

JCCU Supports 2015 IPC Cross-Country Skiing

JCCU has been supporting athletes with disabilities cross-country skiing Japan team from 2005 by sponsoring the team and cheering them to work towards a high level of achievement in their career.

Also in the 2015 International Paralympic Committee (IPC) Cross Country Skiing World Cup held in Asahikawa, Hokkaido Japan in February 2015, JCCU as usual sponsored the Japanese team and cheered them up.

In this tournament, Co-op Sapporo which operates in Hokkaido Prefecture being the venue of the game, and Okayama Co-op located in the birthplace of one of the athletes also offered sponsorship.

Holding a flag with words of encouragement from co-ops nationwide the players were cheered up.

This tournament which becomes Asian first holding was achieved by the strenuous efforts of the Japanese players who have contested in world sports, the coaches and all persons involved in Japanese sports.

About 100 people including athletes and staff gathered from nine countries for the exciting game which lasted for seven days.

Further outstanding performance is expected in the future during the South Korea Pyeongchang Winter Paralympic Games in 2018.

The picture above shows the state of the February 2015 World Cup of the disabled cross-country skiing held in Asahikawa, Hokkaido.



JCCU establishes a New Electric Power Company "Earth Club Co., Ltd."

JCCU has established of a new electric power company the "Earth Club Co., Ltd." that commenced business on April 1, 2015 to supply electric power to the facilities of JCCU and Consumer Co-ops.

The power procurement and supply capacity of the company is approximately 100 million kWh per year which corresponds to the annual power usage of 22,000 households of ordinary homes

The new company is to supply 20 megawatt (MW) of power on contract to the headquarters of JCCU located in the Tokyo metropolitan area and 168 offices of Consumer Co-operative Co-op Mirai.

JCCU, with the aim of achieving a sustainable society and an energy policy that does not rely on nuclear power generation, and again as part of the renewable energy spread, has pushed forward the installation of solar power equipment to seven logistics facilities nationwide from 2012.

In order to integrally promote the generation and use of renewable energy, JCCU established the "Earth Club Co. Ltd" to produce power to cover the energy demand of JCCU business facilities. Preparations for the start of the project was completed on June 20, 2014.

Other services of the new company includes buying and selling of solar power and providing consultation and support services on other energy related products to JCCU member co-ops who are advancing their own energy business.

The new company will sell power to JCCU taking advantage of the Feed-in Tariff System (FIT), at a level equivalent to that of the normal electricity prices.

Also, in September 2014, a woody biomass

power plant (Noda bio power JP Co., Ltd.) was built in Noda village in Iwate Prefecture by JCCU and three consumer co-ops in the northeastern Japan, namely Miyagi, Iwate and Co-op Tohoku Sunnet Federation.

The present power supply procurement plan of JCCU is about 2.5MW by solar panels installed in the logistic facilities of JCCU and the Co-op Net Business Federation in which Co-op Mirai is affiliated with and external procurement of natural gas electric power or the factory surplus electric power.

In addition, JCCU anticipates the procurement from Noda bio power JP Co., Ltd. operating from 2016.

The "Earth Club Co., Ltd." has signed a back-up contract with a public-power-supply company (Tokyo Electric Power Company) in a preparation for any shortfall to balance the supply and demand from JCCU.

Through the business of the new power companies, such as the solar power generation and the woody biomass power generation, JCCU aims to further promote renewable energy.



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Co-op Kobe starts TV shopping service

In March 2015, Co-op Kobe in collaboration with Toshiba corporation commenced a TV shopping assistance service "TV-MEMU" that allows products ordering from TV terminals. This solution, offered and managed by Toshiba, comprised of a communication terminal, an exclusive wireless remote controller, application, a communication line and a server.

The communication terminal is equipped with a 3G communication function that makes Internet connection unnecessary. The service may be utilized by just connecting to a TV.

With the adoption of a voice recognition technology to a dedicated remote control, anything one wants to buy is input by sound and relevant goods and the related item can be indicated.

Anticipating the use of the elderly, the system is equipped with a function that can check and confirm the house situation and the ordering information of the person making the order. This is possible if a smartphone or any internet terminal of the family member is set to receive notification of the terminal start-up operation and the ordering information.

With this dedicated application, pictures taken on the smartphone could be sent to the communication terminal, and be displayed on a television screen of the user.

When inputting the weight, the blood pressure and the number of steps, the confirmation of daily health condition and a recommended health product are also possible.

At the end of March, only a part of Kobe was a target area for the TV-MEMU, but will be expanded to all Co-op Kobe operations in May.

The equipment rental fee per month is ¥ 1,680 and the only first time office work handling charges is ¥ 3,000.

Fiscal 2014 Radioactive substance intake investigation results

From 2011, JCCU has been conducting investigation on the "radioactive material intake from domestic meal" and the results for the fiscal 2014 has been summarized.

Since the East Japan Earthquake in 2011 members anxiety about radioactive contamination of food has not ceased, serving the purpose for the continuing investigation, to find out the actual situation scientifically.

