

Town Marché Project for Disaster Recovery

(1) Project operator: Fukushima University Machizukuri Kabushikigaisha (Marché F)

“Fukushima University Machizukuri Kabushikigaisha Marché F” (Hereinafter referred to as Marché F) is a company established to promote area revitalization in 2009 by students in the seminar by Associate Professor Ryota Koyama of the Faculty of Economics and Business Administration of Fukushima University. The company is named by combining Marché (market in French) and F (for Fukushima). It embodies our aspiration to create a market of “local production for local consumption” by connecting various areas in Fukushima and processing and selling local specialties with added-value, and promoting local consumption of local products, by which ripple effects will be spread into various direction.

Marché F organized outdoor markets twice in 2009 and 2010, where local producers directly sold their agricultural crops and processed goods in city centers, and consequently to help city dwellers have deeper understanding and promote exchange of people and goods (things).

(2) Objectives and activities of the Town Marché Project for Disaster Recovery

[Objectives] Food safety in Fukushima has been heavily threatened by the radioactivity from the Fukushima No.1 nuclear power plant of TEPCO damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake in March 11, 2011. Under such a circumstance, development of a post-disaster approach for farm product distribution has become an urgent task. Two specific objectives are: 1) to firmly establish and widely publicize a system to inspect radioactive substances, and 2) to visualize production areas and distribution processes. This year, students organized Marché F under the theme of recovery while conducting interviews with participating shops. It was held to foster a long-term trusting relationship through mutual understanding between producers and consumers, by selling products with proper information about safety and other issues and demonstrating radioactivity measurement to show an inspection system of farm products.

[Main activities]

- (1) Set up a produce stand in temporary outlets to sell local farm products, processed goods and prepared foods from various areas in Fukushima
- (2) Farmers Café: Provide a place where producers and consumers can talk each other about the status of agriculture and fishery in Fukushima, as well as inspection systems.
- (3) Demonstration of radioactivity measurement: Experts give a presentation of radioactivity measurement of farm products to help consumers have deeper understanding

(3) Achievements

Marché F attracted 1,164 visitors during two-day operation with the total sales of 360,960 yen. The figure was lower than in 2010, suggesting the damage by harmful rumors. However, thanks to increased PR activities, no. of leaflet distribution, and poster spots, the total sales has

been kept to be a slight decline. And we have been promoting a new sales approach of “telling stories behind products” since 2010, and providing information to consumers actively. Thus, this could be a good opportunity to raise their interest in the inspection system and the activities of Marché F.

Overall, consumers showed strong supports for the inspection system and Marché F. We believe that this project has provided people an another opportunity to think about the safety of produces in Fukushima Prefecture.

(4) Future development

We are planning an outdoor market next year again. In light of the results and problems of this year’s event, we would like to further improve this project while exploring how we could help consumers have better understanding of the inspection system and establishing a trusting relationship between producers and consumers, for the recovery of the primary industries in Fukushima Prefecture.