan.

We learned a lot especially about agricultural cooperatives from both countries Thailand and Japan for this training course. We will implement the

knowledge that we got from the training course in the action plan that we prepared to be applied in our home country.



Ms. Norfahida Binti Hasbullah (Malaysia)  
3<sup>rd</sup> person from the right in front  
Officer, Agriculture and Plantation Section,  
Malaysian National Co-Operative Movement  
(ANGKASA)

## -NEW FACES- Introducing New Members

**Ms. Chiba**  
Training and Development Group



I would like to disseminate Information about JA Group's Agricultural initiatives to the world.

**Ms. Suzuki**  
Planning Group



I would like to use my experience and knowledge gained from my previous job to make operations more efficient at IDACA.

As an IDACA employee, I will dedicate myself to build relationships with various countries that uphold the reputation of the JA Group.

**Mr. Akutsu**  
Training and Development Group



**Ms. Yamanashi**  
General Affairs Group



I am in charge of accounting in the General Affairs Group. I will do my best to make an immediate contribution to IDACA's operations.