This time the survey period was from July 30, 2014 - February 20, 2015 with a target number of 256 households (256 meal samples from Tohoku to Kanto, just like the previous investigations).

The two-day meals from each household (total of 6 meals and between-meal snack) was made into one sample, mixed together and examined for cesium levels using a germanium semiconductor detector.

The detection limit for the measurement of cesium 134, cesium 137, iodine 131 and potassium 40 was 1Bq/kg.

Comparing the investigation result in fiscal 2014 with the results in the past 3 years, the following results have been summarized.

About the amount of the radioactive cesium per 1 kg of meal, the radioactive cesium beyond the detection limit wasn't detected by any of the samples investigated in fiscal 2014.

In each year of the investigation, including 2014, some amount of radioactive cesium was detected

but the detection ratio and the maximum value of radioactive cesium has been reduced with each passing year.

As a result of having investigated 1,612 samples in four years, it has become evident that the assumption that one could continuously be eating meals containing 1Bq / kg or cesium is very low.

Regarding the internal radiation exposure dose of radioactivity from a meal per one year (radioactive cesium), the results revealed that the maximum value of the internal exposure dose, has become progressively lower from 2011 to 2013.

In fiscal 2014, radioactive cesium could not be detected and therefore cannot be compared, however, the internal exposure dose is considered to be equal or less than the level recorded in the previous years.

Radioactive potassium (potassium 40) was detected in all samples regardless of the nuclear plant accident with a value 14-59 Bq/kg. Hence the internal radiation exposure dose of radioactivity per year would be 0.053-0.36mSv. This result is same with the past three years.

JCCU would continue the investigation in 2015 to disseminate the right information to members and the general public so that anxiety about food products especially from Fukushima and Miyagi prefectures would cease based on the scientific evidence of the investigation.

Co-op Mirai holds product exhibition

"Co-op Mirai product exhibition Festival 2015" was held on March 8 at the Makuhari International Convention Complex in Chiba. It was well attended by approximately 25,000 people.

This event, a big product exhibition, is held once every year since the birth of Co-op Mirai in 2013, in collaboration with various organizations such as schools, local governments, Agricultural co-ops in Japan and producers.

This time, about 100 companies including "Sanchoku" producers took part in the exhibition and performed food tasting and sales of products such as fresh vegetables, meat, fish and frozen food produced in Chiba Prefecture.

Also in the mini stage, there was an appearance of the image character of Co-op Mirai that received applause of children.

This exhibition is part of Co-op Mirai's food education program that intends to convey the importance of the Japanese-style diet and to promote local production for local consumption.

Through the event, all visitors enjoyed and had a chance to think about the importance of healthy diet, food safety, food education and agriculture issues.



Seen at the exhibition

"Sanchoku", direct transaction and co-operative activity between producers and consumers.

Co-op Mirai grant to organizations instrumental in social issues

On March 7, 2015, Co-op Mirai held the first joint awards ceremony "Co-op Mirai Brilliance Award" and the "Co-op Mirai Community Brilliance Award" in which a total grant of 3.9 million JPY was awarded to 18 organizations who have been instrumental in contributing to community development and solving problems in the society.

Both awards were founded in August 2014 as a social contribution activity subsidy system by reframing the subsidy program of the old 3 co-ops in the Tokyo Metropolitan and Saitama and Chiba Prefectures namely Co-op Tokyo, Saitama Co-op and Chiba Co-op respectively, before their merger into Co-op Mirai, to commend business organizations and social activity groups that achieved excellence in terms of contributing to community development.

From among the organizations that were selected on the recommendation by experts and through public offering, "Co-op Mirai Community Brilliance Prize selection committee" of each prefecture gave the final endorsement of the organizations achievements and a certificate of commendation and a price of ¥200,000 was presented to each of the winning organizations.

Again from among the winners of the "Co-op Mirai Community Brilliance Award" were selected particularly excellent organization from each prefecture as winners of the Co-op Mirai Brilliance Award by "Co-op Mirai Social Activities Committee" with a winning price of ¥100,000 per each winning organization.



ICA Collaboration Seminar "Aiming at Sustainable Society"

On March 27, 2015 in Tokyo, the Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives (JJC) organized the second ICA collaboration seminar under the theme "contributing to sustainable community development by co-operatives in Japan" to exchange views on the theme.

Mr. Jean-Louis Bancel, ICA Director, Mr. Charles Gould, Secretary General of ICA, Dr. Martin Lowery, Director of ICA and Mr. Enzo Pezzini, General Secretary of the Italian cooperative Confederation Brussels office gave lectures and discussed the role and potential of Japanese co-operatives.

Approximately 250 people including representatives from agricultural co-ops in Japan and consumer co-operatives attended. Mr. Bancel emphasized the importance of the education. In the background of his lecture he talked about the world economy, the rapid changes in society and the mutual trust of cooperatives. He pointed out the gap between generations and stressed the necessity to think about how a person less than 30-year-old could understand what we talk about cooperative model of business.

Mr. Bancel also mentioned that Japanese idea of a cooperative society and participation are needed and that "Japanese aggressive participation" has been suggested to cooperative society of the world.

