

Health counseling for Co-op members in the disaster stricken area

On April 27, the Health and Welfare Co-operative Federation of Japan (Hew CO-OP) in co-operation with JCCU conducted health consultation for co-op members in the stricken area over the counter of one of the stores of Co-op Kumamoto.

The counseling team consisted of Kagoshima Medical Co-op, Oita Prefecture Medical Co-op, Saga Medical Co-op, Health Co-op Kenbunkai, nurses, dental hygienist and Medical Social Worker (MSW) all together 13 people participated in the counseling.

On the day of the event the weather situation was not good with rain falling from the morning. Irrespective of this situation 130 people participated in the event.

As part of the an old-woman's feeling of satisfaction she mentioned that she was relieved because she could not go to hospital in that severe earthquake situation.

The manager of Co-op Kasuga store, Mr. IWASAKI Tomoyuki expressed great delight for the event stating that the event was the first of its kind in the history of the store and most importantly all the people who participated showed a sign of relief and were glad to have such an opportunity.

Consultation that has no direct relationship with the disaster was also allowed.

A similar health consultation event was held at the same location on May 6.



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ICA President Ms. Monique Leroux visits Japan

The International Co-operative Alliance (ICA) president Ms. Monique Leroux paid a two-day visit to Japan on May 15-16, 2016 to take part in the third ICA collaboration seminar organized by the Japan Joint Committee of Co-operatives (JJC) in Tokyo.

Among the topics discussed in the seminar were;

- 1) to outreach and appeal the social role of co-operatives worldwide.
- 2) to create an environment for young people to actively participate in co-operative and emphasized the importance of education.
- 3) innovation of cooperative business and
- 4) the importance of cooperation between cooperatives.

During the second day of the visit (May 16), Ms. Monique paid a visit to Fukushima Prefecture to gain insight into the future reconstruction effort after the Great East Japan Earthquake and the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant accident. She met with some co-operative officials there and inspected some co-operative facilities.

She later paid a courtesy visit to Mr. MORIYAMA Hiroshi the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries with JJC representatives to exchange views on the reconstruction projects in Fukushima prefecture.

Also accompanied the ICA president on the visit to Fukushima were the chairman of JJC and also the president of JA-ZENCHU (Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives) Mr. OKUNO Choe, the president of JCCU Mr. ASADA Katsumi and the Regional Director for the International Cooperative Alliance Asia-Pacific Region, Mr. Balasubramanian Iyer.



ICA President's visit to Fukushima



Monique Leroux ICA president and Asada JJC vice-chairman and President of JCCU

CO-OP Hokkaido “edamame” green soybeans

JCCU has released a new product “Co-op Hokkaido edamame” which is green soybeans, cooked in the pod and sold as a frozen item. The release took effect from April 1, 2016.

The need for this product came as a result of members request. Edamame has great health benefits with high protein content, vitamins, minerals and insoluble fiber. With its high nutrients the product has become more popular especially among Co-op members having strong consciousness to health. The soy beans is grown in Tokachi in Hokkaido prefecture blessed with abundant nature.

JCCU, has been cooperating with manufacturers in Hokkaido including the local JA for many years and based on the trust built with them JCCU has been producing products that meets various requirements of co-op members. The green soya beans used as a raw material for this product is planted between May and June, and the best timing for harvesting (the most delicious ripeness) is determined in summer.

While not losing the freshness, the raw material is processed at a local factory in Hokkaido. The production process include sorting, washing, boiling and salt seasoning and rapid freezing. Using a short period of time in the processing ensures good taste.

Seasoned with salt the green soybeans could be enjoyed as starter for every dish.

To make clear the traceability of the product, the package clearly specifies the production area.



JCCU commissions a new power company

On April 1, 2016 JCCU announced the launch of a new power company the “Earth Club Co., Ltd.” which is a subsidiary of JCCU in the Tohoku region of Japan. The new company will supply power to four consumer co-ops in the region, namely, Co-op Aomori, Iwate Co-op, Miyagi Co-op and Co-op Fukushima.

The new electric power company will supply 20 megawatts of power on contract to 92 locations of the four consumer co-ops in the region. This corresponds to the annual electricity consumption of about 19,000 households.

The facility will have an annual production scale of about 90 million kWh.

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 addition, on June 20, 2014, in order to integrally promote the use and generation of renewable energy, JCCU established a similar “Earth Club Co., Ltd” in the Tokyo metropolitan area to produce power to cover the energy demand of JCCU business facilities, its subsidiary company CX Cargo and Co-op Mirai. From 2015 about 140 million KWH power is being supplied from the facility to

170 locations of the aforementioned organizations on annual basis.

