

## Abstracts

### The Trends and Future Prospects of Agricultural Employment

**Tsutomu Matsuhisa** (Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries)

The workforce in the agricultural sector began to increase from the middle of 1970s, and this trend is continuing. This increase has been commonly seen in the males under 39 years old and male and female workers of 55–69 years old. The population growth in the young group include newcomers who started engaging in agriculture and technical intern trainees from foreign countries, whereas the increase in the older group may include those who have mandatorily retired and then joined to agricultural sector. Recently, agricultural workers over 60 years old are increasingly observed, while the share of full-time workers is shrinking. Regarding production types, the horticulture sector shows the most increase of workforce. Due to lower labor requirements and agricultural incomes, hiring full-time workers is unlikely to be seen in many commercial farms (holding >0.3 ha of farmland or earning >0.5 million yen of agricultural income). Among those who still employ full-time workers the number of employers is limited: 2-4 for the commercial farms and less than 20 for the corporate farms. Given that the shortage of family labor and aging issues will be more crucial, the emerging challenge is to keep new employers remaining in the agricultural sector in order to sustain the workforce required.

### The Structure of Agricultural Labor in the Netherlands

**Yuichiro Ichinose** (Norinchukin Research Institute Co., Ltd.)

This paper overviews Dutch agriculture and analyzes the structure of agricultural labor in the Netherlands (NL). The NL (86.6 billion dollars in 2012) is the second largest country which exports agricultural products in the world, next to the USA (144.9 billion dollars). The NL imports many grains which require large areas of land to grow, because the NL is small country. On the other hand, the NL exports many highly profitable agricultural products such as flowers, bulbs, seeds, vegetables, edible meats and dairy products, mainly to EU countries in which 500 million people are living. Due to the EU common market, the NL can export agricultural products without any customs. The number of farms is declining in the NL, and the farm size is bigger than it used to be. The standard working time is 38 hours per week in Dutch farms. In the busy season, the working time can be legally extended. The hourly wage of part-time worker is higher than that of the full-time worker. Dutch farms are basically operated by family labor. To some extent, non-family labor is introduced into Dutch farms. Especially in horticulture and permanent crop farms, a lot of non-family workers are employed. Many migrant workers who come from eastern European countries such as Romania and Bulgaria are employed by the agricultural sector in the NL.

### For Making Farming More Attractive for the Younger Generations

**Kazuhito Yamashita** (The Canon Institute for Global Studies)

The Japanese farming population is aging and declining. In spite of a lot of governmental subsidies for the increase of new entrants to farming, only 58,000 people, which is the equivalent of 2 percent of the total farming population, enter the farming industry every year. Furthermore, about the half of the newcomers are aged over 60 years old. In fact, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries itself prevents people from entering the farming industry. The farmland law prohibits a joint stock company from owning farmland unless more than half of its stocks are owned by farmers or the farming industry. A newcomer is not allowed to set up an ordinary joint stock company in order to gain capital to enter into the farming business. In addition, the acreage reduction policy which pegs the price of rice much higher than that determined by the market lets small scale part-time farmers remain in the rice industry. Full-time farmers could not expand their farm size in order to reduce their costs and make their farming more profitable. Nobody dares to start an unprofitable business. The best way to entice people into farm-

ing is reforming agricultural policies.

“Non-economic Rationales” for Cost-effective Industrial Agriculture: Based on Accounts of a Manager of an Agricultural Corporation Specializing in Spring Onion Production

**Kenichi Noguchi** (Nihon University)

Industrial agriculture is predicated on being cost-effective. This paper sought to ascertain the “non-economic rationales” behind industrial agriculture. This work interpreted the accounts of an individual who resigned as executive director of seven groups of companies in other industries to start an agricultural corporation that primarily produces spring onions in Yamagata Prefecture. Numerous studies in areas such as environmental sociology, rural sociology, and ethnology have examined the modernization of agriculture from a critical perspective. These studies have depicted modernization as a major factor for the loss of independence and autonomy among farmers. In sharp contrast to those economic rationales are various “non-economic rationales” for the modernization of farming. These “non-economic rationales” present modernization of farming in a favorable light. This work found that modernization has not necessarily conflicted with industrial agriculture. Instead, findings revealed that agriculture is an industry that retains a great deal of independence. Moreover, this paper contends that work to produce crops offers vast latitude to take on challenges as an extension of management. For the manager of an agricultural corporation, the “non-economic rationale” for engaging in industrial agriculture was having vast latitude to take on challenges while ensuring that crops were produced cost-effectively.

Challenges for Women Farmers’ Active Engagement in Agriculture

**Kazue Sato** (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries)

Women farmers occupy about half of the agriculture work force now and are to take an important role on in promotion of the local agriculture. However, their role as the non-paying worker has been expected in the family-owned farming of conservative Japanese farm village society. Because of less attractive points compared with other industries, the position of Japanese agriculture has dropped down and invited situations such as the lack of brides in farm villages, and, as a whole, the aging and the decrease of farmers. The Japanese Government is now promoting support for women’s active engagement in agriculture. Since women farmers have special abilities for judging not only as farmers but also as mothers or consumers, they can sometimes give better ideas and strategies in farming management than men. However, the wall which blocks women’s success is still very high in rural villages in Japan. Especially, among the older farmers’ the mindset is difficult to change. In family-owned farming, women farmers are supposed to behave as having no eagerness. In companies, there are many women who have active roles in farming or management, but the numbers of farming companies are low.

Agriculture and Labour Law

**Hideo Kunitake** (Otaru University of Commerce)

This paper seeks to offer an exploration of the basic principles of Agriculture and Labour Law. Employees who are employed in agriculture as that term is defined in the Labor Standards Act are exempt from overtime pay provisions, and not all of the rules and standards apply to agricultural workers. This study examines how and why agricultural workers used to be exempt from working time rights, and will further discuss some ideas to extending the scope of working time rights.