

# Rural Development With Residents' (Agricultural Farmers) Participation -- Centering on Policymaking Process

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In this report I have tried to present the situation that farming villages in Japan are currently facing as well as a concrete strategy for achieving a breakthrough, by analyzing trends in regions whose basis is agriculture. To that end, I examined towns that have established agricultural strategies by employing a policy method involving farmer participation.

Refer to Fig. 1 for the composition of this report.

So far, it has been common practice for local agricultural departments and agricultural cooperatives to draw up agricultural policies in rural regions as a matter of formality. Even when entrusting the matter to specialized research organizations, concrete deliberations had not been held on the policymaking process or follow-up inspections and countermeasures. Under these circumstances, farming house-

holds' intentions were never reflected, and the fact is that there has existed a wide gap between administrators and farmers.

However, as the government's guidelines on agricultural policy have been gradually changing, it is extremely difficult to maintain local farming through traditional methods. This trend is further noticeable especially in regions practicing paddy field farming that have enjoyed stable revenues so far.

Among these regions, the K region has launched a new agricultural organization earlier than any other region. It has been exerting efforts to draw up an agricultural strategy through collaboration with experts from the outside.

The K region collects, analyzes, shares, and recycles various data related to it. Through this, it encourages participation by farmers and helps organize them. In this way, the K re-

