

THE FAILURE OF AGRICULTURAL POLICY REFORM IN NEOLIBERAL JAPAN:
THE 2007 MULTI-PRODUCT MANAGEMENT STABILIZATION PLAN

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Yoshitaka Miyake

Dissertation Committee:
Mary McDonald, Chairperson
Krisna Suryanata
Jon Goss
Petrice Flowers
Lonny Carlile

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a geography of a failed attempt to change state-society relations in Japanese agriculture, examining a policy that tried to require family farms to become corporate entities. The study traces the rationale for state neoliberalism in Japanese agriculture, the particular reform aimed at the practices of rural communities, and the fate of that policy. Neoliberalism is a range of economic policies favoring free markets, de-coupling from state support, and privatization. Japanese agriculture became a target of neoliberal thinkers because sub-sectors rely on state protections and farm scale and land use are thought inefficient. Anticipating that Japanese agriculture would face wider import streams and lower rice subsidies, neoliberal politicians adopted a 2007 national measure known as the Multi-Product Management Stabilization Plan, *Hinmoku Ōdanteki Kei'ei Antei Taisaku*. This “Multi-Product Plan” was neoliberal in that it declared only core farmers and Cooperative Farming above a certain size would be eligible for future subsidies, and tried to develop these bodies into profitable operations. The plan required Cooperative Farming land pools to rationalize and incorporate the management of small rice farmers. Small producers could not otherwise remain eligible for subsidies. I investigated how the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry (MAFF) rolled out the Multi-Product Plan, how farmers tried to consolidate their management under the Multi-Product Plan; how farmers struggled with the plan in practice; and how politicians, agents, and researchers evaluated the plan’s fit with the practices of farmers. Methods included interviews with staff in government agencies from national to local scales, and with leaders of rural communities. The Tōhoku Region was the site of the case study owing to its high dependency on rice farming. I

interviewed staff of governments and related agencies across the six prefectures of that region. To understand the fit of the plan with local production and farmers' evaluation of the Multi-Product Plan, I chose Daisen City in the Senboku Region, Akita Prefecture, as a focus. My research found that the Multi-Product Plan could not succeed locally, continue politically, nor restructure Japanese agriculture. Farmers derailed Japan's developmental neoliberal policy in this instance.

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LIST OF TERMS USED

- Chiiki Ninaite Kei'ei Kiban Kyōka Sōgō Taisaku Jikken Jigyō
Experimental Project for Comprehensive Measures to Strengthen the
Management Base of Core Farmers in a Local Area
地域担い手経営基盤強化総合対策実験事業
- Daisen Shi Shūraku Einō Hōjinka Shien Sentaa
Daisen City Center to Assist Cooperative Farming and its Incorporation
大仙市集落営農法人化支援センター
- Hanbai nōka
Commercial farm household
販売農家
- Hinmoku Ōdan Teki Kei'ei Antei Taisaku
The Multi-Product Management Stabilization Plan
品目横断的経営安定対策
- JA Fukushima Chū'ō Kai
Fukushima Central JA
JA 福島中央会
- JA Zenchū
Central JA
JA 全中
- Jimintō Nōgyō Kihon Seisaku Shō I'inkai
LDP Sub Committee on Agricultural Basic Policies
自民党農業基本政策小委員会
- Ichishūraku Ichisanchi Jigyō
Project to Form a Production Complex in Each Community
一集落一産地事業
- Inasaku Kei'ei Antei Taisaku
Rice management stabilization policy
稲作経営安定対策
- Inasaku Kōzō Kakushin Sokushin Kōfukin
The subsidy to promote the improvement of rice farming structure
稲作構造改革促進交付金
- Kei'ei Seisaku Taikō
The Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan
経営政策大綱
- Keiri Ichigenka
Consolidate bookkeeping
経理一元化
- Kome Seisaku Kaikaku
Reform of Rice Policy
米政策改革

- Kome Seisaku Kaikaku Kihon Yōkō
Basic Outline to Reform Rice Policy
米政策改革基本要綱
- Kome Seisaku Kaikaku Taikō
Broad Outline to Reform Rice Policy
米政策改革大綱
- Kōritsuteki Katsu Anteitekina Nōgyō Kei'ei
Efficient and stable agricultural management
効率的かつ安定的な農業経営
- Kotei harai
Fixed payment
固定払い
- Nihon Nogyō Hōjin Kyōkai
Japan Agricultural Corporation Association
日本農業法人協会
- Ninaite
Core farmers
担い手
- Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgi Kai
Conference of Comprehensive Support to Nurture Core Farmers
担い手育成総合支援協議会
- Ninaite Kei'ei Antei Taisaku
The Policy to Stabilize the Management of Core Farmers
担い手経営安定対策
- Ninaite Kei'ei Kakushin Sokushin Jigyō
The Project to Promote the Management Innovation of Core Farmers
担い手経営革新促進事業
- Ninaite tantō
Team for core farmers
担い手担当
- Nintei nōgyōsha
Designated farmers
認定農業者
- Nōchi hoyū gōrika hōjin
Corporation to rationalize farmland ownership
農地保有合理化法人
- Nōgyō Iinkai
Local Agricultural Committee
農業委員会
- Nōgyō Kaigisho
National Chamber of Agriculture
農業会議所

