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JCCU Supports 2017 IPC Cross-Country Skiing

JCCU has been sponsoring Para Nordic Skiing Japan Team since 2006.

From March 18 to 22, the 2017 IPC (International Paralympic Committee) Nordic Skiing World Cup Sapporo-Japan was held with the participation of about 80 players from 15 nations.

In the competition, Mr. NITTA Yoshihiro one of the Japanese athletes won silver medal in the "5km Cross Country, Men Short Classical, Standing".

JCCU, as an official partner of the tournament, together with Co-op Sapporo and Okayama Co-op, in the capacity as co-sponsors, sent delegation to cheer the team up at the tournament field.



Nitta standing on the podium (L) during the award ceremony.



Co-op supporting Group; Co-op Sapporo, Okayama Co-op and JCCU.

2017 Environmental Business Research and Exchange Meeting Held

On March 1 and 2, 2017 JCCU organized the "2016 Environmental Project Research and Exchange Meeting" in Tokyo.

53 executives and staff from co-ops nationwide took part in this meeting to learn and engaged in exchanges to deepen understanding of the advanced business efforts of co-ops nationwide and the Japanese business community regarding environmental protection.

On the first day of the meeting four lectures were given on the theme "Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions".

The first lecture was given by Mr. SHIRAKI Yasuo of JCCU who spoke on the subject "The setting of 2023 greenhouse gas reduction goal for consumer co-ops".

He emphasized the importance to know the domestic and foreign trends when setting targets and reported on target level to be referred in order to materialize the 2030 reduction plan for co-op.

Taken turns, Mr. KANEKO Masahiro of the

Palsystem consumers' co-operative union gave an introduction of the company's Energy Data Collection and Management Software referred to as "Multiess" that manages the energy consumption in the group that leads to further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Subsequently, Mr. TSUJIMOTO Yoshiro, also reported on Nara Co-op's Energy Initiatives and the establishment of a Renewable Energy Co-operative Fund.

There were other reports on environmental initiatives from various companies such as Ajinomoto Co., Inc., AEON Co., Ltd., and Kao Corporation highlighting the promotion of environmental and social considerations in the supply chain, management of environmental and social impact of marine products and timber and the procurement of sustainable palm oil respectively.

On the second day, five subcommittees were formed to deepen the discussion based on practical reports.

JCCU Releases Business Summary

On March 21, JCCU summarizes February 2017 business turnover of 66 community-based retail co-ops nationwide operating stores and home delivery service.

For 23 consecutive months, from 2015 fiscal year, the total turnover of the home delivery service had exceeded the previous year.

In February, the home delivery turnover exceeded the previous year by 2.8% with a value of 132.4 billion JPY, accounting for about 62.6% of the

total turnover of the 66 community-based co-ops.

However, the store turnover slightly fell short by 0.3% at a value of 74 billion JPY accounting for about 35% of the total turnover.

The cumulative growth for the 11-month period from April 2016 to February 2017, show a year-on-year increase of 1.4%, 1.8% and 0.5% respectively for the total turnover, the home delivery turnover and the store turnover.

Miyagi Co-op wins the "Environmental Communication Excellence Award"

The Environmental Communication Award is an award system run by the Ministry of Environment, Global Environment Forum, that aims to promote efforts towards environmental communication by business operators, as well as to improve its quality by recognizing excellent environmental reports and environmental activity reports of business organizations.

At the "20th Environmental Communication Awards - Environmental Report Division" Miyagi Co-op's "Summary of Fiscal 2015 Environmental Activity" report won the Excellence Award.

It was evaluated as a comprehensive report because of its business nature and scale which is different from large enterprises and manufacturing industries. While the report features the characteristics of the company, it is also summarized from customers' perspective as a stakeholder which is easy to understand.

Focusing on food safety, Miyagi Co-op promoted efforts to pursue the satisfaction of members.

Again, the diffusion of environmentally conscious products for the environment, advancing efforts on renewable energy and effective initiatives in cooperation with the local community were some of the advanced approaches the Co-op advanced that won her the award.

Miyagi Co-op is expected to develop efforts to pursue its achievements and set future goals.



No Radioactive Substance beyond Threshold Detected in Household Meals for Three Consecutive Years

Since the fiscal 2011, just after the Great East Japan Earthquake, the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) has been conducting a survey to find out the level of radioactive substances in home meals, and on March 7, 2017 the results for the fiscal 2016 was released.

The anxiety of co-op members as well as the general public regarding radioactive contamination of food has not ceased, serving the purpose for the continuing investigation, to find out the actual situation scientifically and to help to understand the current situation by providing survey results and related information widely to consumers in an easy-to-understand manner.

This time the survey period was from June 25 2016 to January 31 2017 with a target number of 253 households (253 meals samples from 19 prefectures from Tohoku to Chubu. For Fukushima prefecture alone 100 households 100 samples were taken). 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 (threshold) for the measurement of cesium 134, cesium 137 and potassium 40 was 1 Bq/kg.

