Rural areas form the basis for sustainable agricultural development and serve as the location for fulfillment of agricultural multifunctional roles. This Chapter describes the trends and challenges facing rural areas, focusing on the demographic changes and trends in rural communities, maintenance of community functions and conservation of regional resources and environment, promotion of the “sixth industry” to revitalize agriculture and rural areas, and rural-urban exchanges and human resource development. The major points are as follows:

Substantial population decline and accelerated aging in rural areas are making it difficult to maintain these areas’ community functions and regional resources. Due to the recent economic slowdown, employment opportunities have also decreased, putting rural areas in difficult situations.

Recent years have seen moves to supplement community functions in small-scale communities with many elderly persons. Moreover, the program of direct payment to hilly and mountainous areas has been implemented in various regions, where activities are also in progress to preserve and improve agricultural land and water as well as the environment.

To regenerate rural areas, it is important to promote initiatives to develop agriculture into a “sixth industry” that can help revitalize rural areas, and thereby improve income levels and increase employment opportunities. Specific measures to this end include encouraging farmers’ efforts for better processing and marketing practices, and fostering the integration of agriculture and secondary and tertiary industries.

To revitalize rural areas, it is important to promote rural-urban exchanges through green tourism and hands-on agricultural/rural experience programs for children, and to secure human resources from urban areas.

Although rural areas have been experiencing difficulties, hopeful moves can also be observed. It is encouraging to see active involvement in agriculture, mainly by young people, who are engaged in agriculture in various ways. Examples include activities to revitalize rural areas by taking up agriculture on their own or working for farm support, and activities to publicize agriculture through events and magazines.
Current state and challenges of rural areas and local communities

With Japan’s population expected to decrease hereafter, shifts in population concentration from rural to urban areas will be further accelerated. It is estimated that the rate of population in the densely inhabited districts (DIDs) in FY2035 will be about 70%. Meanwhile, non-DIDs will see its populations decline to 80% of current totals, but with the number of elderly increasing 1.2 times and an aging rate projected to reach 36%.

By prefecture, the rates of population decrease and aging in non-DIDs tend to be higher in prefectures with a high percentage of those working in agriculture among the total population. This could affect future agricultural production in Japan.

The Japanese economy remains difficult. One concern is that the vitality of local regions may diminish due to the worsening employment situation and decreasing total cash wages per employee.

4-1 Rates of population decrease (2005-2035) and aging (2035) in non-DIDs (by prefecture)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population decrease rate</th>
<th>Aging rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>≥ 30%</td>
<td>≥ 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 30%</td>
<td>25 - 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 - 25%</td>
<td>20 - 25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 - 20%</td>
<td>10 - 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; 10%</td>
<td>&lt; 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Estimates by MAFF, based on the Population Census (MIC) and Population Projection by Prefecture (May 2007) (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

Note: Population decrease (%) = (2005 population – 2035 population) / 2005 population × 100

4-2 Population mainly engaged in farming (2005), population decrease rate (2005–2035), and aging rate (2035) in non-DIDs (by prefecture)

Source: Estimate by MAFF, based on the Census of Agriculture and Forestry 2005 (MAFF), Population Census (MIC) and Population Projection by Prefecture (May 2007) (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

Notes: 1) Population mainly engaged in farming (%) = Commercial farm households / Total population × 100

2) The Census of Agriculture and Forestry was conducted on February 1, 2005, but the Population Census was on October 10, 2005.
During the period from 1980 to 1990, 2,255 communities lost their rural community functions, while from 1990 to 2000, 4,959 communities lost such functions. Subsequently, it was feared that 1,403 communities mainly in hilly and mountainous areas could be left uninhabited. These communities could face difficulties maintaining their community functions. These include maintenance of rural resources such as farmland and forests, agricultural production support activities such as mowing along farm roads and levees, and mutual assistance in ceremonial occasions among community residents.

In an opinion survey of farmers, 90% of respondents answered that it would become difficult or it might become difficult to continue maintaining agricultural production resources such as agricultural land and water. Asked about measures required to maintain agricultural production and rural resources in the communities, many respondents replied that measures should be taken to ensure that sufficient income can be obtained by agriculture, to provide support for agricultural resource maintenance activities, to secure human resources, and to secure necessary medical and social welfare organizations and services.

