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# JAPAN RESOURCES

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**Consumers Union of Japan**

1-9-19-207 Nishi-Waseda Shinjuku-ku

Tokyo 169-0051 Japan

Phone: 03-5155-4765

FAX: 03-5155-4767

## **Recent Food Activism in Japan**

### **Japanese Activists Hold Nationwide GMO Free Zone Meeting in Yuza**

The fifth annual GMO Free Zone meeting with activists from all over Japan was held in Yuza, Yamagata prefecture on March 6, 2010. The goal of the nationwide movement is to create a world without genetically modified (GM) crops. Over 200 people attended the meeting.

This time, the theme was “Development of GMO Free Zones and biological diversity for regional agriculture,” because in October 2010, the tenth Conference of the Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the fifth Meeting of the Parties of the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety will be held in Nagoya, Japan.

We listened to a presentation by Phil Bereano, professor emeritus, University of Washington, who has participated since the start of the Cartagena Protocol negotiations. We also enjoyed the presentation by GMO Free Zone activists from South Korea’s nationwide Consumers’ Co-operative Group, who described their successful efforts to set up South Korea’s first GMO-free zone. This gave the meeting a rich international flavour.

In his keynote address, Keisuke Amagasa from the No! GMO Campaign in Japan described how expanded use of GMO pollutes the environment, causing damage to biological diversity and wildlife. He noted that in May, 2010, the Environmental Medical Science Association in the US issued its official opinion regarding GMOs, warning that there are serious health risks such as allergy, immune function, and pregnancy/childbirth, while also urging people to change their diet.

The total area of registered GMO-free zones in Japan has increased by more than 1,900 ha to reach approx. 55,536 ha as of February 28, 2010. This is equal to about 1 percent of the total area under cultivation in Japan. We concluded that this is actually a powerful grass root movement with the participation of both producers and consumers in the entire country.

A statement was adopted at the end of the meeting in Yuza: “Let’s change the destructive tide of GMOs that dominate the global food trade, with the aim to develop local and regional agriculture for safe food.”

### **Another World Food Day**

October 16 is designated by the United Nation as “World Food Day.” However, there are still over one billion people who suffer from hunger, although the UN has worked since 1961 to eradicate hunger from the world. In 2008, Japan’s nationwide No! GMO Campaign held “Another World Food Day” events, heeding the call from Pesticide Action Network Asia Pacific (PANAP).

Again on October 16, 2009, we held a big meeting to celebrate rice in Tokyo, Japan. The theme of our 2009 Another World Food Day was “Let’s make and eat rice with happiness!”

During this event, we learnt about the severe problems of rice in Asia and Japan. Maki-san from the Teikei Rice Network said: “The daily average consumption of rice has decreased to about half in Japan. Rice fields also have been reduced by 50%. We are entrusting rice farming to people who are now 70 years old or older, with non-commercial farm households. We will not know how to farm rice in the future.”

Tasaka-san from Pesticide Action Network Japan discussed in detail how the so-called “green revolution” had a negative influence on rice farming around Asia. He noted that a huge amount of agricultural chemicals were introduced as a way to get higher yields. He was critical of IRRI, the International Rice Research Institute in The Philippines, which was actively promoting raising production in this dramatic way, but the real effects are an increase in harmful insects and loss of biological diversity – a loss of rice varieties.

During the event, we heard reports from city residents and young people who enjoy rice making. There were also many examples of people who have managed to find ways to maintain and develop abandoned terraced paddy fields, growing both rice and vegetables. Of particular interest were the reports from people working on winter rice fields in projects to promote habitats for *tsuru*, the Japanese crane, a large migrating bird. This was an excellent example of how farming can contribute to biological diversity.

The event was of course not all talk – we also enjoyed *onigiri* (handmade rice balls) and chiffon cake made with rice flour for dessert.

### **Rice Paddies Trust Movement—Rice Farming With Ducks!**

We held an event on May 16, 2009 to plant rice as part of the Aigamo Rice Paddies Trust Movement in Ibaraki prefecture, north of Tokyo. Rice farming with ducks has emerged as a way to produce rice without agricultural chemicals or commercial fertilizers, or with much reduced amounts. The Aigamo ducks swim freely in the paddies, eating weeds and insects that may otherwise harm the rice plants. This way of farming has attracted a lot of attention because it is gentle also to people and the environment as well.

During the event, some 60 participants from the metropolitan area and Tokyo joined the Trust Movement, helping to plant rice. The ducklings were released into the paddies about two weeks after birth on this day. After enjoying lunch together, we introduced the Year of Rice Action and Week of Rice Action held in 13 Asian countries including Japan.

We also discussed the various campaign activities against genetically modified rice, with updates on the prospects of GM rice being introduced in Asian markets.