Comparing the investigation results in fiscal 2016 with the results in the past 5 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 was not detected by any of the samples investigated in fiscal 2016.

In each year of investigation from 2011 to 2013 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, however, from fiscal 2014 no radioactive cesium has been detected for 3 consecutive years.

As a result of having investigated 2,128 samples in 6 years, it could be inferred that the assumption that one could continuously be eating meals containing 1 Bq/kg or more of radioactive cesium is extremely low.

Estimated internal radiation exposure dose from meal per one year (radioactive cesium) has become progressively lower from 2011 to 2013.

From fiscal 2014 to 2016, 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 2013.

Radioactive potassium (Potassium 40), which is included in food regardless of nuclear disasters, was detected in all samples with a value of 14-59 Bq/kg. Hence the internal radiation exposure dose of radioactivity per year would be 0.045-0.29 mSv.

This result is same with the past 5 years.

JCCU will continue this investigation in the years ahead to disseminate the right information to members and the general public.

CO-OP Cardboard receives FSC certification

JCCU continues to expand its environmental friendly products in the market and it aims to switch 50% of cardboard used for CO-OP products to FSC certified cardboard by the end of FY 2020. Full-scale adoption starts in April 2017 and it is the first of its kind in Japan to adopt FSC certified cardboard full-scale to private brand (PB) products.

FSC is an international forest management certification system that attest that any product with the certification has been produced from the forests that conform to the requirement of environmental friendliness contained within an FSC forest management standard.

In 2010, JCCU announced the "New Environmental Policy of consumer co-ops for 2020", recognizing environmental issues as the fundamental challenge of mankind and has been working towards building a sustainable society.

As part of this initiative, JCCU has treated FSC certified products as one of the "environmental

friendly CO-OP products", and has since been advancing.

In September 2012, JCCU released "CO-OP Tissue" and "CO-OP pulp roll single/double" as FSC certified products, and in September 2014 JCCU released beverages in paper pack with FSC certification.

JCCU will continue to actively develop and disseminate eco-friendly products, such as FSC certified products and products using recycled waste paper such as milk cartons. Below is Co-op cardboard with FSC certification mark.



The 34th Okinawa old battlefield / American Military base tour held

From March 29 to 31, 2017 JCCU and Okinawa Prefecture Consumers Co-operative Union co-organized the 34th Okinawa old battlefield/American Military base tour for co-op members nationwide. 175 members from 26 consumer co-ops nationwide participated.

The aim of the tour was to provide an opportunity for the members to think about peace in Okinawa and Japan, and learn about the actual situation and current issues over Okinawa base.

On the first day, the participants received a lecture under the title: "Okinawa History - Battle of Okinawa – American Bases in Okinawa", followed by a monodrama performance based on testimonies about the ground battle in Okinawa and also listened to a survivor's experience of the battle in Okinawa.

On the second and third days, visiting tour was held. The tour was in three courses. "The basic course" was organized particularly for people who are participating in the tour for the first time. They visited the Okinawa Prefectural Peace Memorial Museum to learn the realities of the battle in Okinawa. They also visited bunkers, viewed Futenma Base from Kakazu hill and visited Henoko area.

The "parent-child course" was organized for families with children who also visited the old bunkers and Kakazu hill. Thereafter, they visited a cultural center where many relics are exhibited and "Henoko-Takae Course" offered a chance for a tour mainly aimed to visit places related to existing American bases.

There was a feeling among some of the participants that the best way to reach out to many people regarding peace efforts is to tell the people about what they saw, heard and felt during the tour.

Learning Session on the Significance of Collaboration among Co-operatives

On March 8, 2017 the member activities committee and the policy planning committee of Kanagawa Prefecture Consumers Co-operative Union co-organized a learning session with the participation of 44 people from co-operative related organizations in the prefecture.

Following the opening greetings by Mr. MARUYAMA Yoshihiro, Managing Director of the union, a keynote lecture was given by Professor TAKAHASHI Iwao, Nihon University, College of Biological Resource Sciences, Department of Food Business, under the theme "What we need to know to work together as co-operatives – subtheme: rediscovering co-operatives".

He mentioned that since the birth of co-operatives over 170 years ago, co-ops have involved in projects and activities that have played a major role in improving the lives of people and communities and today it has evolved into a large organization with more than 1 billion members worldwide.

He went on to say that the United Nations (UN) also raises cooperatives as one of the key partners for the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) and expects co-operatives to keep advancing activities towards the achievement of the goals.

Furthermore, he mentioned that, the registration of co-operative by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage in 2016 attest the

recognition and highly valued "philosophy and practice of co-operatives" and hence the importance of expanding co-operative ideas and practices in the world.

Co-operatives are also highly valued by the International Labour Organization (ILO) which is a specialized agency of UN for the sustainable development of the stalemate world as well as by the events such as the International Day of Co-operatives and the International Year of Co-operatives (IYC).

However it cannot be said that the Japanese society in general has the idea of co-operatives being evaluated and understood.

