

## **Yuki-no-Sato Touwa Furusato-zukuri Kyogikai** **(Council for Hometown Development of Organic Farm Village Touwa)**

### **(1) Project operator: NPO Yuki-no-Sato Touwa Furusato-zukuri Kyogikai**

**[Establishment]** April 2005

**[No. of members]** 264 (As of 2011)

**[Objectives]** To preserve the blessings, history, culture and scenic beauty of the forests rich in nature in the Touwa district of the Abukuma mountains and promote a hometown development by constantly recycling natural resources. To promote welfare and health enhancement of local people and revitalize the whole community through visible and heartfelt exchange programs so that they can live a purposeful life with a pride.

#### **[Main activities]**

- (1) To process and promote local specialties (Mulberries, figs, apples and other local produces)
- (2) To display and sell local specialties (Roadside Stand “Fukushima Touwa”)
- (3) To open and operate outlets (in large stores in cities, and Tokyo ward-level festivals and other events in Tokyo)
- (4) To sell and distribute farm-fresh products (for school lunch and lodging facilities)
- (5) To support compost center operation and farming business (Yuki-sanchoku/Touwa Genki Yasai)
- (6) To promote exchange and resettlement programs (e.g., Fukushima Furusato Kurashi Annainin – volunteer guide for hometown life)
- (7) To promote satisfying life and culture (e.g., folklore tea shop, shimekazari, bamboo works, pottery)
- (8) To promote health (Lectures and counseling services)

### **(2) Activities for recovery**

In Touwa, local residents took initiative in developing the “Forest recovery plan/ Disaster recovery program for the organic farm village Touwa” with a view to recovering from the nuclear plant accident. The followings are major activities.

- SATOYAMA recovery plan/disaster recovery program
  1. To help members apply for damage compensation
  2. To confirm safety of members’ agricultural products
  3. To research and revitalize members’ farm fields
  4. To expand the sales of members’ agricultural products
  5. To protect the health of members and their families from radioactivity

An immediate focus of the disaster recovery program is to realize resilient farming in the face of radioactivity and give supports to livelihood and physical and mental health of local residents. In Touwa, the council has been taking initiative in measuring radiation dosage in the

farm lands and produces from early on and analyzing data accumulated in cooperation with experts. As one of the activities for physical and mental health of local people, the Committee for People, Town and Environment Development was established. The committee regularly organized discussion meetings and workshops for people to think locally, understand current situations, and share hardships each other, instead of holding concerns over radioactivity in their own heart. On such occasions, they can talk about their problems and experiences honestly, and learn from experts' lectures to know the status properly and think for themselves.

### **(3) Achievements**

As a result of prompt dosage measurement and cultivation based on the experts' advice, severe levels of radiation dosage are now virtually undetectable in agricultural crops in Touwa, and the transition rate of radioactive substances from soil to vegetables and other produces could be kept to a much lower level than initially worried. As for the soil, it is expected that we could plant seeds in this spring, by using organic substances of local origin and plowing deeply.

Another achievement is that the committee played a leading role in providing opportunities for people to share their concerns and feeling instead of holding anxiety and grief in their heart alone.

This sincere attitude toward people's concerns over agriculture is quite characteristic of our disaster recovery program, which is also one of the major achievements.

### **(4) Future development**

Future tasks are to continue soil surveys for each field and develop countermeasures depending on the contamination levels, and to take measures to stop radioactive substances from flowing into fields and help local people explore the cultivation methods to prevent transition of radioactive substances in crops, even if only slightly, at experts' advice.

The council will also continue to organize the opportunities to let the society know the status of local farmers. The following is one of such occasions.

- A symposium to be held soon: "Visit to Fukushima – National Assembly"
1. Date: March 24 (Sat) and 25 (Sun)
  2. Overview: To provide opportunities to visit Fukushima Prefecture, witness the damaged areas, and listen to the stories of local people, in order to help more and more people learn about the reality of agriculture in Fukushima for their proper understanding.