- Nōgyō kei'ei kaizen keikaku
A plan to improve agricultural management
農業経営改善計画
- Nōgyō Kōzō no Tenbō
Forecast on Agricultural Structure
農業構造の展望
- Nōgyōsha Kobetsu Shotoku Hoshō Hōan
Law to Secure the Income of Individual Farmer
農業者個別所得保障法案
- Nōgyō shinkō kōsha
Public corporation to promote agriculture
農業振興公社
- Nōkyō Chū'ō Kai
The Central Union of Agricultural Cooperatives
農協中央会
- Nōrin Suisan Shō Kanbō Kikaku Hyōka Ka
Planning Evaluation Division, MAFF Office of Minister's Secretariat
農林水産省大臣官房企画評価課
- Nōrin Suisan Shō Kei'ei Kyoku Chō
Director General of MAFF Management Bureau
農林水産省経営局長
- Nōsei jimusho
Prefectural MAFF office
農政事務所
- Nōyōchi riyō kaizen dantai
Organization to improve agricultural land use
農用地利用改善団体
- Sanchi Zukuri Kōfukin
Subsidy to Create a Production Area
産地作り交付金
- Seifu kai'ire kakaku
Government purchase price
政府買入価格
- Seisan chōsei
Production control
生産調整
- Seiseki barai
Annual payment
成績払い
- Senboku Chiiki Shinkō Kyoku
The Promotion Office of the Senboku Region, Akita Prefecture
仙北地域振興局

- Shien Sentā
Assistance center
支援センター
- Shokuryō Hō
The New Food Law
食糧法
- Shokuryō Hō Kaisei An
The Proposal to Revise the Food Law
食糧法改正案
- Shokuryō Kanri Hō
The Food Control Law
食糧管理法
- Shokuryō/Nōgyō/Nōson Kihon Hō
The Basic Law on Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas
食料・農業・農村基本法
- Shokuryō/Nōgyō/Nōson Seisaku Shingi Kai
The Council for Policies on Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas
食料・農業・農村政策審議会
- Shūraku Einō
Cooperative Farming
集落営農
- Shūraku Einō Jittai Chōsa no Gaiyō
Summary of Results from the Survey on the Situation of Cooperative Farming
集落営農実態調査結果の概要
- Shūraku Einō Kei'ei Antei Shien Jigyō
Support Project for Management Stabilization of Cooperative Farming (Support Project for Management Stabilization)
集落営農経営安定支援事業
- Shūraku Einō/Ninaite Kyōgi Kai
Conference of Cooperative Farming Organizations and Core Farmers
集落営農・担い手協議会
- Shūraku Einō Sōgō Shien Jigyō
Comprehensive Project to Support Cooperative Farming
集落営農総合支援事業
- Soba Sanchi Zukuri Shien Jigyō
Support Project for a Buckwheat Production Region
そば産地作り支援事業
- Suiden/Hatasaku Kei'ei Shotoku Antei Taisaku
Income Stabilization Plan for Rice Paddy and Field Management
水田・畑作経営所得安定対策
- Suiden Kei'ei Antei Taisaku
Income Stabilization Plan for Rice Paddy Management
水田経営所得安定対策

- Suiden Nōgyō Bijon
Vision for Rice Paddy-field Agriculture
水田農業ビジョン
- Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgi Kai
Conference to Promote Rice Paddy-field Agriculture
水田農業推進協議会
- Tensaku Jutaku Soshiki
Organization to Cultivate Crops other than Rice
転作受託組織
- Tochi Kairyō Jigyō Dantai Rengō Kai
Federation of Land Improvement Associations
土地改良事業団体連合会
- Tochi Kairyō Ku
Land Improvement District
土地改良区
- Tōhoku Nōsei Kyoku
Tōhoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office
東北農政局
- Yamagata Nōgyō Shien Sentā
Yamagata Center to Support Agriculture
やまがた農業支援センター
- Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Shien Kyōgi Kai
National Conference of Comprehensive Support to Nourish Core Farmers
(National Conference for Core Farmers)
全国担い手育成支援総合協議会

Chapter 1: Introduction

This is a geography of an attempt to change state-society relations in rural Japan today, of a neoliberal vision of larger farms, of bureaucratic effort to create corporate forms in farming, the difficulty of fitting that vision to local practices, and the failure of the attempt to induce radical change in the structure of agriculture. Neoliberalism emphasizes market rules in economic development and policies (Peet and Hartwick 1999), but it has had mixed effects in Japan, depending on “where and when we direct our attention” (Edgington 2013, p. 508). In Japan, the developmental state, or the central role of national government in economic development, remains an active force in mediating the expanding influence of globalization and neoliberalism on state and society. Hill, Park, and Saito (2011) observed developmental neoliberalism in Japan, finding that developmentalism remained strong even as it integrated neoliberalism in politics and policy-making. In Japanese agriculture, according to George-Mulgan (2006), the central government continues to be an “intervention maximizer” to secure its interests in mutual support with a broad rural base. She feels neoliberal policy has had little effect because of resistance within the dominant Liberal Democratic Party and the bureaucracy. Yet clearly, the Japanese state has undone many supports for the countryside. As international negotiations pressed for the liberalization of the Japanese rice market, the central government and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishery (MAFF) retreated from intervention in the rice market and lowered the producer rice price from the early 1990s (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; Yokoyama 2008) The state also promoted policies to increase and develop ambitious large farmers. New policies allowed MAFF to select large farmers for subsidies, assuming the ministry could cause “induced