Together with the supply to the Tohoku region, the power procurement and supply capacity of the company is approximately 230 million kWh per year which corresponds to the annual electricity consumption of about 50,000 households.

In addition, a woody biomass power plant (Noda bio power JP Co., Ltd.) which is 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 is scheduled to run from the first half of 2016 fiscal year.

After this operation, the Earth Club may procure a part of the power, and then supply to the local Iwate Co-op and the co-op offices in the Tohoku district.

In the second half of the fiscal 2016 the power supply arrangement of the “Earth Club Co., Ltd.” is planned to be approximately 40% of the FIT electricity generated by wind power, solar and woody biomass.

JCCU aims to further promote renewable energy such as solar power generation and woody biomass power generation in the future.

The 7th Co-op detergent environmental donation campaign

JCCU aims at contributing to environmental protection activities while spreading the visibility of co-op laundry detergent through the campaign.

In 2011, “Co-op Environmental Campaign Fund” was established by Japanese Consumer Co-ops and every year donation campaign is organized through the sale of Co-op detergent (11 items) to raise funds to support environmental activities both in Japan and abroad.

This year the campaign is conducted between April 21 to October 20 2016, where for every purchase of a particular laundry detergent, one yen will be donated to the fund.

The amount will be donated to the NPO Borneo Conservation Trust (BCT) Japan for biodiversity conservation activities in Borneo.

Borneo has oil plantations where JCCU gets its raw materials for the production of laundry detergent.

This campaign is, the 7th since commencement and it is expected to raise about 5 million yen.

During the last fiscal year (April 21 to October 20, 2015), 102 consumer co-ops participated in the campaign and raised a total amount of 4.5 million yen.

JCCU has been promoting the development of

environmentally friendly products that have received various certifications such as the Marine Stewards Council (MSC), the Eco Mark and the Forest Stewards Council FSC®.

JCCU is aggressively spreading Eco Mark products in consideration of increasing donations towards environmental activities and to environmental groups engaged in various environmental protection activities soliciting the assistance of member co-ops.



Campaign Logo



Campaign items

Rice planting experience for school children

As part of Kyoto Co-op's social program for nurturing the younger generation, the co-op organized rice planting in the rice terraces of Sodeshi - Kyotango, facing the sea of Japan, for school children on May 14, 2016. About 90 people including co-op members and staff participated in this event.

Rice fields of Sodeshi is among the best 100 selected terraced rice fields in Japan. However, in recent years, as a result of depopulation and the aging of the region cultivation of the rice fields have been abandoned.

In order to protect the rice terraces of Sodeshi, and the beautiful landscape, Kyoto Co-op has signed an agreement with local Sodeshi rice terraces preservation society through rice planting and harvesting activities.

Last year the co-op organized the planting of koshihikari (brand name of a Japanese rice) in this rice field which was harvested and sold through home delivery in this March.

Kyoto Co-op with the aim to protect the landscape of the beautiful rice terraces will continue this effort in the future



Rice field along the sea that has been abandoned. Kyoto Co-op aims to return it someday as terraced rice fields

35th Anniversary of "CO-OP mix carrot"

In 1981, JCCU developed the "CO-OP mix carrot" which is a vegetable fruit mix juice based on members request for wanting nutritious vegetables to feed their children.

In commemoration of the 35th anniversary of the launch, JCCU has renewed the existing product to strengthen its competitiveness. The new product will be put on sale from June 1, 2016.

A significant change has been made in the raw material selection in response to members concern about the origin of the raw materials. The new product now uses more than 80% of local raw materials. Vegetables remain 50% using domestic carrots. Seven kinds of fruits are being used namely; apple, orange, mandarin orange, banana, pineapple, grape and lemon providing an outstanding flavor.

In this renewal, a total of 6,500 co-op members took part. Prior to the renewal, group interviews and questionnaires were carried out with 2,100 people and based on the results a prototype product was developed.

Through events and monitoring by 1,700 co-op members and their children, tasting of the product was repeatedly carried out till the final product that satisfied the members request was decided.

The package design was also determined by the general consensus of 2,700 co-op members.

Since its launch in 1981, a total of 728 million bottles have been sold.



Nutrition check in mobile sales vehicles

In recent years mobile grocery service that delivers goods to family members living far away in depopulated areas without grocery stores has increased. Many consumer co-ops in Japan including Co-op Sapporo are engaged in this kind of business.

