



Director-General
Dr. Kozo Konishi

On August 1, I was appointed to succeed Mr. Nishio as Director-General of the Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries. I would like to take this opportunity to say a few words.

Last year, as already mentioned, the Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PRIMAFF) reviewed its activities in the past 5 years since it was reorganized to create its present structure in April 2001. Based on the result, it was determined to promote further reform of the research structure by 1) promoting policy research that more properly meets administrative needs; 2) introducing the group/team system, etc. with a view to acting in a systematic and expedient manner; and 3) introducing evaluation of the institute by a third party. Also, in order to further facilitate interactions with the administration, PRIMAFF is now considering moving its base from Nishigahara, Kita-ku where it is now located to an appropriate place in the Kasumigaseki district near the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.

Today, the agriculture, forestry and fisheries administration is experiencing great changes in circumstances, both at home and abroad. In the international community, the situation is forcing Japan to enter into negotiations for EPA/FTA with more countries than before, in addition to dealing with WTO and OECD matters. Domestically, the Core Farmer's Management Stabilization Scheme are moving toward the implementation stage with the passage of the relevant bill last June, and thus increased efforts are needed for agricultural reform in the fields of food, agriculture and rural areas. Further, trends in administrative reform are highlighting the need for "accountability" to explain the effects of policy to the public. In addition, medium- to long-term issues such as the effects of the rise in oil prices, Chinese economic development, etc. on the world supply-demand situation, and the relationship between agriculture, forestry and fisheries and the environment are gaining more attention both from inside and outside the country.

Under these circumstances, PRIMAFF is expected to function as the think tank of the agriculture, forestry, and fisheries administration by strengthening its research structure for the analysis and verification of the situations surrounding agriculture, forestry, and fisheries administration at home and abroad as well as the effects of various policies.

Shortly after I took office as Director-General, I was given an opportunity to attend a meeting of the Global Club of Directors of Agricultural Economic Research Institutes to know that each country is facing difficult situations concerning organization management to one degree or another, including the issues of external performance evaluation, coordination with the policy making department, merger with related organizations and restructuring, and thus I recognized the global trends in the common challenges.

On the other hand, it is important for PRIMAFF as a national institute to provide services by making full use of the researchers' expertise and analytical ability while meeting the expectations of the public, including their administrative needs, widely and properly. In addition to cooperation with each bureau of the Ministry, cooperation with related organizations including universities as well as international organizations such as OECD is a matter of importance. In setting research subjects, it is important to pay attention not only to short-term issues but also to medium- and long-term issues.

I am determined to do my best together with the staff. I would like to ask for your support, cooperation and guidance.



Director-General
KOZO KONISHI