innovation” (Hayami and Ruttan 1971). Subsidies remain a dominant tool to enlarge farm size and restructure agriculture even today. These steps pressured farmers and rural regions that remain dependent on rice production. Farmers adopted some steps toward efficiencies, but also resisted policies toward greater rice imports and abandonment by the state to global market competition.

Whether and where neoliberal discourse could turn into reality in practice would depend on many agents and structures in the rural economy, and negotiations among them. Table 1 sets out the agents and structure of state linkages to farming communities in three periods since 1950. This dissertation investigates the state attempt to introduce one new policy, the Multi-Product Management Stabilization Plan (the Multi-Product Plan), *Hinmoku Ōdanteki Kei’ei Antei Taisaku*, which attempted to force rice farmers into larger and corporate production organizations from 2007. To qualify for the plan, individual farmers and farm corporations originally had to be a designated farmer and manage more than four hectares of farmland (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). Land pools known as “Cooperative Farming” could originally qualify only if they managed more than twenty hectares. Cooperative Farming here is neither a traditional farming practice within a community nor a group committed to a shared goal or ideology. Instead, as Table 2 shows, Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan was mainly a creation of the rules of policy. “Cooperative” was partially true, but “Corporate” was the new regime. Farmers following the rules of the Multi-Product Plan would form an organization in order to qualify for future crop subsidies. The state’s attempt to redirect rice subsidies only to large and corporate entities through the Multi-

Table 1. Agents and Structures of State Links to Rural Community

	1950s - 1960s	1970s - 1980s	1990s - 2000s
MAFF Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries	MAFF preserved small farmers in land reform while it started the attempts to increase a farm size.	MAFF tried restructuring and diversification of agriculture. Trade negotiation became severe: food imports surged.	MAFF allowed imports of rice and focused the support on large efficient farmers.
Food Control System	The Food Agency controlled producer price and distribution of rice. The price satisfied farmers.	Overproduction era. The Food Agency introduced brand-based <i>jishu</i> market and acreage reduction. Rice price decreased.	Rice imports started. Rice market got "privatized." Farmers can sell rice out of controlled channel.
LDP Liberal Democratic Party	The LDP collected rural votes with high rice price to rule Japan.	The LDP supported farmers while it started to mention core farmers.	The LDP assumed freer rice import and neoliberalism and stumbled.
JA Japan Agriculture National Farm Cooperative System	Nōkyō was an official rice collector. Nōkyō mobilized farm votes. Credits, inputs, marketing.	Nōkyō lost monopsony. JA cooperated with <i>jishu</i> rice and acreage reduction. Nōkyō became JA in market-oriented reform.	JA is not an official rice collector any more. JA opposes trade liberalization. JA retains members via services.
Farmers	Small owner-farmers became dominant, little tenancy. Mechanized and politically strong.	Most became part-time. Some expanded. Cooperative farming emerged.	Farmers' interest diverged by size. Strong resistance to neoliberalism.
Rural community	Land reform equalized farm size. Mechanization and individualistic farming.	Cooperative farming and task contracting became popular to sustain farming.	Farmers' interest was differentiated by size. Cooperative Farming became a policy target.

Produced by the author

Product Plan is the specific focus for examining attempts to change state-farmer relations in this study.

The state in this story is a liberal democracy in which neoliberal reformism prevailed in the early 2000's, but in which backlash and party politics began to displace the neoconservative regime even as agricultural reforms rolled out near the end of the decade. From 2007, the conservative LDP government of Japan launched the Multi-

Product Plan (Isoda, Takatake and Murata 2006), trying to change the structure of agricultural production from one of many small part-time farms to one of core farmers. The opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) defeated the long-term ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) both in the Diet's Upper House election in July 2007 and in the Lower House Election in August 2009. One of the controversial topics carrying the DPJ to victory was agricultural policy, specifically the Multi-Product Management Stabilization Plan (the Multi-Product Plan), *Hinmoku Ōdanteki Kei'ei Antei Taisaku*. After the DPJ dominated both houses, the major agricultural policies changed from the Multi-Product Plan to the law to secure the income of individual farmers (Mainichi Shimbun 2010). Small individual producers were not forced to consolidate, after all, in order to remain participants in farm support programs.

