

Consumers Union of Japan

Japan Resources

No. 183

November/December 2021

Contents:

From the Editors: Energetic Japan

Nuclear Power in Japan, 10 Years after the Fukushima Disaster

CUJ Opinions on the Draft Basic Energy Plan

Will genome edited food be labelled in Japan?

From the Editors:

Energetic Japan

Welcome to issue No. 183 of Consumers Union of Japan's English newsletter. This time, the theme is energy, a topic that is always timely in resource-poor Japan.

We note that 10 years after the massive earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster in 2011, only 10 nuclear reactors have been restarted.

Another Citizens' Food Summit: The "Green Food System Strategy" proposed by MAFF is not that "Green"

Trend: The 2nd National Nanohana Blossom Summit in Oyama was held in Oyama, Tochigi Prefecture, on 11-12 December 2021

Consumers Union of Japan is proposing another way forward, with our motto, local production for local consumption.

We hope you will stay updated with CUJ's activities and news on our English website, as well as on our new English Twitter account: <https://twitter.com/consumerunionjp/>

Nuclear Power in Japan, 10 Years after the Fukushima Disaster

By Martin J. Frid, CUJ

As of December, 2021 Japan has restarted 10 nuclear reactors after having completely shut down all 54 that were operational before the March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Six entire nuclear plants with several reactors each are rendered inoperational or indefinitely shut down due to damage or unsafe seismic conditions (Fukushima I and II, Hamaoka, Shika, Tokai, Tsuruga). Others are pending restart (Shimane, Tomari).

Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) which operates Kashiwazaki-Kariwa Nuclear Plant, the world's largest with seven reactors has yet to find solutions for its five oldest reactors, while the two newest are ready for restart. It has not produced any electricity since 2012. As of 2018, nuclear power only contributed 4.7% of Japan's electricity according to data from the Institute for Sustainable Energy Policies, a nonprofit research institute.

The 10 nuclear reactors in operation belong to Kansai Electric Power Co. (KEPCO), which provides electricity mainly to Kyoto, Osaka, Nara, Hyogo, Shiga and Wakayama prefectures in central Japan, and Kyushu Electric Power Co. and Shikoku Electric Power Co. in southern Japan.

CUJ Opinions on the Draft Basic Energy Plan

Consumers Union of Japan submitted the following opinions on 1 October 2021, in response to the Japanese Government Agency for Natural Resources and Energy's call for opinions on the formulation of the Sixth Basic Energy Plan:

Please change "(6) Restructuring of nuclear power policy" in "(5) Policy responses toward 2030 with a view to 2050" to "(6) Transformation of nuclear power policy" and state "Immediately stop restarted nuclear power plants and realize zero nuclear power plants.

The accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant has completely destroyed what has become known as the "safety myth" of nuclear power. It also revealed that the accident was a "man-made disaster" caused by the fact that TEPCO's management knew in advance about the danger of tsunami, but neglected to address it.

In fact, everyone is well aware of the dangers of nuclear power plants, including local residents, citizens who call for zero nuclear power plants, and even residents of the so-called "nuclear village." Even if a major accident does not occur, it is hard to argue that nuclear power plants are economically viable when

decommissioning and other expenses are factored in.

Looking back at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant accident, the Chernobyl nuclear power plant accident, and the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant accident, it is clear that the world has come to recognize that we cannot coexist with nuclear power plants, especially in Japan, a country of frequent earthquakes.

The Sixth Basic Energy Plan has as its key theme to show the path of energy policy toward the realization of carbon neutrality in 2050.

As climate change is occurring around the world, efforts to create a decarbonized society are accelerating, and more than 120 countries, including Japan, have already declared zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Renewable energy sources account for 70-80% of the electricity generated in Austria, Denmark, and Sweden, and more than 40% in Germany, Italy, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

On the other hand, in France, where the percentage of nuclear power plants is high, it is only over 20%. As for Japan, where the percentage is still around 18%, it is clear that Japan is lagging behind, even though solar power generation has been increased in recent years.

For example, in Germany, which relied on nuclear power for nearly 30% of its electricity in 2000, and renewable energy accounted for only 5-6% of its electricity. It has since reached the 40% level and has decided to go “zero nuclear” by 2022.