### 4-3 Expectations for maintenance of agricultural production resources in rural communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expectation</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Will become difficult to maintain</td>
<td>45.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might become difficult to maintain</td>
<td>44.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Might not become difficult to maintain</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Won’t become difficult to maintain</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MAFF survey of attitudes toward food, agriculture and rural areas (released April 2010)
Notes: 1) Questionnaire survey of 2,500 farmers (collection rate: 78.9%)
2) As agricultural production resources, respondents were presented with agricultural land, water and roads.

### 4-4 Measures required to maintain agricultural production and rural resources within communities (multiple answers accepted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring sufficient income can be obtained by agriculture</td>
<td>95.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting activities to maintain rural resources</td>
<td>77.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing human resources, including young workers</td>
<td>77.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing medical/social welfare organizations/services</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting and increasing awareness by introducing best practices</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing transportation means</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Securing IT and other information infrastructures</td>
<td>31.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nothing especially</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MAFF survey of attitudes toward food, agriculture and rural areas (released April 2010)
Notes: 1) Questionnaire survey of 2,500 farmers (collection rate: 78.9%)
2) As rural resources, respondents were presented with various animals and plants in rural areas, rural landscapes, regional joint activities such as community meetings, and traditional culture, including food culture, craftworks and festivals.
Especially in the intermediate and mountainous areas, there are 17,406 rural communities that could become isolated in the event of a disaster. On the other hand, the ratio of areas covered by voluntary disaster prevention organizations tends to be lower in disadvantaged regions. To realize safe and comfortable living in rural areas, it is important to make these areas more disaster-resistant, through measures to improve disaster prevention facilities and systems, in tandem with actions taken by local residents.

Due to the expanding habitation areas of wildlife that cause damage to agriculture, forestry and fisheries, the number of harmful wildlife species has substantially increased. Their damage to agricultural products amounts to around 20 billion yen. Of damage caused by animals, 90% comes from wild boar, deer, and monkeys. Since damage by wildlife has a serious impact on rural living, it is important to take region-wide measures for wildlife control through such means as management of wildlife habitats, population regulation by capturing animals and birds, and installation of guard fences to prevent their encroachment.

### 4-5 Number of rural communities that could become isolated (2009, by prefecture)

![Map of Japan showing the number of rural communities that could become isolated, grouped by prefectures.]

- **≥ 800**
- **500 – 800**
- **300 – 500**
- **150 – 300**
- **< 150**

**Source:** Follow-up survey by the Cabinet Office on the possibility of community isolation in hilly and mountainous areas and other areas with scattered communities (released January 2010)

**Note:** Rural communities that could become isolated are defined as communities that could become difficult to access from outside when an earthquake occurs due to paralyzed road conditions or other reasons, since all roads accessible to these communities are adjacent to sediment disaster-prone districts.

### 4-6 Damage caused to agricultural crops by wildlife

![Bar chart showing damage caused to agricultural crops by wildlife species from 2003 to 2008.](chart)

- **Other birds**
- **Crows**
- **Other animals**
- **Monkeys**
- **Deer**
- **Wild boar**

**Source:** MAFF
In addition to food supply, agriculture plays other various roles such as land conservation, watershed cultivation, preservation of the natural environment, formation of a good landscape, and maintenance of cultural traditions. Not only local residents but also the entire nation benefits from these roles. It is therefore necessary to promote sustainable development of agriculture and rural areas so as to maximize their multifunctionality.

In recent years, regions with many small-scale and aging communities have seen moves to supplement community functions by assigning community support staff and by establishing specified nonprofit organizations specializing in community development. In FY2008, 66 municipalities in 11 prefectures introduced a community support staff system, under which 199 persons worked as full-time staff and about 2,000 persons as part-time staff while concurrently serving as chairpersons of residents’ associations.

From now on, the government as a whole must discuss how to supplement community functions and how to maintain and regenerate communities in rural areas. At the same time, depopulated municipalities must take measures to ensure that appropriate management of regional resources can be continued, even if a community becomes uninhabited.

Source: Prepared by MAFF, based on a report from the Science Council of Japan
Hilly and mountainous areas, which cover 70% of Japan’s total land area, constitute important agricultural production districts. Both the number of farm households and the cultivated land under management in these areas account for 40% of farm households nationwide and total cultivated land, respectively. Located in the upper stream regions of urban and flat agricultural areas, hilly and mountainous areas benefit many people with their multifunctional roles, including land conservation.