My study tried to understand how the state envisioned neo-liberal policy change as an appropriate policy at a time of globalization and farming change, how it adopted new policy, and how it attempted to implement the policy in the countryside. At the same time, I wished to see how the producers at the grassroots were embedded in local practices that could or could not conform to the new solutions. Table 3 charts the two conceptual arenas of my research. The first is the national framing of needs for reform; the second is the local fit with the practices of farmers. The first is the political economy of national agriculture; the second is the spatiality of actual producers in space and place.

The site of my study is the rice farming communities in Tōhoku region, northeastern Japan (Figure 1). Rice was one of the most important target crops in this transformation. Relatively large-scale rice farming remained in the Tōhoku region. The

Table 2. New Basic Qualifications for Inclusion in the Multi-Product Plan 2007

<u>Individuals must be Designated or corporate farmers:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• managing more than four hectares.• managing more than twenty hectares in Hokkaidō.
<u>Smaller holders must join a Cooperative Farming Body:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• not necessarily a traditional farming organization nor a community attempt to solve social and environmental issues of farming.• managing more than twenty hectares.• having a goal to consolidate two thirds of community's farmland.• using consolidated bookkeeping for crop sales.• having a goal of incorporation in five years.

Source : Isoda, Takatake, and Murata (2006).

region's average farm size was 2.2 hectares (MAFF 2011a; 2013). I studied the government's plan for land consolidation and management rationalization, farm families' modes of participation, the reaction of officials to communities' decisions, and the result of the plan as a whole. I studied the complex ways in which bureaucratic neoliberal developmentalism reached the farmers, to see whether they could cooperate with state efforts to rationalize farm production under fewer operators. In 1994, after the Uruguay Round, Japanese officials tried to help farmers face freer trade in rice (Table 1). The state tried to shape local adjustments that comprised Japan's next agrarian transition to a more integrated global market. While it certainly caused the transformation of agriculture in many rural communities, as mentioned above, small rice farmers, the most dominant group of Japanese farmers, resisted the conservatives' agricultural policies because they did not seem able to continue farming with decreased state support, and they would not become the "corporate" entity the state wished to do business with. In the election, as their last resort, farmers could show their electoral power to check the government. Even when farmers joined the plan, many experienced difficulty in the further transformations

Table 3. Scheme of Dissertation Research

Theory	State & Neo-liberalism	State & Space
Question	How does state implement neo-liberal reforms?	What is power of situated agents and subjects?
Methods	Examine state's aims, state programs, and results	Examine local state apparatus, farm practices, response to state program.
Analysis	Problem formations, Policy process	Agricultural geography, farmers' constraints.
Significance	Complexity of constraints on state pursuit of neo-liberalism.	Political power of farmers and communities to undo neoliberal policy.

required.

In 2007, MAFF announced that 72,431 farmers and farming organizations had applied for Multi-Product Plan (Asahi Shimbun 2007). To increase the scale and efficiency of farms, the plan would eliminate subsidies for individual small producers and would supplement the income of large-scale individual farms and aggregated production units of "Cooperative Farming." These larger units should operate as corporations and achieve scale economies that help producers accept price decreases in staple crops resulting from liberalized trade (Hattori 2010; Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Yokoyama 2008). What is the background to this neoliberal adjustment policy?

Rice farming has been reinforced over many centuries as the dominant landscape of Japanese lowland agriculture and rural communities. After WWII, the government provided farmers with enough financial and technical support to result in rice overproduction from the 1970s to today (Table 1) (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). Support for rice farming sustained the conservative LDP as the majority in the National Diet while providing food for urban consumers, cheap in the

