Shokuiku Promotion Policies: FY2017
(White Paper on Shokuiku)

[Summary]
This is a report on “The Shokuiku Promotion Policies” that were adopted based on Article 15 of the Basic Law on Shokuiku (Act No. 63 of 2005). This law requires the government to submit this report to the Diet every year.

In this report, we describe the Shokuiku promotion measures that were taken in FY2017.
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○In principle, the numbers given in figures and tables are rounded off, and therefore may differ slightly in summation from the totals indicated.
○Japanese maps shown in these documents are not always inclusive of Japan’s entire territory.
1. The Basic Law on Shokuiku (Food and Nutrition Education)

- The law was promulgated in June 2005 and took effect in July 2005 to comprehensively and systematically promote Shokuiku policies, thereby ensuring that Japanese people enjoy a healthy and cultural lifestyle and creating a prosperous and vibrant society.
- Shokuiku shall be considered essential for people’s living, become a basis of intellectual, moral and physical education, and nurture people so they can acquire a knowledge of “diet” and an ability to choose an appropriate “diet” through various experiences so as to have a healthy dietary lifestyle.
- It is important to promote a healthy dietary lifestyle for the Japanese public through Shokuiku to ensure mental and physical health. This goal can be achieved by raising the public’s dietary awareness to promote proper dietary decisions based on reliable information. It is also important that Shokuiku encourage Japanese people to appreciate and understand that their diets are a product of the abundance of nature and supported by the various activities of food-related workers.

2. The Basic Program for Shokuiku Promotion

- In March 2016, “The Third Basic Program for Shokuiku Promotion” was prepared in light of the past five years’ achievements and challenges on Shokuiku. The Third Basic Program, covering five years from FY2016 to 2020, sets the basic policies with target values for Shokuiku promotion, and proposes measures to be taken for the comprehensive promotion of Shokuiku.
- The following five priority issues were established as basic policies.
  1. Promotion of Shokuiku among young people
  2. Promotion of Shokuiku tailored to diverse lifestyles
  3. Promotion of Shokuiku that will extend healthy life expectancy
  4. Promotion of Shokuiku with a consciousness of the food cycle and the environment
  5. Promotion of Shokuiku aimed at the inheritance of food culture

3. Shokuiku policy promotion system

- The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) is responsible for affairs related to the preparation and promotion of the Basic Program for Shokuiku Promotion. MAFF is promoting Shokuiku as a government-wide initiative in partnership with other relevant ministries and agencies, including the Food Safety Commission of Japan, the Consumer Affairs Agency, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW).
- Making Shokuiku a national movement will require national and local government efforts and also close coordination and collaboration among various community-level stakeholders, such as schools, nursery schools, workers in the operators of the agriculture, forestry and fisheries industries, food-related businesses and volunteers.

Shokuiku promotion system

- Improvement of healthy minds and bodies of public and cultivation of rich personality
- Promotion of Shokuiku as a national movement
  - Various groups
  - Food-related businesses
  - Health authorities
  - Medical institutions
  - Volunteer groups
  - Agriculture/forestry/ fishery operators
  - Schools and nursery schools, etc.
- Public
- Home
- In all communities nationwide
- Close coordination and cooperation
- Prefectures
  - Prefectural Shokuiku Promotion Meeting
  - Prefectural programs for Shokuiku promotion
  - Preparation of prefectoral programs for Shokuiku promotion
- Municipalities
  - Municipal Shokuiku Promotion Meeting
  - Preparation of municipal programs for Shokuiku promotion
- Regional Agricultural Administration Office, etc.
- Implementation of measures by relevant ministries and agencies, including MAFF, the Food Safety Commission of Japan, the Consumer Affairs Agency, MEXT, and the MHLW
- ‘Comprehensive and systematic planning and Implementation of Shokuiku measures’
1. Positioning in the Third Basic Program for Shokuiku Promotion

- The promotion of Shokuiku tailored to diverse lifestyles is positioned as a priority issue in the Third Basic Program for Shokuiku Promotion. Accordingly, it is necessary to promote Shokuiku through partnership and cooperation with communities and relevant groups, providing opportunities to eat together in a way that promotes communication and richer dietary experiences, to ensure that all people, from children through to seniors, can enjoy sound and satisfying dietary lives.

- Focusing on eating meals together, this special topic looks at the promotion of Shokuiku tailored to diverse lifestyles, highlighting the current situation and relevant initiatives in the following areas:
  - Eating meals together as a family in households, which are the cornerstone of daily life.
  - "Koshoku"; eating every meal of the day alone.
  - Eating with other members of the community.