In FY2000, the program of direct payment to hilly and mountainous areas was implemented mainly in hilly and mountainous areas whose agricultural production conditions are disadvantageous as compared to flatlands, in order to ensure these areas’ multifunctional roles while maintaining agricultural production. By FY2008, 28,757 agreements had been concluded, and carried out on 664,000 ha of farmland.

In various parts of Japan, the Measures to Conserve and Improve Land, Water and the Environment have been implemented to provide support for joint activities for land and water preservation, and support for farming activities that reduce environmental impacts. Region-wide efforts involving both farmers and non-farmers have been in progress, including joint activities covering 1.43 million ha and the number of activity organizations reaching 19,514.

4-8 Distribution of hilly and mountainous areas

Source: Prepared by MAFF based on the Census of Agriculture and Forestry (2005) and Municipalities Area Statistics 2005 (Geospatial Information Authority of Japan)

Notes: 1) Tosan refers to Yamanashi and Nagano Prefectures.
   2) Area percentages according to the classification of agricultural areas are calculated based on data on the total land area of former municipalities (excluding water areas) from the Census of Agriculture and Forestry.

4-9 Community collaborative activities to maintain agricultural land, water and other resources (conceptual image)

Source: MAFF

68
The roles of urban agriculture are not only supplying fresh agricultural products to urban residents but also providing locations for farming experiences, ensuring open space in case of a disaster and providing green spaces with "comfort" and "affluence" to people.

Many urban residents would like to have farming experiences. The number of allotment gardens has increased year by year, reaching 3,382 in nationwide at the end of FY2008.

To maintain urban agriculture, it is important to promote the use of local agricultural products in school lunches, farming experience programs for children and shokuiku (food education), and further development of allotment gardens.

### 4-10 Various roles of urban agriculture

- **Supply of fresh and safe agricultural products**
- **Open spaces in case of a disaster**
- **Enhancement of urban residents' understanding of agriculture**
- **Comfortable green spaces**
- **Opportunities for farming experiences and interactive activities**

### 4-11 Farming experiences that urban residents demand

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kitchen gardening in allotment gardens</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in farming experience programs on farmer’s gardens (run by farmers)</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming experiences such as rice planting and weeding</td>
<td>29.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working as agricultural volunteers to help farmers</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-sufficient lifestyle</td>
<td>23.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in activities to maintain environment in farmlands and irrigation canals</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Others:** 12.5

**Source:** MAFF

**Notes:** The above questionnaire survey was implemented for Tokyo residents through the Internet (Total respondents: 494)

### 4-12 Changes in the number of allotment gardens by garden operator

**Source:** MAFF

**Notes:** The above graph shows the number (at the end of each fiscal year) of allotment gardens established under the Act on Special Cases of the Agricultural Land Act Concerning Specific Agricultural Land Leases and the Act on the Promotion for Development of Private Farmland for Community Use.
As Japan’s total final consumption expenditure on food and drink shows a declining trend, the vitality of agriculture and rural areas has been diminishing. One indication of this is the fact that, of the above-mentioned expenditure, the percentage comprised by the country’s agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector is also declining.

To address this issue, an important future task is to improve the agricultural business environment by such means as introducing an individual household income compensation system for farmers, so that they can continue agricultural operations. It is also important to promote initiatives to develop agriculture into the “sixth industry” that can help revitalize rural areas. This effort will encourage regional business development and the creation of new types of business. Specific measures to this end include: encouraging farmer efforts to integrate production, processing and marketing practices through more effective use of resources available in rural areas, such as agricultural, forestry and fishery products; and promoting integration among agriculture (as a primary industry), manufacturing (as a secondary industry) and retailing (as a tertiary industry).

In view of the fact that non-farming households comprise between 70 and 80% of all households in rural areas, these initiatives must be undertaken by both farmers and non-farmers. It is also essential that the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sector collaborate with commercial and industrial sectors, and other industries in different fields, to make use of the latters’ processing and marketing knowledge, expertise and techniques.

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4-13 Changes in domestic agricultural, forestry and fisheries sector’s percentage of total final expenditure on food and drink in Japan.