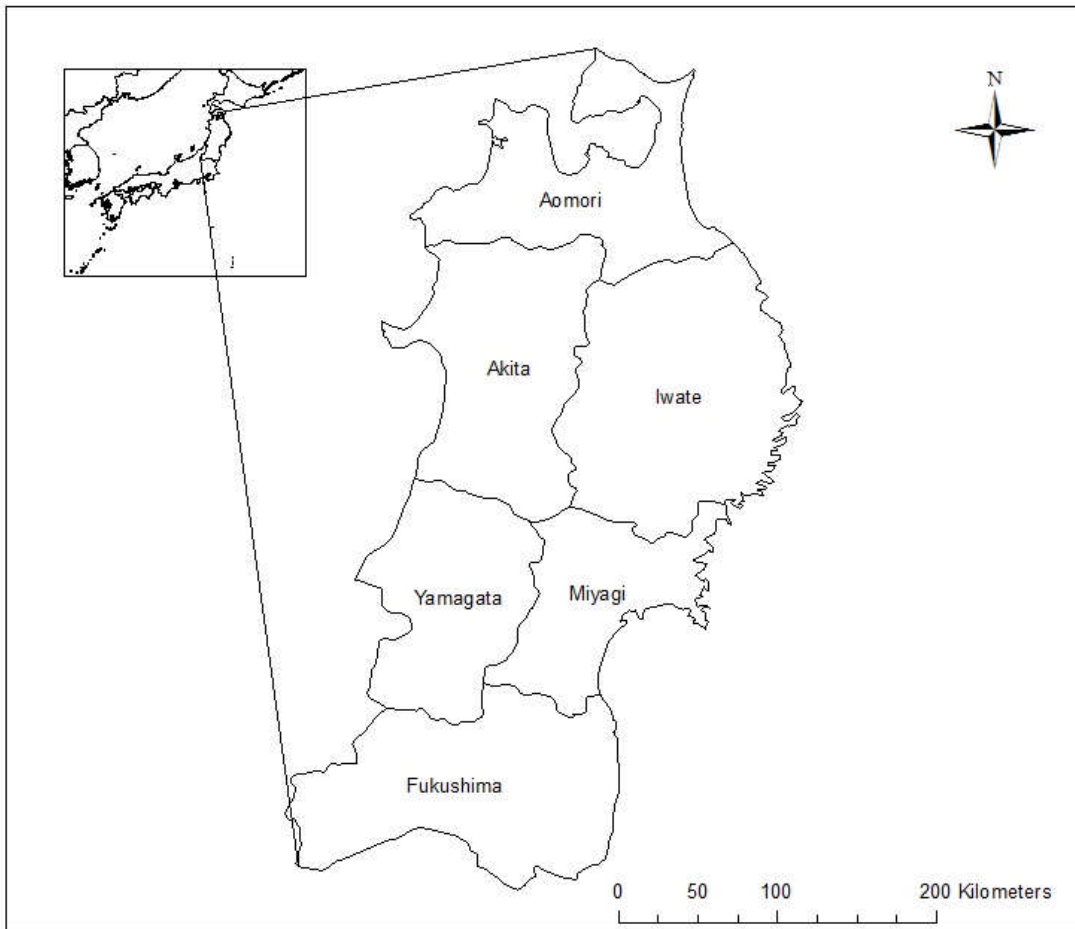


Figure 1. Tōhoku Region.
Source: Adapted from Natural Earth.

early postwar years. A set of thick ties between the State and the family farm evolved over these years.

After WWII, the 1946 agricultural land reform equalized farm size in Japan and made small-scale rice farming the nation's dominant farming type. The Allied Occupation ordered the Japanese Diet or Parliament to conduct agricultural land reform to alleviate rural poverty. It assumed that tenant farmers were the base of modern Japanese militarism as farmers' sons joined the military to escape poverty, and landlords prevented democratic thought. The 1946 agricultural land reform redistributed farmlands

from landlords to tenants and regulated the transactions so strictly that cultivators had to be farm owners. The land reform set the maximum limit of farm size between 2.5 and 4.5 hectares across the Japanese prefectures (McDonald 1997). As an exception, the limit in Hokkaidō was 12 hectares. As a result, more than six million farm households emerged as owner-operators. The average farm size was less than 1 hectare.

To sustain industrial growth in the 1950s, the Japanese government pursued the modernization of agriculture on the production side while it depended on small-scale farming to produce rice and farmers' political power through the Nōkyō (later JA) base in all farm households (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). The government helped individual farmers adopt new kinds of machinery, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and irrigation. In the 1960s, as the Japanese economy grew, labor became expensive in Japan and farmers began to take off-farm jobs for wages. The government concentrated its farm policy on rice farming under part-time farming households who were still owners and operators of their own land. This discouraged the production of other staple crops. In this way, rice became the dominant crop in Japanese agriculture. Farmers' dependence on state decisions about their producer rice price allowed the LDP to win electoral support from farmers.

On the consumption side, the state also controlled the rice market as part of the Food Control System (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). This started in WWII to control food distribution. The government set the consumer prices of food. Only designated merchants carried out the distribution. Rice was the main target of the Food Control System. This provided industrial workers with cheap staples in the 1950s. In the 1960s, the government continued cheap rice for urban consumers while paying farmers a higher

producer price. This provided cheap rice for urban industries and sustained the income of farmers who continued rice farming. Because this was a fiscal burden on the state, the government gradually raised the consumer rice price within a domestic market that did not allow rice imports (McDonald 1997).

From the late 1960s, MAFF started to scrutinize high producer price of rice and overproduction and introduced policies to discipline the Food Control System through acreage reduction and voluntary *jishu* market (Table 1) (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). As the government paid a high producer rice price and assisted the modernization of agriculture, three problems emerged in the past thirty years. The first was rice overproduction and underproduction of other crops (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). Japanese farmers started to produce an excessive amount of rice in the late 1960s. To decrease over-production, the government also started to subsidize farmers for fallowing and crop diversion in 1969. But diversification away from rice has not happened sufficiently under the part-time farming structure of agriculture (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Japan still produces too much rice while it imports almost every other kind of food.

Second, the state tried to decrease both the producer and consumer rice price by introducing market principles. In the 1970s, the government allowed farmers to sell rice through the voluntary channel (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). The government stopped buying all rice. In the 1980s, the government decreased its purchase price from producers. Farmers have seen income declines, yet continue growing rice.