This event by Japan’s Rice Paddies Trust Movement – rice farming with ducks – was part of our contribution to the Asia-wide campaign aimed at protecting and saving rice as our most precious food.

## **CUJ: Annul and Scrap the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and the**

### **Japan-U.S. Status-of-Forces Agreement**

*Resolution to make the best use of Japan's war-renouncing Constitution, and to request the removal of military bases*

On May 28, 2010 the governments of Japan and the United States issued a joint statement outlining the relocation of the Futenma base in Ginowan City to Cape Henoko and the adjoining waters near Camp Schwab in Nago City, Okinawa.

Strong anger was the response to the Democratic Party breaking its election campaign pledge. We also note that it amounted to crushing the will of the people as expressed by the 90,000 that gathered in the prefectural rally on April 25, 2010 in Yomitan Village, Okinawa. The strong reaction to the decision drove Prime Minister Hatoyama to resign from his post.

We strongly request the withdrawal of this joint statement confirming the mutual agreement between Japan and the United States. The Futenma base is located on land that was illegally looted, and should not only be returned, but all installations should be removed.

The Relocation of Futenma is an issue that emerged after the abduction and rape of a 12 year old schoolgirl by 3 U.S. Marines in September 1995. After news of this surfaced, some 85,000 people gathered in a massive protest in October 1995 stating that the base in the city could no longer be endured. At that point, both the Japanese and the U.S. governments were frightened by the anger in Okinawa. In December 1996, they issued a report claiming that the Futenma base would be returned, and the Henoko coastal area of Nago City was chosen as a "replacement facility" where a new military installation would be constructed. This location was already under consideration by the U.S. Navy in 1960. It is now again seen as part of the U.S. military reorganization.

This year marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security between Japan and the U.S. We take this opportunity to request that the Japanese government should annul and scrap the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty and the Japan-U.S. Status-of-Forces Agreement. The reason is that military bases are no longer necessary anywhere.

We thus resolve to make the best use of Japan's war-renouncing Constitution, and build true peace with all the people in the world, to remove and dismantle the military bases.

Resolution adopted by the participants at the 37th general meeting of Consumers Union of Japan

June 6, 2010

## **We Oppose the Introduction of Full-Body Scanning at Japan's Airports**

*Statement by the Citizens Association Opposing Phone Tapping and Consumers Union of Japan*

January 19, 2010

The U.S. government introduced whole body scanning at airports on December 25, 2009. This involves acquiring photographic images that reveal the nude body using X-ray techniques as a way to examine passengers. The claim is that such scanning is needed after attempts to bring bombs on board aircrafts. After that, physical examination using the same type of scanner has been extended to Canada and some EU member countries including the U.K., the Netherlands, and Italy.

However, other countries including Belgium and Spain are taking a skeptical approach to the introduction of such inspections, and in Germany, the opinion is divided.

**We do not agree that the counter-terrorism argument is a valid explanation for introducing full-body scanning.**

Such views are presented in mass media without taking into account privacy rights. We strongly request that whole body scanning should not be introduced in Japan, and that each government should make their own decisions regarding this issue without simply following the decisions made by the U.S. government. Moreover, we request that Japan's government will clearly state that there will be no introduction of whole body scanning in the future.

We have strong misgivings about the violation of privacy related to collecting fingerprints and facial recognition through the US-VISIT (United States Visitor and Immigrant Status Indicator Technology) system, as introduced in 2009 and the introduction of taking naked full-body images from 2010.

We also have misgivings about the influence of X-rays on the human body during the exposure to radiation. Although it is reported that the amount of radiation is small, there is no guarantee that there is no influence when the whole human body is exposed.

Secondary use of the acquired images are technically an easy process, and there is no way to guarantee that individual privacy rights are not violated in the future, as information that must be protected are stored and accumulated on computers as electronic information.

It is uncertain if whole body scanning can properly identify small amounts of liquids or nonmetal materials, etc. The argument that scanning is needed for "counter-terrorism" is in fact a one-sided attack on individual privacy rights, as the effectiveness is doubtful.

The broader issues of human rights and civil liberties are seriously at risk with the introduction of severe monitoring systems that collect personal information including body data, careers, interpersonal relationships etc.

For more details, please see the [Anti-Tochoho.org](http://Anti-Tochoho.org) website (Japanese)

## CUJ: Local Energy Production For Local Energy Consumption

*Resolution to aim for a clean break with nuclear power generation – We request a conversion of Japan's energy policy*

Nuclear power generation leads to radiation poisoning at every level: from the workers involved in uranium mining for the fuel used in nuclear reactors to the final disposal of high-level nuclear waste known in Japanese as *shi no hai*, “ash of death” or “lethal ash.” Human life and the natural environment are at risk and it is clear that we do not need nuclear power generation that pushes this “ash of death” to the children of future generations.