Source: Estimate by MAFF, based on “Input-Output Table for Japan” published by MIC and 9 other ministries and agencies

4-14 Initiatives for promoting the “sixth industry” to revitalize agriculture and rural areas (conceptual image)

Source: MAFF

Note: The term “sixth industry” is derived by multiplying the industrial sectors: first (primary) × second (secondary) × third (tertiary) to come up with the “sixth industry.” The sixth industry is expected to synergistically create new added-value through effective use of agricultural, forestry and fishery products, as well as land, water and other resources in farming, mountain and fishing villages, by integrating production, processing and distribution activities.
Toward promotion of the “sixth industry” to revitalize agriculture and rural areas, advanced initiatives have so far been undertaken that include the processing and marketing of local products and promotion of tourism making use of regional resources. However, these initiatives have been conducted only in limited regions in Japan. It is hoped that various support measures will be strengthened so that these initiatives can be implemented nationwide.

Moreover, in some rural areas efforts are under way to utilize renewable energies such as biomass, small hydraulic power, solar power and wind power. However, these efforts are still insufficient. Henceforth, it is necessary to actively encourage these efforts by developing renewable energy supply facilities and improving an energy production environment in technological and institutional terms.

### 4-15 Example of economic effects achieved through promotion of the “sixth industry”

- **Farmers growing loquats**
  - About 200 households
  - 188 households
  - 15 households
  - 2 households
  - 7 million yen

- **Loquat leaves**
  - 18 households
  - 1 million yen

- **Visitor programs for loquat-picking experience**
  - 22 households
  - 34 million yen

- **Quasi-public sector**
  - Business income, Gross margin ratio 44%
  - Product-selling business
    - Loquat-related products
    - Original products
  - 346 million yen
  - 60% of (1)
  - 40% of (1)
  - (Customer-attracting effects)
  - 15%
  - Tourism
    - Directly-managed farms
    - Provision of information on farms that offer hands-on farming-experience programs
  - 123 million yen
  - 15%
  - Others (trustee businesses)
    - 6 million yen
  - Total sales
    - 675 million yen
  - Labor cost
    - 134 million yen
  - Employees: 80

### 4-16 Development of facilities that utilize renewable energies (as of end of March 2009)

- **Small hydraulic power generation**
  - 26 districts
- **Wind power generation**
  - 6 districts
- **Solar power generation**
  - 11 districts
- **Biomass conversion facility**
  - 76 districts

**Example of hydraulic power generation**
- Prefectural irrigation and drainage project
  - Nakaima district (Ishikawa Prefecture)
  - Generating capacity: 630 kW
  - Total cost: 1,380 million yen
  - Power is supplied to water-use facilities

**Example of solar power generation**
- Village development grant scheme
  - Matsuo/Hasunuma district (Chiba Prefecture)
  - Generating capacity: 80 kW
  - Total cost: 130 million yen
  - Power is supplied to composting facilities

**Example of wind power generation**
- Comprehensive rural development project
  - Isobe district (Niigata Prefecture)
  - Generating capacity: 225 kW
  - Total cost: 160 million yen
  - Power is supplied to community drainage facilities

**Example of biomass conversion facility (methane fermentation)**
- Subsidy for expanding biomass use
  - Hitaka district (Oita Prefecture)
  - Generating capacity: 1.2 million kWh/yr
  - Total cost: 910 million yen
  - Power is supplied to composting facilities at the Biomass Recycling Center.

Source: Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

Note: The above data indicate the districts where facility development was carried out through agriculture and rural development projects.
Exchanges between urban and rural areas and human resource development

According to an opinion survey of city residents about their future involvement in agriculture and rural areas, many respondents said they hoped to have active exchanges with rural areas by such means as purchasing locally produced agricultural products, farming activities in allotment gardens, and green tourism. Green tourism is also emphasized under the Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan formulated by the national government in 2007. The number of guests staying at green tourism-related facilities exceeded 8 million in 2008. In the future, the agencies concerned must work together to develop the system to enable rural areas to accept more city residents and improve hands-on rural experience programs for them.

To promote exchanges between urban and rural areas, it is also important to promote hands-on agricultural/rural experience programs for children. In FY2009, 90 districts in 36 prefectures were designated as model districts to implement the Children’s Rural Area Interaction Project, with the number of districts increasing by 37 and prefectures increasing by 3 from the previous year. However, this project could place a great burden on schools, requiring the need for organizations to play coordinating roles to reduce such burdens in the future.