Third, the government policy has tried to increase the productivity of rice farming by relaxing regulations on farmland consolidation (McDonald 1997). The government

tried to increase the efficiency of agriculture by scale enlargement. The acreage limit was abolished. Farmers became allowed to work for other farms. Farmers were also allowed to organize “membership service establishments” to pool and manage their farmlands. Some organizations were able to hire a few full-time operators. Increased efficiency sufficient to hire full-time operators was one of the goals in recent Japanese agricultural policy, yet not much scale enlargement has actually taken place. Small family holdings remain the dominant form of agriculture.

Since Japan accepted the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade Agreement on Agriculture in 1993 and started to import a quota of minimum-access foreign rice, Japanese prime ministers have shown a sense of greater urgency about changing the structure of Japanese agriculture to one better able to compete with foreign rice in future market openings (Table 1) (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; Takizawa et al. 2003). The government continued to decrease the domestic producer rice price and to help farmers to absorb the price decrease (Takizawa et al. 2003). Still, the government subsidized farmers for fallowing and promoted highly productive agriculture. In 2010, the government intended to quit regulating the rice price and to quit subsidizing farmers who participate in the fallow or set-aside programs (Takizawa et al. 2003).

In a more aggressive step in 2007, the government started the Multi-Product Plan (Isoda, Takatake and Murata 2006). The plan would basically support farmers and farming establishments only if their size met a new minimum standard and if they incorporated as a business. Thus, the plan required most farmers to cooperate to consolidate farm management. While Japanese farms on average manage 1.2 hectares, individual farmers would hereafter have to manage more than 4 hectares (MAFF 2008a).

Also, membership establishments could qualify if they manage more than 20 hectares as Cooperative Farming (Isoda, Takatake and Murata 2006). They had to show plans to consolidate more than two thirds of the farmland in their communities (MAFF 2011b).

The benefit to participating farmers was that the government would supplement the income from the mix of crops if the income in any year was less than ninety percent of the average for the past five years (Isoda, Takatake and Murata 2006). The maximum supplement was 90 percent of the difference between the average income and the current income from the crops. The crops include rice, wheat, soy beans, sugar beets, and potatoes for starch.

The objective of this plan was to restructure agricultural structure and redirect Japanese agriculture into the hands of motivated core farmers. The government thought that the consolidation of farm management and farmland would provide enough income for motivated farmers (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). To accomplish the consolidation, however, the longstanding relationship of the small producer as a direct client of the state would be broken. Critics said that this plan would “slash and dump” small farmers (Shimbun Akahata 2007). Certainly, even eligible individual farmers and cooperative farming organizations were not happy to continue rice farming while prices decreased further. Farmers might quit farming, switch to other designated crops, or diversify their operations into new higher value crops. This study explores the way farmers dealt with the neo-liberal policy to sustain agriculture.

1.1. Research Questions

For the purpose of understanding the interactions between farmers and state managed reforms, I asked three central questions in this study:

1. How did the MAFF Multi-Product Plan try to induce land consolidation and changes in labor and material practices in agricultural production? How did the policy try to increase the efficiency of small-scale Japanese agriculture to cope with the globalization of food trade and Uruguay Round commitments to lower border protections?
2. What difficulty did the MAFF Multi-Product Plan face in developing core farmers and Cooperative Farming under the plan? This question about the link between imagination and material elements showed both specific and dominant processes and the difficulty of inducing further agrarian transition to large scale farms under core farmers.
3. How did politicians, public officials, and researchers evaluate the plan and evaluate the perceptions and will of farmers to reform Japanese agriculture? This question explored the capacity of farmers and that of agents in Japanese agriculture to conform to mandates or to pursue their will via other strategies.

Through these questions, I evaluated the importance of agency in the age of globalization. Agency means the capacity of individuals and groups to define their own structures in place. At the same time, agents such as government and JA officials work for the implementation of policies and the progress of large political agendas. Until now, owing to farmers' capacity to affect the change of ruling parties, the political power of the farmers enabled political negotiation at each scale and provided the space to sustain current Japanese agriculture even while the strong state spent decades decreasing the support of agriculture (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999, p. 98; Davis 2005; Jussaume

1991, p. 166). Thus, in Japan, the possibility of electoral negotiation provided farmers with the space to negotiate with multiple interpretations of neo-liberalism, to decide for themselves the use of farmlands, and to influence the processes of agrarian transition. I saw that the state could change the structure of agriculture only with more drastic action than domestic policy change: the MAFF Multi-Product Plan could not succeed in increasing the scale of Japanese agriculture or enforcing a corporate regime among rice farmers.

1.2. Significance of the Research

There are several good reasons to study the impact of neo-liberal agricultural policy through the views and practices of farmers, farming communities, and officials. First, researching the state's attempt to advance neo-liberal agricultural policy can show the quality and complexity of current state control over space and the state's real efforts to change farming communities. Second, observing farming communities undergoing crises of facing globalization can show farmers' remaining political power to pursue their will and to address equity among farmers and communities. As the policy reform unfolds, farmers might find new strategies to assert their existence and to resist the reform. They might find different kinds of representation to appeal to the government and public as neo-liberalism continues to affect Japanese economy and society. Third, understanding the simultaneous change in agricultural practices and farmers' reactions can add importantly to understandings of the continuing agrarian transition in developed nations (Evans, Morris, and Winter 2002; Murdoch et al 2000; Wilson and Rigg 2003). Whether state incentives can change the structure of agriculture sufficiently to allow farmers to

survive further market liberalizations, or whether farmers can insist on continuity in forms of state support, can provide an immediate and significant case of East Asian adjustment to a world trading system in staple foods.