Japan also had no nuclear power plants immediately after the Fukushima nuclear accident, so it has already proven that it can sufficiently meet its electricity demand without relying on the restart of nuclear power plants. It is appropriate to follow the example of European countries and raise the renewable energy target for 2030 to 36-38%, and achieve zero nuclear power plants.

In 2016, the total deregulation of electricity retailing led to a shift from the 10 major power companies to new municipal power companies and small local power companies. By decentralizing and bottoming up the energy system, this movement will lead to the revitalization of local communities by establishing “lifestyles suited to one’s size” (local economic zones) through local production for local consumption. In order to achieve this, it is desirable to have the participation of residents, and the key points are involvement and participation in the decision-making system politically (secured by ordinances, etc.) and involvement in the business as economic participation (investment, etc.).

Energy-saving lighting and heating/cooling in offices and houses, building insulation, switching to electric vehicles, using public transportation and bicycles in urban areas, are among the efforts needed to make it possible to achieve 100% renewable energy for local low-voltage electricity in the near future.

At the prefectural level, Akita Prefecture, with its large amount of hydroelectric power generation, Kagoshima, Gunma, and Miyazaki Prefectures, with their large amount of solar power generation, and Oita Prefecture, with its large amount of geothermal power generation, have already achieved about 50% self-sufficiency in electricity from renewable energy sources.

By municipality, it is said that more than 100 municipalities in Japan have a regional energy self-sufficiency rate of more than 100%.

While it is true that the formation of regional economic zones based on local production for local consumption faces various challenges, the power shift is becoming more widespread in Japan through the various efforts of each region.

Thanks to the power of these regions, the shift away from nuclear power and toward renewable energy is steadily progressing in Japan, albeit belatedly.

The draft of the Basic Energy Plan assumes dependence on nuclear power plants, stating, “Nuclear power plants will be used on the necessary scale in a sustainable manner.

Consumers Union of Japan notes that the draft of the Sixth Basic Energy Plan assumes that Japan will depend on nuclear power plants, but such reasoning will probably be overcome by reality sooner or later.

Will genome edited food be labelled in Japan?

Consumers Union of Japan, No! GMO Campaign and other groups are lobbying hard for our right to choose what we eat. It also applies to farmers, who want to decide what they farm – and what not to farm. It especially applies to organic farmers, who have spearheaded the movement to more regenerative and natural ways to grow our food, while thinking about the future. Our colleagues over at the Citizens Biotechnology Information Center, CBIC, note:

On September 16, representatives of the NO! GM Food Campaign and other civic groups visited the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) for a hearing and negotiations on the current state of discussions within the government on the labeling of genetically modified seeds and seedlings and whether or not to grant organic certification to

genome-edited crops. A MAFF official said the ministry had not considered labelling for genetically modified seeds and seedlings in the past, but had begun the study because of growing interest among citizens. The ministry also said although it has confirmed in principle that genome-edited crops will not be granted organic certification, this is still on hold since there is no verification technology to determine whether or not food has been produced through genome editing. The official said that Canada is currently the only developed country that has decided not to grant organic certification to genome-edited crops and therefore MAFF is now in the process of contacting relevant organizations in the country.

Another Citizens' Food Summit: The "Green Food System Strategy" proposed by MAFF is not that "Green"

"The "Green Food System Strategy" proposed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) is filled with ambitious goals, such as increasing the area of organic farming to 25% of all farmland by 2050 and reducing the use of chemical pesticides by 30%. It is said to have been formulated in preparation for the UN Food System Summit to be held in September this year, but many NGOs have criticized the summit as being dominated by

profit-oriented multinational corporations.

We are organizing another Citizens' Food Summit in response to the UN Food System Summit. We will learn about the current situation of corporate domination of food on a global scale, find out what the true aim of Japan's "Green Food System Strategy" is, and think about the agriculture and food we want.

Date: Saturday, 18 September, 2021

Venue: Bunkyo Silver Center, Silver Hall (Bunkyo Civic Center 4F)

Online participation is also possible.