### 4-17 City residents’ intentions regarding involvement in agriculture and rural areas (multiple answers accepted)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Willing to support agriculture and rural areas by actively purchasing local agricultural products</td>
<td>85.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to enjoy farm working at allotment gardens, etc.</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to support agriculture and rural areas by actively visiting rural areas through green tourism</td>
<td>35.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to support agriculture and rural areas by visiting rural areas to work as farm support volunteers</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want to engage in agriculture but want to live in a rural area</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willing to seriously engage in agriculture (and also want to move to a rural area) in the future</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t want to engage in agriculture (nor want to move to a rural area) in the future</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MAFF opinion survey on the roles of food, agriculture and rural areas (released April 2010)

Note: 1) The survey was of 1,500 consumers. (Collection rate: 87.0%)

2) The above graph shows the results of a survey of 741 residents in Tokyo’s 23 wards, government-designated cities and other major cities, including prefectural capital cities.

### 4-18 Change in number of guests staying at green tourism facilities (annual total)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Million persons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>777</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>795</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>844</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MAFF

Note: Green tourism facilities refer to private accommodations operated by local rural residents and public-operated accommodations aimed at promoting urban-rural exchanges.

### 4-19 Model districts that accept children under the Children’s Rural Area Interaction Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>FY2008</th>
<th>FY2009</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pilot-type</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date supported</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MAFF (as of March 2010)
To revitalize rural areas, it is important to secure human resources by promoting two-area habitation (living in both urban and rural areas) and rural settlement, and by encouraging people to return or relocate to rural areas. According to an opinion survey of residents in regions accepting people moving into or visiting rural areas from urban areas, respondents pointed out that acceptance of non-rural people had positive effects in reversing rural population decline and revitalizing local industries, economies and communities. Future important tasks for local governments and other relevant parties are to develop systems for acceptance of non-rural residents, improve the traffic accessibility and living environments such as education systems, and disseminate sufficient information.

Under the “Inaka de Hataraki Tai!” project aimed at rural area revitalization and human resource development, in FY2008 42 prefectures held roughly one-week training programs in which 2,479 people received training on 69 organizations. After the project, 83 people (59 of them aged 39 or younger) resettled in rural areas, and found employment with local agricultural cooperatives and NPOs. In FY2009, long-term training programs (up to 10 months long) will be held under the project, and is expected to achieve more positive results.
In recent years, some agricultural high schools have been working to develop processed foods and create brands making use of local products in various parts of Japan. This is an indication of the growing interest in agriculture primarily among young people, who are actively engaged in agriculture in various ways. Examples include activities to revitalize rural areas by taking up agriculture on their own or working for farm support; facilitation of agricultural product sales growth through marketing support; and activities to publicize agriculture through events and magazines.

There is also a trend in which consumers try to proactively provide support for farmers and rural areas, while bearing the commensurate costs.

Rural areas remain in difficult conditions, with farmers shrinking in number and getting older, plus the lack of farming successors and young people. To make rural areas and agriculture promising and hopeful, it is important to ensure that the above-mentioned efforts made by young people and consumers can be continued, by providing robust support at the national and local levels.

### Cases of various brands created by agricultural high schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Development of processed foods (agricultural high school brands)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aichi Prefectural Atsumi Agricultural High School</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This high school produces a square-shaped melon whose core area around the seeds is also square-shaped. This special melon, developed based on students’ ideas, has obtained a patent and a registered trademark.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Okinawa Prefectural Hokubu Agricultural High School**        |
| By crossing Duroc, a pig breed originating in America, and Agu, Okinawa’s indigenous breed, this school has created a new breed of pig characterized by its large-size and large amount of meat. |

| **Yamagata Prefectural Okitama Agricultural High School**      |
| Students grow rice, which is used to make a Japanese-style confection stuffed with bean jam made from pumpkins harvested by this high school as well as locally produced red and green soybeans. |

| **Ibaraki Prefectural Hokota High School**                     |
| Pumpkin bread is produced using wheat and pumpkins grown on this school’s farm. |

| **Kumamoto Prefectural Yatsushiro Agricultural High School**   |
| This school produces an all-purpose sauce prepared with a puree made from tomatoes grown by students and irregular tomatoes harvested by local farmers. Among other sauce ingredients are locally produced irregular items such as pears, strawberries, grapes, ginger and lemons. The sauce is sold at roadside shops and at the campus festival, and has proven quite popular. |

Source: MAFF
### Cases of young people interested in and actively working in agriculture