1.3. Chapter Overview

In order to understand the complex ways farmers react to a neoliberal policy and trade liberalization in agriculture, this study explores farmers' reaction to the Multi-Product Plan. The Multi-Product Plan reflected the intention to rationalize farm management as the Japanese government recognized that it might accept more rice imports if it could lead an agrarian transition creating corporate farms as the majority (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). To ask whether the implementation of agricultural policy can lead an agrarian transition to adapt to freer world trade, my study describes the implementation of the Multi-Product Plan from national to local levels, opinions about the plan, and farmers' reactions in the following chapters.

Chapter 2 introduces the literature on neoliberalism, globalizing agriculture, and their effects on related actors. The chapter also introduces the literature on Japanese agriculture to understand the institutions of Japan and the response of farmers after WWII. These became the baseline of my study as an understanding of how farmers had thus far exercised their power.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology of this study. To collect the data for the study, I mainly depended on interviews with community farm leaders and staff of governments and related agencies from national to local levels. These interviews provided material for

analysis of current power relations within Japanese agriculture and the actions of farmers and related agents under these relations.

Chapter 4 reviews agricultural policies from the 1940s to the 1990s. This chapter provides the policy background of my study in more detail than the literature review. The policy change in the decades after WWII comprise the factors preserving small rice farmers, bureaucrats, politicians, and cooperatives as major power holders in Japanese agriculture.

Chapter 5 introduces the reformist policies leading up to the Multi-Product Plan, the plan's promotion at the national level, and the evaluation of plan. The MAFF introduced the Multi-Product Plan to accelerate restructuring Japanese agriculture as it expected that the trade liberalization would decrease the producer rice price (Shogenji 2006, p. 39). While the implementation was successful in the first year, the plan became one reason the DPJ defeated the LDP in both the Diet Upper House election in 2007 and the Lower House election in 2009 (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007; Mainichi Shimbun 2010).¹

Chapter 6 explains the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming at the prefectural level in the Tōhoku region, the northeastern part of Honshū Island. At the prefectural level, governments and agents including MAFF's prefectural offices coordinated to publicize the Multi-Product Plan, increase the participants in the plan, and improve participants' management including the ones in Cooperative Farming. The governments and agents made various attempts to increase and improve Cooperative Farming.

Chapter 7 explains the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming at the municipal level in Daisen City, Akita Prefecture. The city deserved

¹ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

attention as it had 1,089 designated farmers and seventy-one cooperative farming organizations under the plan. All related agencies were engaged in developing Cooperative Farming. The city held information exchanges and informed everyone in order to develop agriculture in each community. I found that many Cooperative Farming groups allowed individual farming and had difficulty in consolidating farm management and in incorporating into an enterprise.

In Chapter 8, I reflect on the reaction of farmers to the implementation of the Multi-Product Plan in order to understand the limits of the capacity of farmers to carry out local adjustments in Japan's agrarian transition to a more integrated global market. Most farmers could not follow and trust the government in this direction. This quickly caused the change of major parties in the Diet and reversed the policy direction. The government could not cause agricultural change by policy that created and favored the large. Delicate and intensive consultation with farmers must continue to smooth agricultural change with rapid aging of farmers and to train farmers in the coming decade. As a result, farmers will actively participate in local to global institutions of food production and consumption in the near future.

Chapter 2: Agricultural Policies, Governance and Farmers' Reactions in Neoliberal Japan

2.1. Introduction

Through this study, I wished to know what kinds of reactions farmers can express against a agricultural policy in a state advancing neoliberalism. Neoliberalism bases economic development on market rules (Peet and Hartwick 1999). The literature about neoliberalism in agriculture does not say so much about the capacity of farmers as other literature on neoliberalism might imply (Peck 2004; Peine and McMichael 2005). To pursue this topic, this chapter explores the literature to understand neoliberalism and possible actions and power changes among institutions and individuals. Specifically, the chapter reviews the effect of neoliberalism on governments and farmers in Japan. Because I study the reactions of Japanese farmers, the chapter also reviews the policy change of Japanese agriculture and the farmers' reactions after WWII. George-Mulgan (2006) claims that the MAFF has been an “intervention maximizer” to protect the JA as well as the LDP. Even if MAFF accepted policy change to liberalize agricultural trade and domestic agricultural prices, MAFF pursued its interest as a maximizer. The JAs developed from old producer cooperatives, representing the interest of farmers. This tendency continued although the government proclaimed intentions to restructure domestic agriculture and agricultural markets in order to internationalize the Japanese economy since its acceptance of the Maekawa Report in 1986 (Kokusai Kyōchō no Tame no Keizai Kōzō Chōsei Kenkyūkai 1986). Costly intervention continued even though huge budgets to support Japanese agriculture concerned the government from the 1970s (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999, p. 89). With the same focus on the state as George-Mulgan, Hill, Park and Saito (2011) observed developmentalism, or the role of the central

government in economic development. According to them, this was rather strong in Japan even when it took the form of “developmental neoliberalism” mixing neoliberal ideals and policies in developmentalist governments (p. 14). While the Japanese government adopted restructuring agricultural policies such as decreasing control of the rice price, loosening controls on farmland ownership, and preferring large-scale rice farming, MAFF would continue economic support among farmers as an intervention maximizer.