In addition, Mr. Charles Gould, touched on "involvement in the local community,"

making reference to the seventh principle of cooperatives.

Furthermore, he mentioned that, currently more than 250 million people in the world are getting food by way of cooperatives, and again cooperatives are contributing to stable employment securement. It is therefore our duty to spread cooperatives from local to global.

Dr. Lowery who is a National Rural Electric Co-operative Association vice chairman, stressed the need to think in conjunction with water, food and electric power energy in the effort to build a sustainable society.

Finally Mr. Enzo Pezzini mentioned that the era of cooperatives trapped in ideology has come to an end, and introduced the current situation of a variety of co-operative organizations in the United Kingdom, France and Italy.



Osaka Izumi Citizen Co-op launches "Dietary Education Museum"

On April 1, Osaka Izumi Citizen Co-op held an opening ceremony for a dietary education museum for elementary school children under the theme "healthy eating museum" to promote healthy eating habits and to learn about local food culture. At the ceremony there was exhibition of food items that attracted attention.

The museum is a participatory type where food safety and healthy eating habits are learned through individual solutions to questions on a question sheet called "mission seat" in their hand and advances.

In the food safety zone which also serves as the product inspection center, hints that help derive answers to problems such as the "hiding place of microorganisms that cause food poisoning" and others, have been given through panels, models and video images.

In addition, in the dietary education zone to learn about food and the human body, there is in place a big human body tunnel right in front of the entrance. Here one could learn about how food is digested, where it goes after

digestion and the health problems associated with it.

The museum will be opened to public in May and a workshop is also scheduled to be held for children to prepare butter and handmade miso. For family or casual visit reservation and admission fee is not required.

As a subject of free study many school children and students are expected to come and have experience of it.



Co-op Mirai introduced electric bicycle for delivery rationalization

On March 9, Co-op Mirai introduced electric bicycle with a drawn cart which becomes the first in use, in the history of consumer co-ops, for the delivery of ordered items to members' homes. The service is limited to the individual home delivery in the city housing complex of Ageo city, Saitama, using "Haraichi housing complex station" located inside the housing complex as a post to achieve the rationalization of delivery.

The individual delivery from a delivery center outside the housing complex is stopped. Instead delivery is made using the Haraichi housing complex station as a post using an electric bicycle.



Co-op Kobe provides driving training facility

One of the business model of consumer co-ops is the home delivery of ordered items to members home using trucks. Co-op Kobe has prepared a driving practice field where the home delivery truck drivers could learn skills and manner regarding safe driving. Inauguration of the facility was held on February 26 and the running of the facility started on April 1.

Co-op Kobe has 1,700 trucks for delivery with 2,500 drivers. Until now the training of the drivers has been done on the street. The size of the new facility is about 4,000sq.m, having walls and slopes that resemble road with bad visibility that will allow drivers to learn how to overcome difficult situations in the actual condition. The facility is opened to co-ops nationwide.

News in Brief

Peace Activity

- On February 21, Consumer Co-operatives delegation to the 2015 NPT Review Conference held an inaugural ceremony in Kanagawa prefecture. It was attended by representatives from JCCU, the Japan Confederation of A-and H-Bomb Sufferers Organization, NGOs, to mention a few.

The (Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons) NPT Review Conference which is held once in five years will be held from April 27-May 22 at the United Nations headquarters in New York. Also this year will be the 70th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The Co-op delegation will play their role to ensure a successful 2015 Review Conference by representing the opinions of people home and abroad wishing a world free of nuclear weapons.

A book entitled the "LAST TOMATO" Hiroshima in my own words, by TAKEMOTO Shigenori, former President of JCCU, who is a survivor of the atomic bomb, has been translate into English and the electronic version will be put on JCCU English website. The URL address will be given in the next edition of JCCU News.

Policy Recommendation

- JCCU established food and agriculture issues Review Committee as a specialized committee of the Board of Directors in fiscal 2014, and has been studying and giving guidance on policy formation of food and agriculture in Japan.

In October 2014, JCCU submitted a written opinion for the new "Food, Agriculture and Rural Basic Plan" of the country, and in March 2015 has published a book entitled "Food and agricultural issues and Co-op challenges 2015" giving opinion on food and agricultural issues and also summarizing the challenges of co-op business and activities related to food and agriculture.

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Chapter 2: reaching point of co-op challenges

Chapter 3: challenges of co-op towards 2020



Social initiatives

- Co-op Sapporo, as part of environmental impact reduction activities and to promote the formation of a recycling-oriented society, has started a new business that will advance a year-round collection service of used clothing that are no longer needed by the members, using the co-ops network of the home delivery business. The service started in February in Sapporo and will spread all over Hokkaido from May 2015.

There are about 310,000 household members using the home delivery business and the co-op intends collecting about 300 tons of used clothes in the first year and further increase to 900 tons in the third year.

The collected used clothes will be sent to Cambodia through a recycling company in Sapporo to be sold to the public.

In 2017 co-op aims at 13.5 million JPY sales and out of this 30% will be donated to Hokkaido UNICEF Association (Sapporo).

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