

Social Science Korea and Kyoto University Joint Seminar

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# **Local Food Movement in Japan: Rethinking Alternativeness**

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# Outline

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## 1. An Overview of Japanese Agriculture

- Declining and deteriorating sector
- Political economic climate surrounding the sector
  - Failure (?) of structural policy
  - Neo-liberal turn of agricultural policy (deregulation and budget cut)
  - Liberalization of agricultural trade under the WTO regime

## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives

- Alternative “quality”
  - Organic, Fairtrade, Ethical Sourcing/Marketing...
- Alternative “place”
  - Local agri-food networks (Teikei/Sanchoku, Chisan-Chisho, Soybean Trust, Traditional food, Local brand marketing, etc.)

## 3. Conclusion: What Alternativeness?

# 1. Japanese agriculture

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- Japanese agriculture rapidly declining and deteriorating
  - **Scarcity of arable land in a long term decreasing trend**
    - 4.61m ha in 2009, 14% decrease since 1985, 24% decrease since 1961
  - **Small farm sizes**
    - 1.4ha excluding Hokkaido (20.5ha) in 2009
    - 1.9ha including Hokkaido in 2005 → 2.2ha in 2010
  - **Low wages and falling agricultural incomes**
    - Avg. ag wage for male = 62% of national avg. industry wage in 2005
    - Earnings from ag = 23% of total farm household income in 2008
  - **Part-time and aging farmers in a sharp increase trend**
    - Commercial farm households with full-time farmers under 65 = 20%
    - Commercial farmers aged 65 or over = 61% in 2005
  - **Lack of agricultural successors**
    - Commercial farmers with successors fully/mainly in ag = 6.8% in 2005
  - **Increase of abandoned cultivated land areas** – 400,000ha in 2010

# 1. Japanese agriculture

## Downward Trend of Japanese Agricultural Sector

(10000ha, 10000, %)

|                        | 1965        | 1975       | 1985        | 1995        | 2005        | 2010*       |           |
|------------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| Arable land            | <b>600</b>  | <b>557</b> | <b>538</b>  | <b>504</b>  | <b>469</b>  | <b>461</b>  | 2009/1965 |
|                        |             | -7.2       | -3.4        | -6.3        | -6.9        | -1.7        | -23.2     |
| Abandoned land         |             | <b>13</b>  | <b>14</b>   | <b>24</b>   | <b>39</b>   | <b>40</b>   | 2010/1975 |
|                        |             |            | 3.1         | 80.7        | 58.2        | 3.6         | 205.3     |
| Nr. of farm households | <b>566</b>  | <b>495</b> | <b>423</b>  | <b>344</b>  | <b>285</b>  | <b>168</b>  | 2010/1965 |
|                        |             | -12.5      | -14.5       | -18.7       | -17.2       | -41.2       | -70.4     |
| Nr. of farmers         | <b>1151</b> | <b>791</b> | <b>543</b>  | <b>414</b>  | <b>335</b>  | <b>260</b>  | 2010/1965 |
|                        |             | -31.3      | -31.4       | -23.8       | -19.1       | -22.4       | -77.4     |
| Nr. of core farmers    | <b>894</b>  | <b>489</b> | <b>346</b>  | <b>256</b>  | <b>224</b>  | <b>191</b>  | 2009/1965 |
|                        |             | -45.3      | -29.2       | -26.0       | -12.5       | -14.6       | -78.6     |
|                        | 65 or over  |            | <b>19.5</b> | <b>39.7</b> | <b>57.4</b> | <b>60.4</b> |           |

Note: Data of arable land and number of core farmers are available for 2009. Numbers of farmers and core farmers are only for commercial farm households since 1985.

# 1. Japanese agriculture

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- Political economic climate surrounding the agricultural sector
  - **Trade liberalisation pressures** from the U.S. and WTO
  - **Deregulation pressures** from the mainstream business sector
  - **Diminishing role of the government sector**
  - Milestones
    - 1982-87: Nakasone cabinet → neo-liberal turn
    - 1985: Plaza Accord → rapid revaluation of JPY
    - 1988-91: Trade liberalisation of beef, orange, processed cheese, etc.
    - 1994: GATT-UR Agreement on Agriculture → rice import (+ in 1999)
    - 1995: New Food Law (+ in 2004) → deregulation of rice market
    - 1999: New Basic Law on Agriculture → selective measures
    - 2001-06: Koizumi cabinet → neo-liberal drive
    - 2007: Direct payment system → mainly targeted at core farmers
    - 2009: End of LDP rule → Where DPJ rule is heading for?
    - 2010-: Extensive Direct Payment System to support farm households
    - 2011??: Join in TPP (Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement) ...???

