

Foreword



Director General
Dr. Takashi Shinohara

The National Research Institute of Agricultural Economics, changed its name to “Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries” (PRI/MAFF) on April 1, 2001. Only this Institute remains a part of governmental organization, whereas each of the other 28 natural science-related institutes under MAFF became a so-called “Agency”, or Independent Administrative Institution, due to the Japanese Government’s administrative reform. PRI/MAFF remains a national research institute as it is deemed to participate in the policy making of MAFF. Therefore, PRI/MAFF has to cooperate and collaborate with MAFF or other Ministries, so it is different from other semi-autonomous agencies under the supervision of MAFF.

PRI/MAFF changed its name, but the mandate given by MAFF and the Japanese Government has not fundamentally changed. We have contributed to policy making for-MAFF through our research since the establishment of this institution in 1947. The modest change at this time made our role far more clearer.

It is partly true that this Institute conducted more academic-oriented research than policy-oriented research under its former name. From now on, we will explicitly put more emphasis on policy-oriented analysis rather than academic-oriented research as the first user of our research is the administration of MAFF.

I attended the Global Club Meeting twice (2001 Chicago and 2002 Prague). The Global Club Meeting consists of similar agricultural policy research institutes from all over the world and is presided over by Dr. Zahariasse (the Director General of the Agricultural Economic Institute of the Netherlands) and Dr. Offutt (the Director General of Economic Research Service, USDA). I was much impressed with the variety of institutes. Most of them are semi-autonomous agencies, but managing styles differ greatly. On the other hand, current priority research themes are surprisingly similar. This fact proves that each country faces common issues, such as global supply and demand of food, environment and forming farming, sustainable agriculture, food safety, rural development, direct income support, behavior of consumers, risk management, WTO agricultural negotiations, regional free trade agreements and agriculture, etc.

Under these circumstances, PRI/MAFF decided to accept various foreign researchers, who are interested in Japanese agricultural policy. Now we have three foreign researches from South Korea, China and U.S.A.(OECD).

I hope that readers will compare our Annual Report 2001 with those of their own country. Presumably readers will be also astonished at the similarity of research themes. Hope you enjoy learning about our work through this book, our Home page and other channels.

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further information.

We have not published or distributed our research in English. Annual Report 2001 is the only authorized English version that offers a summary of our activities. We will try to provide more information in English in the future.



Director General
TAKASHI SHINOHARA

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "T. Shinohara".