People who frequently eat with others tend to have good dietary patterns

A recent report analyzed the results of studies conducted in Japan that focused on the practice of eating with others and on health and good dietary patterns. The report identified two trends among those who frequently eat meals with others: (1) a tendency to have few subjective psychological symptoms, such as distraction and lack of patience; and (2) dietary patterns involving little use of fast food and frequent consumption of healthy foods, such as fruit and vegetables.

A similar report on the results of overseas studies suggested that frequent consumption of meals as a family indicates a good diet, including high consumption of fruit and vegetables.

In the MAFF "Survey of Attitude toward Shokuiku", too, a large proportion of people who hardly ever eat alone and eat with someone almost every day replied that they have meals consisting of a staple food, main dish and side dish almost every day, suggesting that they tend to eat more balanced meals than people who eat alone at least two days a week.

In addition, people who frequently eat meals with others tend to have good dietary patterns, eating breakfast frequently and taking care to prevent or ameliorate lifestyle-related diseases.

Special Feature

Frequency of having a meal consisting of a staple food, main dish and side dish by frequency of eating alone

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Eating Alone</th>
<th>Frequency (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Almost every day</td>
<td>62.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>18.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four or five days a week</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or three days a week</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hardly ever eat alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(n=1,402)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat alone twice or more/week (n=380)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0%</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>15.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: "The Survey of Attitude toward Shokuiku" (MAFF) (November 2017)

2. Eating Together with Family Members: Current Status and Initiatives to Encourage the Practice

(Number of times people eat together with family members is approaching the target, but frequency tends to be low among those aged in their 20s to 50s)

- Number of times of “eating together” - eating breakfast or dinner with other family members was 10.5 times/week in FY2017 (Target in the Third Basic Program: 11 times or more/week by FY2020).
- Frequency tends to be low among those aged in their 20s to 50s.
- Respondents in all age brackets regarded eating meals with their family as important (approximately 90% in all age brackets).
- The positive aspects of eating meals with family members most commonly cited by respondents were “It facilitates communication with family members” (79.4%) and “It makes eating more enjoyable” (62.3%).

(Busy worklife was the main reason for difficulty in eating meals with family members)

- More than 30% of those aged in their 20s to 50s find it difficult to make time to eat meals with their families.
- Being busy at work (themselves or a family member) was the most commonly cited reason for difficulty in eating meals with family members.
- The percentage of men working long hours continues to be highest among those in their 30s and 40s.
- Promoting a good work-life balance is crucial to enabling people to eat around the table with their families.

Case Study: Enabling staff to achieve a better work-life balance through the yukatsu [The summer campaign for Life style change] program

In 2011, Seibu Railway introduced a trial daylight saving time program, under which staff brought forward their working hours by an hour in summer. As well as reducing electricity consumption, the program cut overtime work by 25% compared with the previous year. The company revised its rules of employment the following year and the practice is now firmly established as a yukatsu initiative.

Some staff commented that they had developed a healthy morning-oriented lifestyle, resulting in better health. Many stated that being able to go home earlier gave them more time to eat meals with their children, resulting in deeper communication with their families than before. A number reported an increase in the number of opportunities they had to eat meals with their families.

I can go home earlier, so I have more time to eat meals with my children.

Staff comment

Rail-kun
Smile-chan
Since 2016, to encourage men to participate, a monthly group dinner has also been held, mainly targeting elderly men living alone. Some are invited by their neighbors, while others have been told about the gatherings by the local social welfare council. Each time they attend, participants become better acquainted with each other and feel more at home.

After a tasty and enjoyable meal in congenial company, participants return home, looking forward to the next time.

The percentage of people of “Koshoku” eating every meal of the day alone for at least half the week has risen to approximately 15% since 2011.

Some people do not want to eat alone, but have no choice, because their mealtimes or locations do not suit others or there is nobody to eat with them.

Factors behind the rise in people who have no choice but to eat alone include the growing number of one-person households, childless households, and single-parent households.

In particular, the proportion of elderly people (those aged 65 or above) who live alone is increasing, reaching 13.3% among elderly men and 21.1% among elderly women in 2015. It is estimated that 20.8% of elderly men and 24.5% of elderly women will be living alone by 2040.

While it is important for people to eat meals with their families, there are situations in which this is difficult to achieve through household or individual efforts.

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Case Study
Open-house initiative bringing elderly people together to eat with friends

As well as providing childcare, long-term nursing care, and support services for children with disabilities, Home Hinatabokko in Iwanuma City, Miyagi Prefecture is engaged in a community open-house initiative that welcomes everyone. The purpose of this initiative is to assist elderly people, including those resident in temporary housing following the Great East Japan Earthquake, in living independent lives.

In 2003, it launched the Hinata Club open-house initiative to offer elderly people a reason to go out, combating their tendency to become housebound. Participants get together once a week to enjoy a variety of activities, including classes in creating hand-painted postcards, health seminars, and light exercise. A group lunch takes place once a month.

