

Why now Vision!

The General Assembly has endorsed the bill detailing Co-op vision for 2020.

To affirm a common recognition of consumer co-operatives, it is necessary to have a unified vision.

In our rapidly changing world, the co-operative society is expected to demonstrate its role and a vision that foresees ahead is necessary.

Co-op employees nationwide and the union members were tasked to proactively think about their aspirations in ten years. A summary of the expectations is compounded into the vision.

The implementation of the vision is channeled through five major action plans.

The first action plan (meeting the demand of members) is to promote business that will be useful for everyday living. The second; participating in community building through expanding our network with the community.

The third; Co-ops contribution to the Japanese society and the world. We will aggressively support the realization of a peaceful and sustainable society through member oriented activities.

The fourth; creating a healthy organization with sound management. With active member participation, staff working energetically, learning and growing the organization to establish a healthy business.

The fifth; infrastructure development and activities to further promote solidarity.

Formation of regional alliances and collaborated business to improve the living on members.



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JCCU held 61st General Assembly

(The 2020 vision and the support for the earthquake reconstruction bills were passed with new officers elected)

The 61st Annual General Assembly of the Japanese Consumers' Co-operative Union (JCCU) was held on June 17 2011, in Tokyo.

The General Assembly was honored to receive congratulatory messages from Dame Pauline Green, the President of ICA read on her behalf, and several other guests including Mr. Mitsunori Okamoto, the Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Health, Labor & Welfare and Mr. Masao Hatakeyama, the Vice President of JA Zenchu and by the attendance of 696 out of the total 700 registered representatives.

At the meeting all of the eight bills including "Co-op Vision 2020", "Co-op initiatives for the earthquake reconstruction and future challenges", "the FY 2010 financial report" and "the budget for 2011 business plan" were all approved by a majority vote.

Moreover, a new President was elected due to the expiration of the term of office of the former one.

During the general discussion after the bill had been proposed, there were remarks from 14 representatives mostly from Co-ops in the earthquake affected areas.

They represented their local people and rendered thanks to the support from various organizations, the national commitment towards reconstruction in the future, and call for further assistance to bring a complete relief to the victims in the stricken areas.

In addition, an active discussion was done about the role of co-operatives under "vision 2020", in respect of energy problems including the nuclear power plant.



Mr. Okamoto Mitsunori delivering his address



State of the General Assembly



Mr. Asada Katsumi, President elect (JCCU)

Event to support producers started

Agricultural products sold mainly

On May 14 at the Tokyo International Forum (Yurakucho) an event was held under the theme "making strong Japan begins from the dining table" aiming at motivating and supporting producers to overcome the agricultural setback confronted them by the accident of the Fukushima nuclear plant. There was a placard reading "let's support each other, and get over it!".

The event was co-hosted by Co-op Net (eight consumer co-ops in 8 prefectures including Tokyo) and JA liaison committee. Agricultural products including milk from the prefectures; Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Ibaraki and Fukushima were sold. Eventhough the event time was short; from 10:00 to 15:00, the event hall was crowded with some 5,000 visitors.



Scene at the event

At the opening speech, the Chairman of Co-op Net Mr. Akamatsu Hikaru, expressed his regret that there is still harmful rumor going on about agricultural products from the area. In order to dissolve this doubt and to prevent the spread of the rumor co-op will continue to organize events like this to enlighten members about current situation in those areas, while working with the government to get the right facts and figures to disseminate to the public.



Speech by Mr. Akamatsu Hikaru

Volunteer activities of Co-op in quake-stricken areas

Local co-ops are working on massive effort to assist people displaced by the Great East Japan Earthquake.

The construction of the temporary shelter is now being advanced. Co-op volunteers are helping with the carrying of daily necessities and supporting victims to re-locate into the temporary shelter.

The daily necessities include futons (Japanese-style bedding), wash-line poles, brooms, tableware sets, rice, seasoning sets etc. The moving support to temporal shelter uses co-op delivery truck. Once the items are properly sorted out and fully loaded into the trucks a co-op volunteer staff together with a local administrative personnel and a public volunteer go along with each truck to the designated place to off-load the items into the temporal shelter. In a day about 100 households are supplied with relief items. Clearing away the rubble of houses in the tsunami devastated area is the first task followed by transporting luggage to the temporary shelter.

JCCU staff volunteer to Iwate reports:

The scene in the area is simply miserable and is more serious than what is seen on TV and in the newspapers. The house that I helped was a two-storey and the water had gone up to the second floor and important valuables such as furniture, photographs hanged on walls could not be put away from reach of the tidal waves. They had all been destroyed. The rooms were full of odor, posing unpleasant condition for even cleaning work to be carried on.

In some houses where some goods escaped damages, co-op volunteers got them cleaned and loaded them into co-op truck and transported to the goods depository.

Situation is still not the best; there are flies and other insects, litters and pebbles are still scattered in the town, posing serious sanitary problems. A lot of support is still necessary.



Delivering daily necessities to a temporary housing



Delivering daily necessities to a temporary housing



Temporary housing



Assisting in clearing & cleaning a house at the stricken area



Assisting in clearing & cleaning a house at the stricken area

Support to the stricken areas (Co-op Net)

Exemption in Co-op Deli delivery fee

As part of Co-op Net effort to support co-op members who were affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, the home delivery fee of products ordered by individual members is exempted up to the middle of March 2012.

For Co-op Gunma and Nagano the incentive is extended to non-members as well during the stated period.



Co-op staff delivering goods to a member.

Saitama Co-op wins environmental award.

Saitama Co-op, for the purpose of promotion of CO₂ emission reduction and recycling of resources, recycles waste from its store's vegetable section, as well as "used tempura oil" from members home collected at Co-op stores and the home delivery depots to biodiesel fuel for the home delivery trucks.