Program (tentative)

13:30-13:40 Opening remarks

13:40-13:50 Issue: "Why Green Food System Strategy is not Green" by Mr. Toshiyuki Saito (National Federation of Farmers Movement)

13:50-14:00 Issue: "The UN Food System Summit that gives priority to large corporations", Ms. Setsuko Yasuda (Food Policy Center Vision 21)

14:00-14:10 Issue: "Slow Food International Movement / Food System Strategy from the Viewpoint of an Organic Farmer" Ms. Megumi Watanabe (Japan Slow Food Association, Organic Farmer)

14:10-14:20 Issue: "Breaking away from chemical pesticides with RNA pesticides?" Keisuke Amagasa

14:20-14:40 Animation “Big Brother is Coming – The Invisible Threat to Our Food” Screening and commentary

14:40-14:50 Break

14:50-16:15 Panel discussion “We are the main actors! The Future of Food Created by Consumers and Farmers

16:15-16:30 Message Board Campaign and the Future

Panelists

Toshiyuki Saito was born in Chiba Prefecture in 1949. He became a standing committee member of the National Federation of Farmer’s Movements when it was formed in 1989, and later became its secretary general. He has been practicing organic farming in Chiba Prefecture.

Setsuko Yasuda worked for Consumers Union of Japan, where she was in charge of the anti-nuclear power movement, food safety and food agriculture issues. She established the Food Policy Center Vision 21 in 2000. Her major publications include “Suicide Seeds” (Heibonsha Shinsho), co-authored “TPP and Japan’s Issues” (Noubunkyo Booklet), and “Food is Degrading Japan: Seeds for Life and Safe Food for the Next Generation” (Eats Food News).

Megumi Watanabe is a graduate of the Faculty of Education at Waseda University. In 2015, she moved to Italy and received a master’s degree from the University of Gastronomic

Sciences, a university founded by the Slow Food Association. After returning to Japan in 2016, she played a central role in the launch of Slow Food Japan and will become the President in April 2019. She is also the wife of an organic farmer and the mother of two children.

Coordinator

Keisuke Amagasa graduated from the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Waseda University. After working as an editor for the magazine “Gijutsu to Ningen” (Technology and Humanity), he became independent in 1993. Currently, he is a representative of the Citizens Biotechnology Information Office, a representative of the No! GMO Campaign, and advisor to Consumers Union of Japan. His recent publications include “Genome Manipulation and Human Rights” (Jiyu Shuppansha), “Postwar History of Agriculture and Food: From Defeat to Post-Corona” (Midorikaze Shuppan, co-author), and “New Corona Vaccine: Its Real Image and Problems” (Midorikaze Shuppan).

Animation: “Big Brother is Coming: The Invisible Threat to Our Food

ETC Group

In addition to agribusinesses, this video shows how huge IT companies are now entering the world of food, and asset management companies are buying up shares in food-related companies. What in the world is

happening in the food industry? We will consider the true nature of the digitalization that is unknowingly shaking our food industry from the perspective of the food world. Presented for the first time in Japan.

(Original title: Big Brother is Coming to the Farm: the digital takeover of food)

Organized by: Consumers Union of Japan

Trend: The 2nd National Nanohana Blossom Summit in Oyama was held in Oyama, Tochigi Prefecture, on 11-12 December 2021

By Tasaka Koa, CUJ

This conference was attended by the mayor of Oyama, the mayor of Isumi, and the mayor of Kisarazu, as well as Mr. Susumu Sameda, a city official who has been promoting organic school lunches in Isumi. They discussed the promotion of organic farming, protection of natural monuments such as the crested ibis, and preservation of the environment.

Isumi in Chiba Prefecture has been promoting the use of locally grown organic and pesticide-free rice and vegetables for school lunches instead of imported wheat bread contaminated with pesticides. It is a city that has decided to supply organic and pesticide-free rice for school lunches at all of its elementary and junior high schools, under the

guidance of the late Mr. Inaba of a local rice research institute. They achieved the goal of supplying organic and pesticide-free rice for school lunches in all elementary and junior high schools in Isumi by 2019, as well as eight kinds of vegetables grown organically and pesticide-free to be served at school lunches.

Next, it was reported that Kisarazu in Chiba Prefecture is currently implementing a special program for farmers to produce organic and pesticide-free rice and vegetables to serve as school lunches for elementary and junior high schools in Kisarazu. Based on these reports, the mayor of Oyama decided to do the same in Oyama and convert school lunches to organic, pesticide-free foods. To this end, the Oyama City Organic Agriculture Council was established and a local rice research institute in Tochigi Prefecture was assigned to provide technical guidance to organic rice growers.

Consumers Union of Japan

CUJ is a politically and financially independent non-governmental organization (NGO). We are funded by membership fees, sales of publications and donations.

CUJ was founded in April 1969 as Japan's first nationwide grassroots consumer organization.

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