

## “Let’s get connected Co-op Action” Exchange Meeting

“Let’s get connected Co-op Action” initiative was launched by JCCU in 2011 to call on member co-ops to organize fund raising for specific issues concerning the revival of the Great East Japan Earthquake stricken areas and to offer voluntary participation in the reconstruction exercise.

On January 16 in Kobe, as part of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake, JCCU and Co-op Kobe co-sponsored an exchange meeting to learn the earthquake disaster area reconstruction efforts in Kobe to serve as tips for the ongoing reconstruction efforts of the Great East Japan Earthquake. It was participated by about 450 people including co-op members nationwide, co-op board members and employees, NPOs and representatives from the council of social welfare.

Mr. ASADA Katsumi made the opening remarks and mentioned that through the two earthquakes ties between people and the power of cooperation have been recognized as important for the community. He called on co-ops nationwide to work with the local people to continue the reconstruction effort.

Following a video screening, which summarized the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake and the Great East Japan Earthquake, there was earthquake experience report by FUJII Hiroshi, Professor Kobe Gakuin University and Ms. AKIKO Saito, adviser of Miyagi Prefectural Consumer Co-operative Union with Mr. YAMAGUCHI Kazufumi chairperson of Co-op Kobe presiding as coordinator (top pic).



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## 2015 New Year Message: ASADA Katsumi, President, JCCU



Mr. ASADA Katsumi

I would like to extend New Year Greetings to all our co-operative members, staff members, stakeholders and Co-operative colleagues around the world. I am very grateful to you for your understanding and support for our business and look forward to working with you again in the spirit of cooperation this New Year.

In April 2014, after 17 years, there was a consumption tax hike. In addition to this tax increase, there was also electricity tariff increase and a rise in price of food, making members' living increasingly severe.

Co-op is facing this reality, and will continue to promote business and activities to support the living of our members.

On January 17, the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake was commemorated and four years have also passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Also last year, including the landslides in Hiroshima, enormous natural disaster occurred throughout the country.

In response to these disasters, Co-ops nationwide in cooperation with the government and other organizations, have been engaged in a variety of support activities.

Co-op will continue working on reconstruction assistance of the affected areas and further promote businesses and activities to support members living.

Especially last year, taking advantage of the inherent opportunity to meet directly with the elderly and community members living alone through our home delivery business made it possible for the increasing "Regional Protection Agreement" with the local governments. The number of cities, wards, towns and villages where agreement have been concluded is more than a third of all municipalities.

In addition, co-ops expanded support business for the elderly and people living in the food deserts through our meal delivery and the mobile grocery businesses.

JCCU and member co-ops also expanded the child rearing support schemes to encourage children's free activity and interchange as well as parents' spontaneous mutual learning.

Co-op as an organization of mutual help will continue to deepen ties with the local community and strengthen participation in community development together with our members, NGOs and the local governments.

In this year also, further guidance and encouragement from all of you is highly appreciated.

Thank you.

## 2015 New Year Reception Held

The Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU), the Japan CO-OP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation (JCIF) and the Japanese Health and Welfare Co-operative Federation (HeW CO-OP JAPAN) co-organized a new year reception on January 13 as a means to raise co-ops visibility through the exchanges with the various participants. More than 952 people, including co-op stakeholders, the media, academics, co-operative organizations, leaders from various institutions including cabinet members, political parties and representatives from the Member of Parliament attended.

Following the opening address by Mr. ASADA Katsumi, President of JCCU, the Minister of Health, Labor and Welfare (MHLW) Mr. SHIOZAKI Yasuhisa took turn and expressed that he still expect co-ops to keep supporting efforts towards the reconstruction of the Great East Japan Earthquake and other social issues.

The Ministers speech gave the co-op an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of social responsibility of co-ops and a need to further strengthen their collaboration for the development of the community. In addition Mr. BANZAI Akira, Chairperson, JA-ZENCHU (Central Union of Agricultural Co-operatives) and Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives representative called on the various co-op organizations to exercise a collective effort through strengthening ties between them to contribute to the development of the local communities.

At the breaking open the New Year's sake barrels, each political party, friendship organizations, business partners and representative from various co-ops went on the stage and a toast was proposed by Mr. KOBAYASHI Hiroshi, Chairperson of the association of business partners of JCCU, (Nippon Meat Packers, Inc.'s representative director).

## Consumer Co-ops held 2015 National Policy Debate Rally

The Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union, (JCCU) and the Japan CO-OP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation (JCIF) co-organized a policy meeting for consumer co-operatives nationwide on January 13-14 2015 in Tokyo, attended by 400 persons.

The meeting was attended by board members and executive officers from co-ops across the nation to discuss the 2015 fiscal year business plan and policy development to have a common understanding about the task to pursue in the New Year.

Mr. ASADA Katsumi, President of JCCU, gave an opening remark and appealed to co-ops to further advance the agreement with the local government regarding "community watching" and to tackle various social issues confronting the nation while maintaining support efforts towards the reconstruction of the Great East Japan Earthquake disaster areas.

He also mentioned that 2014 was a year consumer co-ops expanded the Co-op boxed meal catering services for the senior citizens and families with small children as well as expanding the target users.

In a keynote speech by Mr. SHIMADA Hiroyuki, CEO of JCCU, he summarized the 2014 fiscal year activities and further proposed tentatively special issues to be addressed in 2015.