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | Taking up agriculture on their own choice  
Sakai City, Fukui Prefecture  
A young person with experience working as a business consultant established an agricultural corporation to grow baby leaves. By directly selling these products to restaurants, the corporation has increased sales in recent years. |
| 2    | Visiting a rural area to contribute to regional revitalization  
Ogata-Mura Village, Akita Prefecture  
In the hope of providing opportunities for young people to take an interest in food and agriculture, an ex-company president in her early 20s works with a team of magazine models to grow rice in Akita Prefecture, jointly with a local agricultural cooperative. The harvested rice is sold in Tokyo and other places. This new attempt is called the “Nogal Project,” i.e., a project for gals who do agriculture. |
| 3    | Facilitating agricultural product sales growth through marketing support  
Hokkaido, Tokyo, and Shimane Prefecture  
University students living in Tokyo set up an organization that operates street stalls in Tokyo to sell irregular vegetables produced in Shimane Prefecture. These students started this business after working as interns at a hotel in Shimane Prefecture that purchases irregular vegetables and serves dishes prepared with them. They also established a food distribution and processing company in Sapporo City, and have worked to build a new distribution network that transports irregular vegetables produced in Hokkaido to the main island of Japan. With cooperation from transportation companies and local volunteers, they hope to become profitable. |
| 4    | Awareness-raising activities voluntarily conducted by an association of young formers  
Urahoro Town, Hokkaido  
Young farmers in the Tokachi district set up an association called “Tokachi Oyaji no Senaka wo Koen Kai” with the aim of establishing mutually complementary relationships between urban and rural areas. The association organizes events on the theme of disseminating the roles and values of Tokachi, which is a major agricultural crop-producing area. Through exchanges with consumers in large cities, the association aims for agricultural and local revitalization. |
| 5    | Conveying the attractiveness of agriculture and rural areas through magazines and other media  
Various magazines are published to provide young people in urban areas with information on the lifestyles of others in their age group engaged in agriculture, the attractiveness of agriculture, hands-on agricultural experiences, and new employment in agriculture. |

Source: MAFF
# Cases of new collaboration to support agriculture

## ① Consumers’ activities to support producers

### Implementation of CSA

**Naganuma Town, Hokkaido**
Naganuma Town has implemented CSA, which is a new form of direct marketing system in which farmers and consumers within the region share the risks and benefits of agricultural production. Consumers who become members of the system share the total required cost as an annual membership fee. They in turn receive a wide variety of agricultural products in small quantities on a predetermined day every two weeks, starting in May for about half a year.

### Consumers’ support for producers

**Oshu City, Iwate Prefecture**
In FY2009, in cooperation with Oshu City, the apple section of JA Esashi launched the “Esashi Apple Supporter” project to publicize apples produced in the Esashi district. This project aims to ensure that production of Esashi apples can be supported by consumers and all other parties concerned. To deepen their interest in apples, PR brochures and the San-Fuji, the representative variety of Esashi apple, are sent to supporting consumers several times a year. These supporters can also enjoy experiencing harvesting Esashi apples.

## ② Support through consumer cooperative activities

### Offering aid money to farmers from sales proceeds

**Kagoshima City, Kagoshima Prefecture**
To help dairy farmers who were in financial difficulties due to soaring prices of livestock feed, a two-year support program was conducted from June 2008 to February 2009. The program provided the prefecture’s dairy cooperative with aid money of 2 yen per carton of milk produced in Osumi and sold by the local consumer cooperative.

### Providing support for soil improvement

**Tokyo Metropolis**
A soil improvement fund was established in which members pool funds to offer low-interest loans that are then used to construct composting facilities and purchase agricultural equipment.

## ③ Collaboration with NPOs and enterprises

### Efforts to eliminate abandoned cultivated lands

**Hokuto City, Yamanashi Prefecture**
Egao Tsunagete (lit. “connecting smiles”), a specified nonprofit organization, is working with various enterprises to make more effective use of abandoned cultivated lands. Specifically, the NPO provides matching opportunities between landlords of abandoned cultivated lands and their borrowers, and organizes various events to promote enterprises’ CSR activities, human resource development, and direct procurement of safe and reliable farming products in rural areas.

Source: MAFF

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*1 CSA: Community Supported Agriculture. CSAs consist of a system where individual consumers make advance payment agreements with growers regarding the varieties, production quantities, prices, and distribution methods of agricultural products the consumers are to receive.

*2 CSR: Corporate Social Responsibility. In conducting their corporate activities, enterprises should keep in mind their responsibilities to all their stakeholders, including employees, investors and local communities, and fulfill their accountabilities while taking into account social justice and environmental considerations.