On April 20, this effort was evaluated, "The 12th Saitama Environment Award" was awarded to Saitama Co-op. Winning the prize was the 2nd time following 2002.



At the awards ceremony. Saitama Gov. Mr. Ueda (left) and Mr. Sato, Chairman Saitama Co-op (second from left)

NEWS from member Co-ops

Posting messages of support to farmers in the stricken area on Twitter

Consumer Co-ops have been striving to ensure business continuity in the quake-stricken Tohoku region through various member support activities.

On May 6, JCCU opened a website "Revival support portal" to collect members messages of inspirational hope, encouragement and boosting the morale of producers in the disaster area. As of June 30, about 299 encouraging messages were received.

Following are some specific message to the producers:

"There are no simple answers to the farming situation in the stricken areas especially in the Fukushima Prefecture, but we need the services of the farmers to feed ourselves and power our lives. How we relate to the land reveals our tradition and culture. We're with the farmers in the stricken areas".

"We don't know if our crops will be safe," a farmer says. "We can't ignore this issue. But we won't stop cultivating our land. We need to nurture the environment and pass them to the next generation."

New delivery service for Co-op Nagano (delivery to homes & community shops)

This year, as part of Co-op Nagano's home delivery business, the co-op uses, in full scale, the community shops as "local stations" for keeping commodities intending for home delivery.

With the aim of expanding the choices of the method members could receive the home delivery commodity, this year co-op aims at establishing 110 places inside the prefecture.

This agenda was explained to members during the General Assembly held on June 10 in Matsumoto city.

Co-op has entered into agreement with the local pharmacies, laundry and coffee shops to use their facilities as part of the "local station" for keeping the home delivery goods.

Commodities would be delivered to the stations once a week and members would visit the place at their own convenience of time to collect the ordered goods.

At one designated place registration of eight members is required in order to receive the ordered goods free of delivery charge.

Chiba Co-op starts agricultural support to farmers

In April the agreement which allows co-op members to participate in agricultural support activities with farmers was reached between Chiba Co-op and Boso food center that operates in Chiba Co-op contracted production area.

This time 11 people, divided into three groups, with each group helping each farmer on daily basis.

Two of the participants commented: "usually we just eat, but today we can actually touch the plant, understand the task and effort required through the process of planting to harvesting and understand how difficult the task is".

"With lack of experience I suffered extra strain on my waist after having harvested leeks and picking tomato lateral buds. It made me admire the strength of the producers with the same posture as me working under the same condition for much longer hours without any burden to their body".



Co-op members assisting in onion harvesting



Members helping in clearing plastic pipe tunnel

"Staff Earthquake Support activity"

Operation Guide for the Volunteer Support Program

A staff from the personnel and human resources division explained the volunteer support program operation guide.

He mentioned the lack of staff annual leave that prevents staff from taken part in volunteer activities even if they have the desire.

Taken advantage of the present situation, the personnel department has developed a comprehensive manual detailing volunteer's circle activities and is been posted on the staff bulletin board.

Staff were asked to check on the information and participate in their great numbers.

Response from the staff who attended the rally showed a positive indication of their willingness to participate in the voluntary activities.



Mr. Yano Kazuhiro
Managing Director/CEO

In conclusion, Mr. Yano mentioned that the reconstruction work at the disaster areas cannot be done by government alone and Co-op has to work with local NGOs to rehabilitate the lives of victims.

We need the support of many people and we hope that everyone would actively participate, he commented.

He ended up saying that in the months to come there is going to be more need for volunteers. Co-ops must exercise their mutual help in this regard.

East Japan Earthquake Volunteer Support News

A volunteer support rally was held on Monday June 6th at JCCU headquarters to promote volunteer participation among staffs at the disaster stricken areas. Staff from different departments attended the rally.

At the kickoff, the staffs were updated with the current situation at the disaster area and the type of volunteer activities going on there. The rally gave them the chance to think about the kind of activities that they could offer a hand.

At the end, many of the staffs pledged their support and the JCCU personnel department also gave the assurance to support any staff willing to join the volunteer's circle.

Current situation at the stricken area



Mr. Haga Tadashi
Managing Director, JCCU

I had the chance to make a tour of the area where Natori city, Ishinomaki and Onagawa were devastated by the tsunami.

The area was in total mess, seemed like a place that has been bombarded by air strike leaving nothing behind.

The situation will require a long term commitment and I am wondering how immediate the condition in the area could be reversed to normal life.

We require close bond, cooperation among persons, spirit of self-help and conviction to work on the task of restoration.

Much as it is important to encourage people in the stricken area, it is also a chance for individuals to look back on their own life and to expand participation in the voluntary activity at the stricken areas.

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The present state of the stricken area and condition of the volunteer work and what to expect as a volunteer



Ms. Sutou Toshiko
Miyagi Prefecture volunteer center

It is unprecedented struck, and a long approach is necessary. There still remain some areas where citizens cannot approach because of the dangers and the left overs of the remains of dead bodies.

Because of ground sinking some areas become flooded at high tide.

It is important to understand the needs of the victims since the time and needs are different for one person to another.

During the snowy day of the quake people needed blankets but now towels and other light clothings are needed for the summer season.

The victims need to resume their daily activities, they need shelter, meals, income and medicare.

Immediate volunteer activities include, continuing cleaning up of houses and debris in the tsunami devastated areas.

Miyagi Co-op has set up a volunteer center to coordinate the volunteer activities.

Staffs and members have been actively involved in the cleanup exercise and offering assistance to the victims in various aspects.

One major work at the volunteer center is to collect information from relevant organizations and disseminate it to the victims as well as the government agencies.

It requires more hands and would appreciate the support from members and Co-op staff.

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