# 1. Japanese agriculture

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- Growing concerns about agri-food and rural resource issues
  - **Food security**
    - Fall of food self-sufficiency ratio = 40% on a calorie basis / grains = 26% on a weight basis in 2009 (cf. 73% / 62% in 1965)
    - But, 2007/08 World Food Crisis was not enough for Japanese consumers to realise the importance of food security...
  - **Food safety**
    - Consumers concerns about safety of imported food (1980s~)
    - Especially in recent years, due to those imported from U.S. and China
    - Vis-à-vis high quality (not necessarily safe) food produced domestically
  - **Rural local economy, resources, and community**
    - Rural-urban divide ← impoverishment (not necessarily in terms of economic income) of rural communities
    - Loss of multifunctionality of agriculture (including rural landscape and culture as well as water resource nurturing)

## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (1) Quality

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- Organic farming (有機農業)
  - Largely originated in the *sansho-teikei* (producer-consumer collaboration) movements, beginning in 1960s and 70s
  - Japanese Organic Agriculture Association (JOAA) founded in 1971
    - At its peak in 1983 in terms of JOAA membership
  - Third-party distributors arose in 1980s, contributing to the development of organic market
    - But at the expense of direct link between and mutual commitment of producers and consumers
  - Introduction of JAS organic standard in 2001, enabling the food services and retail sector to tap into the growing organic market
    - Not necessarily sourcing organic products domestically
    - Certified area (2009)= 8,595 ha or 0.19% of total cultivated area
    - Certified output (2008)= Domestic 55,925t or 0.18% of total domestic output (← 33,755t in 2001) / Imported 2,001,584t (← 94,186t in 2001)

## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (1) Quality

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### Fairtrade

- Started with *teikei-style movement* (eg. Negros Campaign since 1986, Alter Trade Japan since 1987)
- Gradually taken up by *certification-based business* (Transfair Japan in 1993 → FLO since 1997, Fairtrade Label Japan since 2004)

### Ethical marketing (ethical sourcing)

- Social and environmental standards and certification scheme
  - ISO, GlobalGAP, SA8000, etc.
  - Responsible Soybeans, Responsible Sugarcane, Sustainable Tea, etc.  
(→ Hisano 2008; Sekine, Boutonnet & Hisano 2008)
- Not very popular in Japan



## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (1) Quality

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- Concerns over alternative “quality”
  - **Conventionalisation of organic farming** (→ Jordan 2010)
    - Increasing incentives for producers to be organic
    - Increasing opportunities for consumers to purchase organic products
    - But, likely to be exploited by mainstream actors...
  - **Mainstreaming of fairtrade and ethical marketing** (→ Hisano 2010)
    - Increasing opportunities for producers to be supported by consumers while going socially and environmentally sustainable
    - Increasing opportunities for consumers to purchase ethical products
    - But, likely to be exploited by mainstream actors...

## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (2) Place/Locality

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- *Sansho-teikei* (産消提携)
  - Evolved hand-in-hand with organic farming since 1960s/1970s
    - Active and direct involvement and mutual commitment of both consumers and producers within a certain vicinity
  - Gradually replaced by the third-party distributors and mainstream retailers who provide consumers with organic products
- *Sanchoku* movement (産直運動)
  - Started in 1960s/1970s, initially led by consumers co-ops and agricultural co-ops (JAs) in collaboration
    - Ex. Kyoto Consumers Co-op + Daisen Dairy Co-op, JAs in Tango region (Northern Kyoto), Kyoto Fisheries Co-op, etc.
  - Farmers' associations (unions → Japan Family Farmers Movement or 農民連, founded in 1989) have launched Sanchoku Centres since 1980s + New Japan Women's Association (新日本婦人の会)
    - Also addressing social justice and political issues...

## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (2) Place/Locality

- *Chisan-chisho* movement (地産地消)
  - Locally produced (地場生産), locally consumed (地場消費)
  - Emerged in 1990s to address the “failure of the modern food system” by promoting the localisation of food consumption
    - Partially influenced by an old saying “身土不二”
    - But, largely aimed to revitalise local agriculture ← quickly taken up by local/national governments and JAs (rather than NGO/NPOs)
    - National Chisan-chisho Promotion Council/Forum since 2006
  - Various types
    - Farmers’ market / direct sales outlet (直売所、道の駅、里の駅)
    - Promotion of local food in school lunches and food education
    - Green Lantern (緑提灯) voluntary scheme
    - Teikei (CSA) style movement
    - Not (or less) addressing safety/environmental issues, social justice issues, and political issues, with some exceptions



## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (2) Place/Locality

- Agriculture, Commerce, and Industry Partnerships (農商工連携)
  - METI, MAFF, etc.
  - Local-level partnerships...expected to make a ripple effect of investment and economic activities within the local
  - Various stakeholders
    - Local government, JA, community banks, SME, producers (agriculture, fishery, forestry), universities, research centres, etc.
- Sixth-order Industrialisation (6次産業化)
  - MAFF
  - Farmers are encouraged to add/change values
  - From just producing to processing, marketing, and linking their resources with various services
  - With support from other stakeholders



## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (2) Place/Locality

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- Soybean Trust Movement (大豆畑トラスト運動)
  - Launched in 1998 by Japan Consumers Federation (日本消費者連盟) and its division of No! GMO Campaign
    - Started with 15 farmers' groups in 9 prefectures and about 1,000 *teikei* consumers → rapidly increased to the peak of 57 farmers' groups in 2000 and 6,000 *teikei* consumers in 1999
  - Backgrounds of the movement
    - Soybeans as a key ingredient of Japanese diet, but self-sufficient ratio dropped to 2-3% (6% in 2008, and if limited to food consumption 21%)
    - Concerns about the safety of imported GMO soybeans
    - Concerns about the loss of diversity of soybeans and soy-foods
    - To make use of increasing set-aside paddy fields and abandoned fields
  - Some consequences
    - **Mainstreaming of the use of domestically grown soybeans** (国産大豆) for *Natto*, *Tofu*, and other soy-food products, while imported organic or non-GMO soybeans are also popular ← also promoted by MAFF

## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (2) Place/Locality

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- Traditional Food movement (日本の伝統食を考える会)
  - Established in 1981, with 22 members in Osaka
  - Initially aimed at rediscovery and reevaluation of Japanese traditional diet
  - Launched the “Traditional Diet Train Campaign” in 1992, to travel to a particular region of Japan every year to promote Japanese diet
    - As a countermeasure against the “American Train Campaign” (1989-1990) sponsored by U.S. interests aimed at promoting food exports to Japan
  - Symposiums on various topics such as WTO, food safety, school lunch, food and poverty, etc.

## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (2) Place/Locality

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- Local brand marketing
  - Old practices of trademarks, brands, seals of approval and certifications become central to supply chains of all kinds including local food networks...
  - Local traditional vegetables
    - ex. Kyoto traditional vegetables or Kyo-yasai and Nara traditional vegetables or Yamato-yasai (→ [Ikejima & Hisano 2008](#); [Imaizumi & Hisano 2010](#))
  - Geographical Indication
    - ex. Kobe Beef and Matsusaka Beef (→ [Sekine 2010](#))
  - Endogenous development can be enhanced by linking products to places (locality), but at the same time could be re-embedded in the conventional agri-food networks (as seen in the case of organic and fairtrade “quality” products)

## 2. Emerging Alternative Initiatives (2) Place/Locality

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- Concerns over alternative place (locality)
  - Initiated by social movements → gradually or quickly taken up by local/national governments and mainstream actors especially WHEN the locality is translated into an added value of products through labelling/brand marketing strategy
  - Sometimes controversial role of JAs and local elite actors = less oriented to social justice and policy issues
  - At the same time, without the involvement of local/national governments, JAs, and some businesses, alternative initiatives would be left marginal



# Discussions and Conclusion

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## □ Some critiques

- [DuPuis & Goodman \(2005\)](#) challenge the ‘normative’ conceptualisation of localism, calling instead for a ‘reflexive localism’ that recognise potentially differential incorporation of social class into local food networks
- [Maye & Kirwan \(2010\)](#) “(A)gri-food scholars are now becoming more sensitive to the dangers of falling into the ‘local food trap’, wherein ‘local’ is uncritically accepted as being ‘good’”
- [Hirata & Nishiyama \(2008\)](#) “Chisan-chisho’s popularity has shown that there is a shared sense by government, JAC, and NGOs that there is something wrong with the current food system. This evaluation of the current food system is a starting point, but analysis needs to go further into policy issues. Social, economic, and environmental disadvantages and shortcomings of the food system need to be considered in a holistic manner.”

# Discussions and Conclusion

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- The role expected of academic researchers?
  - [Maye & Kirwan \(2010\)](#) “on the one hand, there are academics and activists who advocate a ‘pragmatic’ agenda , working both with and within the existing food system; whereas, on the other hand, there are those who advocate a more ‘purist’ agenda, seen through a structuralist critique of neoliberalism.”
  - What is my position? What is your position? Whatever position we would take, what is important is...
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