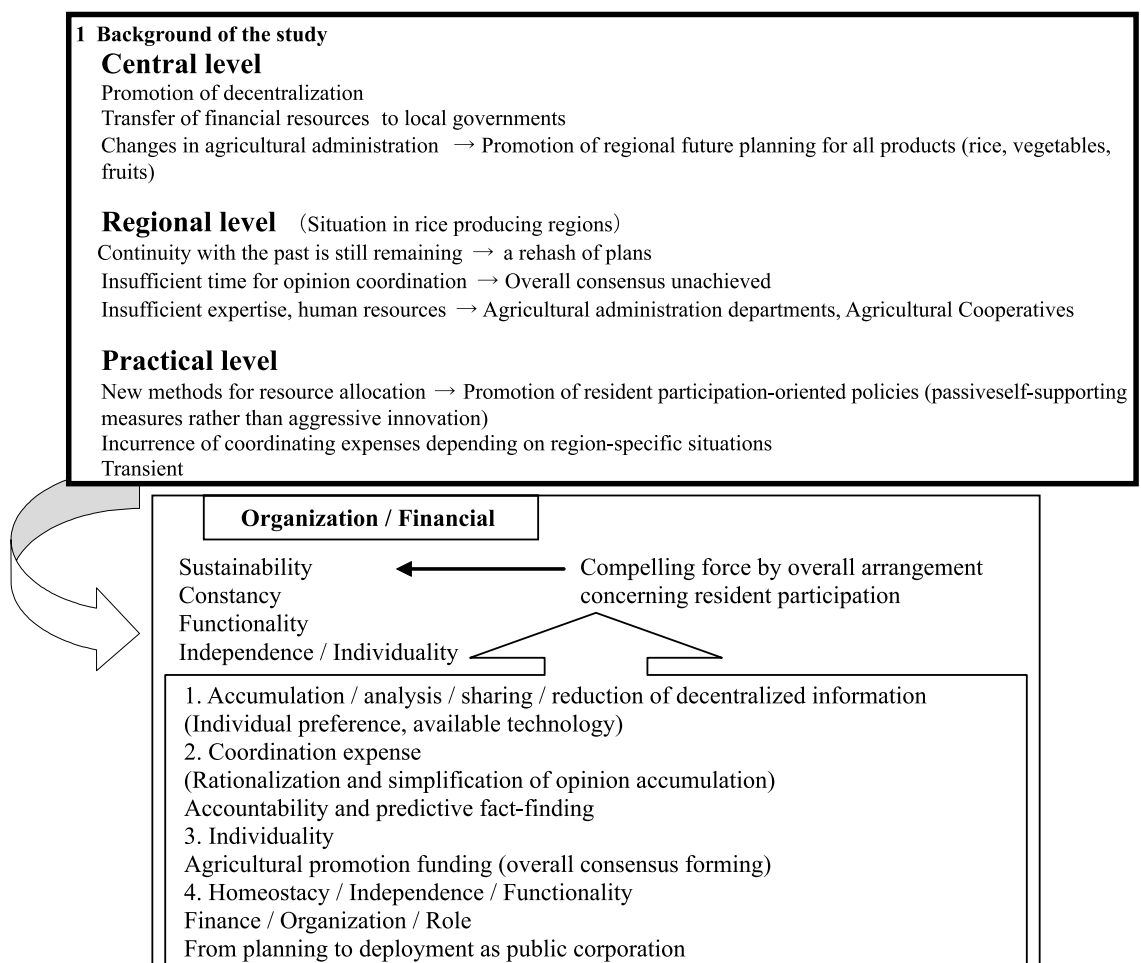


Fig. 1. Overall concept

gion opens the possibility of new policymaking processes. These policymaking processes offer many hints.

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The process of regional farm policies formed by voluntarily participating farmers gives a lot of suggestions and possibilities as emphasized in this report. Similar remarks can simultaneously be made about the role of colleges, universities, and laboratories in local

societies.

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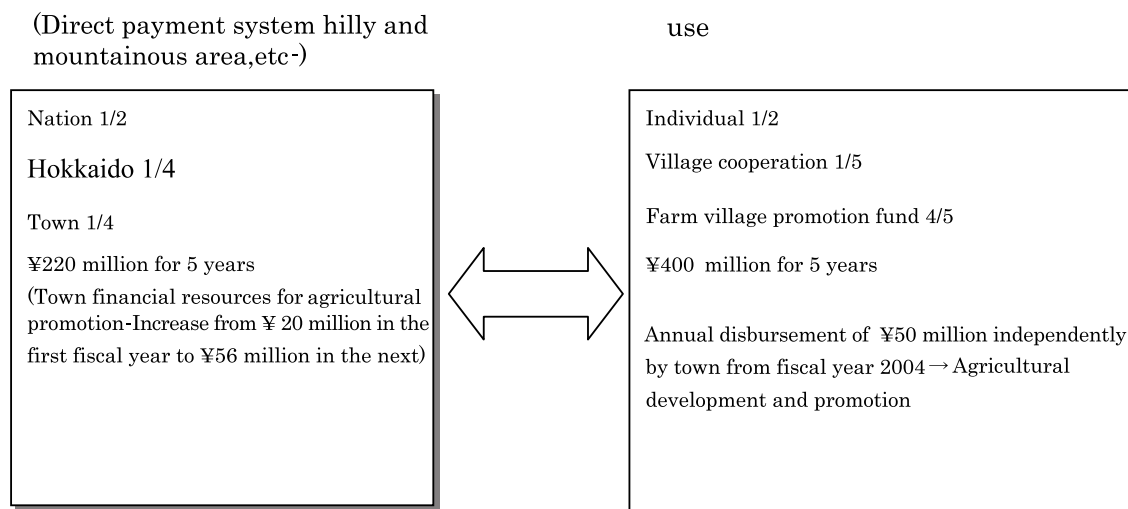


Fig. 2. Financial resources

## Development of Rural-Urban Human Communications through "Rural Working Holiday"

Gentaro SUZUMURA

### 1. Background and Objective

The Rural Working Holiday (WH) is an agricultural working program which many urban residents participate in. It was successively started in Nishimera-village (Miyazaki) and Iida-city (Nagano) in the latter half of 1990's, and was adopted all over Japan. Opinion of the sociological value of rurality was becoming more favorable, and the needs of urbanites for rural leisure were expanding, while in rural areas, the shortage of farm labor and the problem of an aging population were becoming more serious. WH was stated as a way to bring together urban interest in rurality and agricultural labor demand.

### 2. Research Method

This research was mainly based on a questionnaire for WH respondents in Iida city and

hearing investigations at Iida city, Nishimera village and Tono city (Iwate). 513 copies of the questionnaire were distributed, and there were 264 effective replies.

### 3. Outline of the Results

Table 1 is a distribution of age and sex of WH questionnaire respondents. It shows that many respondents are in their 30s and that the ratio of women is much higher in the younger generations (ex. 74% in their 20s).

"Interest in farm work" is the most popular reason for participating in WH; however over 60s participants attach greater importance to "interest in crops, attachment to soil", or "interest in farm stay" (Fig. 1.). This analysis shows a generation gap in demand for WH.

Finally, Fig. 2 analyzes the desire to migrate to rural areas. Many respondents in their 50s expressed the strongest desire to migrate,