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After a tasty and enjoyable meal in congenial company, participants return home, looking forward to the next time.
4. Eating With Other Members of the Community: Current Status and Initiatives to Encourage the Practice

The percentage of people who want to “eat together” in communities and actually do so grew from 64.6% at the time the Third Basic Program was established to 72.6% in FY2017. As such, the target of 70% or more by FY2020 has already been achieved.

The effects of taking part in group meals as part of a community include encouraging communication with other participants, providing opportunities to enjoy eating, and enabling participants to get to know more about things in the community.

For people who cannot easily eat with other family members but want to enjoy the communication fostered through eating, it is important to have opportunities to eat with a variety of people through meals with others in their community, such as their neighborhood or workplace.

### Thoughts after participating in meals as part of a community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thought</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I was able to communicate with others</td>
<td>86.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I enjoyed eating</td>
<td>75.3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I got to know about things in the community</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I gained a greater knowledge and interest in diet</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to eat a well-balanced meal</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I participated in preparing the meal, by doing the shopping or by cooking/serving it</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about food culture</td>
<td>6.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I ate a safe meal that offered peace of mind</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I learned about table manners</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was able to eat a meal at an appropriate time</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: “The Survey of Attitude toward Shokuiku” (MAFF) (November 2017)
Notes: 1) Question for those who replied “I have” to the question about whether they have participated in a group meal as part of their geographic or other community (workplace, etc.) within the last year
2) Multiple responses allowed

### Conditions for participating in group meals as part of a community

| Condition                                                       | Percentage | Notes |
|                                                               |           |       |
| The group meal taking place in a convenient location          | 47.8%     |       |
| Being invited by a friend or acquaintance                      | 46.1%     |       |
| The group meal taking place at a convenient time              | 42.1%     |       |
| Having enough time                                             | 42.1%     |       |
| Receiving an invitation from their community (geographic or other) | 34.6%     |       |
| Being able to participate at little expense                    | 22.4%     |       |
| Having a meal that includes local cuisine or food associated with special events | 16.2%     |       |
| Having a satisfying meal                                       | 12.7%     |       |
| Having enough money                                            | 6.6%      |       |
| Other                                                          | 5.3%      |       |
| Not sure                                                       | 2.6%      |       |

Source: “The Survey of Attitude toward Shokuiku” (MAFF) (November 2017)
Notes: 1) Question for those who replied “I have not” to the question about whether they have participated in a group meal as part of their geographic or other community (workplace, etc.) within the last year
2) Multiple responses allowed
In recent years, a growing number of Children’s Cafeterias have sprung up, launched by local citizens as voluntary initiatives to provide children with free or cheap nutritious meals and a warm, friendly environment. These opportunities are provided to children who cannot easily enjoy meals with others at home.

A MAFF survey of Children’s Cafeterias found that the majority saw their main purpose as “providing a place to enjoy meals with a diverse array of local residents, including elderly people and people with disabilities” and “teaching children about manners, food culture, and the importance of meals and nutrition,” with each response selected by approximately 70% of respondents.

Most Children’s Cafeterias’ Shokuiku initiatives involve providing children with a warm, friendly place in which to enjoy meals and having the children help to serve meals. Most Children’s Cafeterias also undertake Shokuiku initiatives, which include teaching children about seasonal ingredients, table manners, health, and local cuisine, or offering opportunities to gain hands-on experience of cooking and the agriculture, forestry and fishery industries.

Many Children’s Cafeterias open up these initiatives to people of all ages, enabling not only children, but also accompanying parents, elderly people, and other adults (aged 18 or over) to participate.

### Shokuiku initiatives at Children’s Cafeterias

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Providing children with a warm, friendly place to enjoy meals with others</td>
<td>86.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting children to help with serving meals</td>
<td>78.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching children about seasonal ingredients and nutrition</td>
<td>62.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Getting children to help with cooking meals</td>
<td>53.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching children about table manners, such as the correct way to use chopsticks</td>
<td>45.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching children about the relationship between meals and health</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorporating local cuisine and traditional Japanese dishes into the menu and telling children about them</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holding cooking classes and other events that give children hands-on experience of cooking</td>
<td>28.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching children about the life of ingredients and the effort that farmers, forestry workers, and fishery workers put into cultivating and harvesting them</td>
<td>25.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving children opportunities to interact with farmers, forestry workers, and fishery workers at the children’s cafeteria</td>
<td>24.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving children opportunities to experience the agriculture, forestry and fishery industries first-hand</td>
<td>23.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No initiatives in particular</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>n=274</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MAFF, “Examples of Shokuiku Activities Based on Collaboration Between Children’s Cafeterias and Local Communities” (March 2018)