In order to have confidence in co-operatives and in ourselves to work in the community, the learning session was organized to provide an opportunity to learn about what we need to know, the meaning of cooperation and the significance of collaboration among co-operatives in this present world.



Professor TAKAHASHI Iwao

2016 JCCU "National Consumption Tax" Survey

JCCU released a flash report about 2016 "Survey on Consumption Tax" through registered monitors of Co-op members from 35 consumer co-ops with an aggregate target of 539 households in a 12-month investigation period from January 2016 to December 2016.

The survey based on the household account book of the co-op members and the calculated tax amount was obtained by subtracting the non-taxable expenses (such as rent and school education expenses) from consumption expenditure multiplied by the tax rate.

According to the survey results, in 2016 the consumption tax rate was 8% and the annual consumption tax per household was 244,256 yen on average, decreasing by 12,011 yen from 2015. This is 3.71% of average income of the target, which is 0.12 point decrease compared with 2015.

For the household receiving annual income less than 4 million yen and between 8-9 million yen the percentage of revenue were 5.21% and 3.44% respectively which are almost the same as the value obtained in 2015.

On the other hand, for households receiving 10 million yen or more, it was 2.67%, a decrease of 0.45 points from the previous year.

For annual household income less than 4 million yen, the annual consumption tax ratio to income was 1.95 times (previous year 1.74 times) more than household with income more than 10 million yen indicating that the tax burden rate is high for low-income households.

Like the previous years, the tax burden ratio for "pension household" has always been higher than the "salary household". 2016 survey had it 4.92% and 3.34% respectively.

Connecting Welfare Facilities with used towels

Under the "Single Towel Movement" which is an initiative of Kanagawa Consumers Co-operative Union to demonstrate their social role, unused towels from co-op members' home are collected and donated to nursing care and child care facilities in the prefecture that require towels.

Last year, in 9 locations where "May Day" event was held, "Single Towel Movement" was simultaneously organized and 12,650 towels were collected and donated to welfare facilities in the prefecture through the regional association of labor and welfare. Lots of thanks were received from the recipients.

This year's "Single Towel Movement" will be held on April 29 at the same venues as last year. Kanagawa Consumers Co-operative Union is asking for cooperation and participation in the event.

Seminar on consumer damage prevention

On March 2, 2017 in Hiroshima, the Hiroshima Prefecture Consumers Co-operative Union in collaboration with Hiroshima Prefecture Liaison Committee of Consumer Organization co-organized the "2016 Seminar on Preventing Consumer Damage".

Two lectures were given under separate themes by resource persons from the Hiroshima Prefectural Police Headquarters and Hiroshima Consumer Affairs Center who spoke on "The current situation and countermeasures of special fraud targeting individuals" and "Trends in Consultation on Consumer Damage and Advice from Consultants" respectively.

It was reported that in recent years special fraud targeting individuals has become increasingly sophisticated with 348 cases in Hiroshima Prefecture in 2016 causing damage of about 1 billion JPY.

News in Brief

Nepal Co-operative inspection team paid a visit to JCCU

From March 14 to 17, 2017 a nine-member observation team from Nepal co-operatives paid a visit to JCCU.

The team consisted of members of savings and credit cooperatives and executives from multipurpose co-operatives.

The purpose of the visit was to deepen understanding about the co-operative business in Japan and to use the experience gained to develop new co-operative businesses in Nepal.

After visiting JCCU the group also paid a visit to the Tokyo Health Co-op, Tokyo University Co-op and the U Co-op.

At Tokyo Health Co-op the group received general lectures on Japanese Health Co-op and also visited Tokyo Kensei Hospital, a multifunctional type home nursing facility and a long-term elderly care facility.

At the Tokyo University Co-op, the group toured stores and cafeteria to learn about the structure of university co-op business, student membership rate, activities of student members etc.

The group also visited the distribution center and a store of U Co-op to observe the facilities and later got an explanation about dinner home delivery business.

There was time for exchanges between the group and the U Co-op members to deepen their understanding of their respective organizations,

projects and activities, and exchanged vigorous opinions on the present situation and issues of gender equality in co-op.



Tokyo Health Co-op home nursing and long-term elderly care facility.



Group picture of U Co-op Board members, staff and the observation team

Kanagawa Prefecture Co-operative Union Liaison Committee established

On March 7, 2017 at the Yokohama Media Business Center, 100 people from co-operative related organizations participated in the inauguration of the Kanagawa Prefecture Co-operative Union Liaison committee.

3 main purposes for the formation are as follows:

1. Promotion of regional agriculture, forestry and fisheries industry aiming at town development that agriculture and cities can coexist.
2. Creation of healthy and affluent life, leading to the promotion of regional welfare network concept and activities that will promote exchanges in the region.
3. Formation of a peaceful and greenery environment aiming at creating a

concept to protect the natural environment that will also lead to the response to large-scale disasters and creating countermeasures.

The formation calls for co-operative partnership to make the living in Kanagawa Prefecture suitable for the citizenry, and become a stakeholder to work together with for the achievement of the United Nation's sustainable development goals, SDGs.



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