We, who value human life and the natural environment, must insist that nuclear reactors and other related facilities such as reprocessing plants will not be constructed anywhere. The earthquake-prone islands of Japan are particularly unsuitable for such construction.

Around the world, people are carefully watching plutonium reprocessing efforts related to nuclear fuel. Japan's resumption of the Monju reactor in Fukui prefecture has contributed to increasing global anxiety.

Nuclear power is promoted as an answer to the problem of climate change. However, the reality is increased electricity consumption, for example by private homes using more electrical gadgets and night-time use of electrical power. This is due to the fact that nuclear power generation is not effectively adjusted to the power demand of society. Moreover, the future of truly clean energy has been stifled by a lack of funds for energy conservation and renewable energy.

The Basic Energy Plan was amended in March, 2010 to include numerical targets and international development of nuclear power, stating that Japan will work on the construction of new nuclear power generators and expansion of existing facilities, as well as on the early establishment of a nuclear fuel cycle. This also involves trying to adopt “innovative” energy technologies, such as next generation light-water nuclear reactors, fast breeder reactors and FBR closed fuel cycle technology by the end of this fiscal year (March 31, 2011).

Furthermore, the Parliament is discussing the *Basic Law* for Prevention of Global Warming as submitted by Japan's government, which also relies on the use of nuclear power. We note that Japan's government is involved with the business sector in frantic sales promotion of nuclear power plants to foreign countries.

We hereby resolve to request a diversified and rich energy policy with local energy production for local consumption under the slogan of “a vigorous and healthy life connected to the future” instead of the current national policy that promotes nuclear power plants and nuclear power generation.

Resolution adopted by the participants at the 37th general meeting of Consumers Union of Japan

June 6, 2010

## **CBIC Closeup: Is It Necessary To Slaughter Cattle And Pigs That Have**

### **Foot-and-mouth Disease?**

The foot-and-mouth disease turmoil in Miyazaki Prefecture, involving the continual slaughter of livestock, has finally ended. Many people expressed their doubts about whether it was necessary to slaughter livestock over such a large area. This is a perfectly natural emotion from the point of view of the feelings of the general public. Doubts were also cast about why, if there is no problem consuming the meat and given the waste involved, these burdens were forced upon the farmers and such large compensations were necessary.

Honorary Professor of the University of Tokyo, Yamauchi Kazuya has spoken of the developments that led to the slaughter of livestock suffering from foot-and-mouth disease. According to Professor Yamauchi, foot-and-mouth disease first became established as an endemic disease in Britain and brought about a great loss to farmers there. From 1892 it was decided to introduce the method of slaughtering all the livestock in the surrounding area as a countermeasure. In the epidemic of 1920, however, the number of animals due to be slaughtered was too large, and some of the animals began to recover before their turn to be slaughtered came around, causing doubts about the slaughter method to become widespread among farmers. It became clear that animals could gain immunity from foot-and-mouth disease and recover naturally. Farmers began to express the opinion that if the animals would recover naturally there was no necessity to slaughter them, and this argument was advanced in parliament. However, when put to the vote, it was decided to continue the slaughter method by a slim majority.

What we can infer from the above is that foot-and-mouth disease is a disease from which animals can recover, and further that the slaughter method lacks scientific grounds and was adopted on the basis of a political decision by a majority decision in parliament.

In addition, this decision was internationalized by the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE – formerly known as the Office International des Epizooties). The OIE was established in 1924 as an international organization overseeing animal diseases and formulates international standards for animal hygiene and so on from its HQ in Paris. In 1957, the OIE drew up a treaty for the prevention of foot-and-mouth disease, adopting the slaughter method.

Under the Livestock Infectious Disease Law, which entered into force in Japan in 1951, it became compulsory for cattle and pigs that have contracted foot-and-mouth disease to be forcibly slaughtered. Stud bull farmers in Miyazaki Prefecture resisted the slaughter order to the end, but the state decided to proceed with forcible slaughter. From the state's point of view this was an executive measure based on law and there was absolutely no margin for the acceptance of the farmers' commonsense judgment.

The issue is that, with the advance of globalization, there is no longer any country that can escape foot-and-mouth disease, and it is therefore necessary to find a mechanism to enable coexistence with the disease. In order to do this, it is first necessary to abolish the out-of-date slaughter method, which places a burden on the farmer and which kills animals unnecessarily.

(First published by Citizens' Biotechnology Information Center (CBIC) in Bio Journal, September 2010)

## Getting Ready for Nagoya

Consumers Union of Japan and other groups that we usually work with, including the No! GMO Campaign, has focus on the MOP5 negotiations to be held in Nagoya in October 2010 about biological diversity. Our network is called Japan Citizens' Network for Planet Diversity, with a website: <http://mop5.jp> (in Japanese). You can also follow CUJ's English website for updates at <http://www.nishoren.org/en/>

During 2010 we have held a number of events and conferences, as well as local study group meetings. We are very concerned about how genetically modified organisms can be a threat to biodiversity. Since 2004, groups of volunteers have participated in activities to investigate wild-growing GM canola near roads and harbours in many locations around Japan. Of course there are many other examples of how genetic engineering and monoculture farming of GM crops will contaminate conventional and organic food production.