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### Community Shokuiku-promotion activities in partnership with children’s cafeterias

Children’s Cafeterias are places to which children can come for a free or cheap meal, even if they are on their own. As well as being valuable places where children can enjoy a shared meal around a table, they offer children a space in which they can be themselves in the heart of the local community. Accordingly, with the objective of promoting Shokuiku, MAFF has put together a collection of information about community promotion of Shokuiku in partnership with Children’s Cafeterias, to enhance understanding of the significance of Children’s Cafeteria activities among local governments and others involved in Shokuiku in the community, as well as encouraging appropriate collaboration. This information is published on MAFF’s website.

In addition, with the cooperation of experts in Children’s Cafeterias and Shokuiku, those actually involved in Children’s Cafeterias and their networks, and local government coordinators, MAFF has examined efforts to gather examples and raise awareness of Shokuiku initiatives based on collaboration between Children’s Cafeterias and local communities. Through questionnaires and interviews with Children’s Cafeterias, MAFF has put together an overview of the current status of Children’s Cafeterias, the issues that they face, and the extent of their partnerships with their local communities. In addition, it has compiled an anthology of specific examples of collaboration between Children’s Cafeterias and local communities, organized by topic addressed and type of Shokuiku initiative.

MAFF will raise awareness of this anthology, with a view to ensuring that it is used effectively by local governments, groups, and communities to resolve the problems that Children’s Cafeterias are facing and enhance Shokuiku initiatives.
Case Study  

**Children’s Cafeterias working with producers to promote local production for local consumption**

Shinshu Kodomo Shokudo Network, administered by NPO Hotline Shinshu, links Children’s Cafeterias throughout Nagano Prefecture. As well as providing support such as distributing foodstuffs donated to foodbanks to children’s cafeterias in each area, the network distributes information through seminars for those who want to open a Children’s Cafeteria and the Shinshu Kodomo Shokudo Network News, which highlights children’s cafeteria activities, etc. One of the motivations behind children’s cafeterias is the desire to provide children with a nutritious meal, so they have an abundant need for fresh food. Accordingly, Hotline Shinshu organizes a foodbank of fresh food, using agricultural produce supplied by both individual producers and local agricultural cooperatives (JA Nakano City and JA Green Nagano). In FY2017, with the assistance of JA Nagano and the Nagano Prefecture Future Fund, a cash rebate system was launched that enables Children’s Cafeterias to claim back the cost of ingredients, primarily fresh foods purchased at direct sale outlets and A-Cooop stores. Working in partnership with producers and relevant organizations, the network provides meals that use a substantial quantity of local produce and also offers opportunities for children to hear producers talk about food.

Case Study  

**The Field Canteen: A place that brings people of all generations and living circumstances together through agriculture and food**

Located in Yasugi City, Shimane Prefecture, Machiko Farm grows pesticide-free organic fruit and vegetables, and undertakes learning-support and atmosphere-creating initiatives for children and young people that provide them with a place where they can be themselves. Its Field Canteen initiative attracts a wide range of participants, including students from elementary schools and schools for children with disabilities, non-attendant students, young people with social withdrawal, university students, users of daycare services for elderly people, and local volunteers. Each and every person has a role to play, whether that is planting seedlings, weeding the fields, harvesting the vegetables, or sorting the harvested soybeans and peanuts. After everyone has helped to make lunch using the vegetables picked from the fields, they get together for a multigenerational meal, sharing the food as they talk about the day’s work, the meal, and local history, among other topics. As well as providing a venue for Shokuiku focused on children, the Field Canteen gives children and young people who have difficulty engaging with society opportunities for intergenerational communication. It also offers a lively and comfortable environment in which elderly people can do farm work that they enjoy. As such, it is a cornerstone of mutual community support.

(There are images of children and adults working on the farm, with mushrooms and fresh produce supplied by JA Nakano City, and a group of people eating together at a large table.)

- While people are aware of the importance of eating meals with their families, it is often difficult for them to put this into practice, because they or their family members are busy at work. The aging of the population coupled with a declining birthrate and changes in family composition mean that the number of people of “Koshoku” who regularly eat alone could well rise further.

- Amid this situation, communities are increasingly engaging in initiatives that enable people of all generations, from children to seniors, to get together for a meal.

- As well as enabling people to enjoy a balanced meal in a convivial environment, these initiatives help to deepen understanding of the food cycle from production to table via hands-on experience of agriculture, or offer the chance to pass on knowledge and experience concerning food and food culture to the next generation through multigenerational exchange. In addition, they provide opportunities for members of the community to work together, thereby widening the circle of Shokuiku.