He mentioned that one of the major policies in 2014 was the advancement of managerial competencies to maintain affordability of Co-op products in response to the consumption tax hike.

He also stated that this year (2015) will be the second year of the initiative "Love Co-op campaign" to spread the trust and affection for Co-op products by co-op members.

JCCU will continue to collaborate with member co-ops and staff to expand the campaign by planning events to be held at various places across the country where members could see and experience values of Co-op products in display and have the chance to interact with fellow members and co-op employees with Co-op products as theme.

Taken turns, the Managing Director of Japan COOP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation, Mr. OGIHARA Takashi, also submitted the 2014 fiscal year business report and the business plan (proposal) for the 2015 fiscal year for (JCIF).

During the plenary session, which divided into three groups, participants actively debated on some of the key issues in the proposals to deepen understanding about the 2015 policy and business plan.

The discussions include "solving social problems through co-op business", "further strengthening of ties" and "maintaining sustainable business structure" respectively.

About 100 people discussed each theme.



Mr. ASADA Katsumi



Mr. SHIMADA Hiroyuki



Mr. OGIHARA Takashi

## "CO·OP × Red Cup campaign" donation ceremony held

On September 21 2014, Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) and its member Co-ops in co-operation with the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) launched the "CO·OP × Red Cup campaign" to raise funds to support the "school lunch program" in the Republic of Ghana.

One yen from the sale of the 11 targeted CO·OP products was donated to WFP for the school lunch program.

The first phase of the project was executed from September 21 to October 31 2014. During this one month period, a total of 2.5 million packs were sold yielding an amount of 2.5 million JPY.

On January 20, 2015, the first donation presentation ceremony was held at CO-OP PLAZA (JCCU headquarters) in Tokyo, where the amount was presented to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) to support the "school lunch program" for the Ghanaian school children.

Present at the ceremony included Mr. SEKIGUCHI Yasue, the Secretary-General of UN WFP Association, Mr. SHIMADA Hiroyuki, Managing Director/CEO JCCU, some staff members of JCCU and WFP.

The school feeding project would run for three years till 2016.

JCCU, with the cooperation of Co-op members is committed to continue support for the children of the Republic of Ghana through this "CO·OP × Red Cup campaign".



Mr. SHIMADA (R) presenting a note representing the amount of donation to Mr. SEKIGUCHI.

## News in Brief

### Japan CO-OP Insurance Consumers' Co-operative Federation (JCIF) wins Recognition

The Service Productivity & Innovation for Growth (SPRING), an independent organization, backed by the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), conducted the fourth survey to collect data to estimate the Japanese Customer Satisfaction Index (JCSI) for 2014.

JCSI is a national cross-industry benchmarks of customer satisfaction which was established for the purpose of competitiveness reinforcement.

In 2014, the survey was conducted for six different industries namely, supermarket, electronics stores, household goods stores / home center, life insurance, property and casualty insurance and the credit card. Customer evaluations of the quality of goods and services from a total of 98 companies were investigated.

In the category of life insurance, consisting of 13 companies, Japan CO-OP Insurance

Consumers' Co-operative Federation (JCIF) came first in 5 indexes, namely, customer expectation, perception quality, perception value, customer satisfaction and the recommended intention based on customer evaluations of the quality of goods and services received from the company.

Customers receiving services from JCIF gave the company a JCSI benchmark of 81.9 for the customer satisfaction, surpassing the top-scoring company in the private sector, prefectural mutual insurance at 81.0

This is the second consecutive time that JCIF has come first in the survey.

Out of 26 companies (supermarkets) under the investigation, Co-op Sapporo ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in perception quality and 8<sup>th</sup> in customer satisfaction, while Co-op Kobe also ranked 6<sup>th</sup> in customer expectation.

### JCCU launches new brand for its products

In order to further increase the competitiveness of CO·OP Brand products as well as to raise the brand image and members loyalty for the product, JCCU has announced the launch of a new brand for Co-op products in June 2015.

This complete reform of a new package design, is performed taking advantage of having reached the 55th anniversary this year after launching its first CO·OP Brand product "CO·OP Butter" in 1960. Now there is approximately 4,400 CO·OP Brand products in the market.

In this reform, a brand message and a brand statement consisting of five promises with specific themes that underline the quality assurance system of co-op products are formulated as summarized below.

1. Placing importance to safety and reliability we pursue the development of better quality products.
2. Listening and incorporating the opinions of members we pursue the development of valuable products.
3. Connecting thoughts and expanding empathy
4. Bringing smiles and good health at dining table.
5. Contributing to the community and the society

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Five brand messages and packages have been designed including "CO·OP Quality" which represent co-op products rich in taste, "SMILING CO·OP, representing products produced based on members' opinion and requests", "Products produced from domestic materials" etc. and JCCU will advance the improvement of the product value based on the brand statement.

In the new brand, JCCU will adopt a common label in the package design and improve a united feeling of the whole co-op product brand. It is more plain and simple in its outlook and will have calorie display in the front and allergic material indication on the back side.

Specifically, JCCU plans to refurbish approximately 600 and 800 items in June and September respectively while advancing new product development and improvement of the existing 4,400 items in a period of three years. Below is a picture of the brand image of CO·OP Quality.



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