We hope to raise awareness about the problems by organizing a side event on October 12, 2010 in the building where the UN negotiations will take place. We are also organizing several events to discuss the on-going negotiations with guests and experts from Japan and other countries.

On October 10 (Sunday), we are holding an out-door pre-event with Japan Forum for Biodiversity from 10:00-16:00 at the Sakae Mochi no Ki Hiroba in Nagoya. There will be a Planet Diversity Parade from 15:00-16:30 on that day followed by a Forum on October 11 from 9:30-16:40. Finally, on October 16, will sum up the results of the MOP5 negotiations at an event from 13:00-17:00 at Wink Aichi Hall 1102.

For our foreign friends and supporters, the pre-event in the park on Sunday on October 10 and the Forum on October 11 (Monday) will perhaps be the most interesting. Among the speakers on October 11 will be Canadian farmer Percy Schmeiser, Australian anti-GMO activist Julie Newman, Norwegian expert on Mexican maize David Quist, and special guests from South Korea and The Philippines, who will talk about GMO-free zones and the Asian campaign against GM rice. Speakers from Japan include Amagasa Keisuke from the No! GMO Campaign and Kawata Masaharu, who has led the efforts to expose GM canola contamination around Japan.

We hope Nagoya will give real results both inside the negotiation hall and outside among citizens, who want to help protect our food and our farming by thinking locally and globally about genetic resources. The theme for our actions is "Food and agriculture that protect biological diversity: Aiming for a world without GMO." Hope to see you in Nagoya!

**Planet Diversity Forum**  
**Food and agriculture that protect biological diversity:**  
**Aiming for a world without GMO**

Date: October 11, 2010 (Mon.) 9:30 – 16:30 Place: Wink Aichi Small Hall 1

9:30-9:50 Opening Session

- Welcoming remarks
- Introduction of foreign guests

9:50-12:00 Part 1: Genetically modified farm products and biological diversity

Panel discussion: Summary of the efforts over six years to investigate GM canola that grows wild around Japan, and what to do next

Coordinator: Amagasa Keisuke

Panelists: Nagoya GMO Study Group, Green Co-op, Seikatsu Club

Presentations:

Kanagawa Takahiro, Kyoto Gakuen University: Basic problem of recombinant DNA techniques

Kawata Masaharu, GMO Information Service Japan (GISJ): The problem with wild-growing GM canola

Hatta Sumito, Nouminren Food Research Center: Investigating wild-growing GM canola

Namai Hyoji, Tsukuba University (Ret.): Hybridization issues of GM canola

Julie Newman: The current situation in Australia

12:00-13:00 Lunch

13:00-13:50 Lecture

David Quist: Pollution of traditional maize seed in Mexico

13:50-14:50 Part 2 Aiming for a world without GMO

- The movement for GMO-free zones: Korea, Japan
- The movement against GM rice in Asia: Malaysia

14:50-15:00 Break

15:00-15:50 Lecture

Percy Schmeiser: Towards a world without GM farm products

15:50-16:30 Part 3 The Cartagena Protocol and the Convention on Biological Diversity:

Changing Japan's domestic legislation

Talk show with Amagasa Keisuke, Kawata Masaharu, and Harano Yoshimasa:

The Convention on Biological Diversity and north-south issues, benefit sharing of genetic resources, liability and redress, and how to change Japan's domestic legislation for the Cartagena Protocol

**Japan Resources** is published by Consumers Union of Japan (CUJ). CUJ was founded in April 1969 and was officially certified as a non-profit organization on May 1, 2006 by the new Japanese NPO legislation. We continue to be a non-political and financially independent organization (NGO). CUJ is funded by membership fees and donations. The main concern of CUJ and its members is to realize a world of liberty and equality, a world free of economic, social and legal discrimination, and to preserve a safe and healthy environment for our children's future.

CUJ pursues the following goals on behalf of consumers: (1) To secure for ourselves and our families safe and healthy lives, (2) to establish systems/laws to protect the rights of consumers, (3) to promote peace, social justice and economic fairness, (4) to support and empower consumers who care about the environment, and (5) to cooperate with foreign consumer groups/organizations.

**Consumers Union of Japan**

**Nishi-Waseda 1-9-19-207, Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo 169-0051, Japan**

**Tel: (81)-3-5155-4765    Fax: (81)-3-5155-4767    E-mail: [nishoren@jca.apc.org](mailto:nishoren@jca.apc.org)**