A diet survey conducted in the sparsely populated areas in Japan for elderly citizens revealed that the nutrients in the food for those using the mobile grocery service fall short to those using regular stores.

In response to the results, Co-op Sapporo with the cooperation of Otsuka Pharmaceutical company (Tokyo) and Shikoku University started a "simple nutrition check service" for the grocery service users via Otsuka's exclusive tablet terminal in May 10 2016.

By inputting answers to simple questions such as; "how many times in a week they use milk or eat dairy products", or "whether they cannot eat as a result of dental treatment or lowering of bite force", the system works to reveal any shortages in the protein level or insufficient vitamin of the user using the screen and voice guidance of the tablet that has been handed to the driver during the delivery rounds.

With this system in place the co-op is able to introduce food products through learning sessions and suggests menu examples that could help improve the eating habits of users.

Users with nutrients deficiency are given leaflets and flyers that introduce foods that contain sufficient nutrients.



JCCU submitted a petition

On April 1, 2016 JCCU submitted a "petition related to the liquefied petroleum gas distribution" from a summary of a questionnaire by co-op members, to the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry. Summary of the petition is as follows:

1. That the ministry should deepen its understanding and be able to visualize the problems surrounding the LP gas retail market.
2. That the ministry should ensure the transparency of LP gas rates, and to improve the downward rigidity of prices.
3. That the ministry should strengthen the guidance and monitoring for the realization of fair competition in the LP gas retail market.
4. That the ministry should take the necessary action to maintain stable supply to the sparsely populated areas.

Seikatsu Club launches new "children's curry"

Seikatsu Club Consumers' Co-operative Union responding to the needs of the child-rearing generation has begun the sale of "children's curry" through the co-op's home delivery channel from April 2016.

The curry has a mild taste employing the sweetness of domestic vegetables and does not contain the seven major allergens, namely eggs, milk, wheat, buckwheat, shrimp, crab and peanut. Food additives are not also used. The topping ingredients are cut into small pieces making them easy for children to eat. The target age is from about 1 year old.

The co-op issues a catalog which has a large selection of goods such as baby foods and paper disposable diapers for child rearing families.

Before eating the curry, the bag could be warmed with hot water or in the microwave.

News in Brief

JCCU Releases Business Summary

JCCU summarizes the April 2016 business turnover of the 61 community-based co-ops nationwide operating store outlets and home delivery service as the main domain of business.

For thirteen consecutive months the turnover for both the store and the home delivery had exceeded the previous years.

The total turnover in April is higher than the value recorded in the same month last year with an increase of 3.4% to a value of 205.65 billion JPY.

During the month under review both the store and home delivery turnovers had a marginal increase of 1.0% and 1.9% respectively.

The amount of home delivery sales was 127.49

billion JPY accounting for about 62.0% of the total turnover of the community-based co-ops.

Of these, the individual delivery sales alone increased by 4.2% to a value of 87.77 billion JPY.

The store turnover was 73.24 billion JPY accounting for 35.6% of the total turnover.

The number of store customers in April was less than the number recorded in the same month last year but the total turnover was not affected due to the rise in the average spending per customer as a result of maintaining strong agricultural products and delicatessen items.

Child care salon staff exchange meeting held

Consumer co-ops offer child rearing support as part of co-op members voluntary circle activities by running salon for parents and children to encourage children's free activity and interchange as well as parent's spontaneous mutual learning usually supervised by voluntary members with parenting skills.

In 2014 fiscal year, "child rearing salon" was held in 57 co-ops across the country with about 150,000 parent-child participation.

To offer quality of service and improve skills of the child care salon staff exchange meetings are held once a year by inviting a resource person to give lectures and advice on child parenting.

On March 7 a meeting was held in Miyagi Coop Cultural Center "With" where 87 volunteer staff from child-rearing salon from 27 prefectures took part.

The resource person was YAMAGUCHI Keiko who lectured under the title "the power of listening". She emphasized that at the child rearing salon the way to listen is important in order to meet the requirements of parent-child.

Participants expressed feeling of satisfaction saying they had a great experience through comments such as "I will try to immediately practice what I learned", "it was a great learning session especially learning while moving the body,"etc.

Co-ops effort in this activity aims at supporting the society and the community to think that "child rearing is pleasant" especially in this present generation where there's decline in childbirth and the burden of raising children in Japan.



Scene of the exchange meeting

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JCCU News is published by the International Department.
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