Thus, this chapter reviews the literature on neoliberalism, government policies, and governance; neoliberalism and governance of globalizing agriculture; agents and agencies of Japanese agriculture. The last part is divided into three parts: governments and related agents in Japanese agriculture after WWII, neoliberal policy change in Japanese agriculture, and agency of Japanese farmers since WWII. The literature on neoliberalism and governance tells us that neoliberalism challenged the direct and mundane control of the state over its territory (Peck 2004). Within neoliberalism, we can observe an emphasis on market and non-governmental actors engaged in deciding resource distribution and people’s well-being. While we could observe more influence of transnational actors on the nation state, we can also observe that local actors challenged the state’s neoliberalism. Next, the literature on neoliberalism and governance of globalizing agriculture tells us that neoliberalism in agriculture would not enhance the power of farmers in developed or developing countries, rather this benefitted transnational agribusinesses (Peine and McMichael 2005). Freer trade would erode tariffs and other protective measures and lower the price of major agricultural commodities. Because transnational corporations used these commodities as inputs for processed products, TNCs would reap lower production costs. The literature on Japanese agriculture and its policies is divided into

three parts: major policies after WWII, those on the agreement in the Uruguay Round of GATT, and the formation and situation of small farmers in Japanese agriculture after WWII. The post-war land reform formed small farmers as both operator and landowner while the Food Control System set the farm-gate price of rice (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). Farmers shortened labor time with machines, worked off-farm, and survived on mixed household incomes. While rural votes and the belief in food security sustained their position as small rice producers, farmers faced a policy change after the Uruguay Round of GATT that allowed rice imports. As the government became less interested in sustaining the producer rice price, government policies became focused on the formation of large-scale commercial farmers. Under the Multi-Product Plan, the government would only subsidize farmers and Cooperative Farming of a certain minimum size.

2.2. Neoliberalism, Government Policies, and Governance

Neoliberalism is economic, political, and academic discussion of neoliberal economics to reduce government intervention and elevate open and liberal market rule in both domestic and international economies (Peet and Hartwick 1999). The discussion started in the 1960s; Chile based its reforms on this ideology. In the 1980s, the governments of Britain and the US adopted this ideology for economic and social policies. Neoliberalism oriented policies toward private firms, lowering international and state restrictions on the economy (Peet and Hartwick 1999; Rowntree et al. 2010). This would increase trade and financial transactions and contribute to economic development as countries promoted export-oriented production and reception of foreign direct

investment. Many leaders in Latin America supported neoliberalism to promote economic development. When neoliberalism seemed to benefit few except the well-off population, it caused frustration and protest.

In addition to Latin America, other parts of the world including the US and European countries adopted policy attempts toward neoliberalism. Peck (2004) claimed that neoliberalism was not simply a sole ideology in policy making. Moreover, because the transition toward neoliberalism involved both transnational and local processes, each case would show different experiences and results. Also, Peck claimed that the market would not simply replace the state nor integrate it. While neoliberalism had not changed the size or boundaries of states, it challenged the control of the state over its territory and over the activities of transnational actors. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) said the state became unable to keep its geographical imagination in its power over its territory from national to individual scales. According to Peck (2004), in the last few decades, we could observe the erosion of state power and its seemingly natural and mundane characteristics. Neoliberalism challenged state power. Spreading and deepening influence of capitalist society at a global scale destabilized boundaries around the power of the state. We could see transnationalism as the destabilized division between a nation state and foreign and transnational influence. At lower levels, we could see more emphasis on civil society to maintain local resource and provide services. These challenged the power of the state at the local level. Peck also attributed this to neoliberalism as it destabilized the power of the state and the imagination to justify it.

2.3. Neoliberalism and Governance of Globalizing Agriculture

While Peck (2004) mentioned that neoliberalism could help civil society and local actors maintain local resources and provide services, it seemed unable to maintain the power of farmers in developed countries. Peine and McMichael (2005) analyzed global governance in the case of agricultural trade liberalization under the WTO rule. Their explanation of global governance was parallel to neoliberalism. According to them, global governance was characterized by the emphasis on non-governmental institutions such as transnational corporations. The market prominently distributed goods and services. Peine and McMichael (2005) claimed that global governance is centered on market rule. The WTO ruled against trade-distorting government policies, lowered the price of agricultural products and benefitted agribusinesses. While developed countries could support the income of farmers under the WTO rule, this would not profit farmers in these countries, only lower the price of agricultural products. Now, the farmers could neither survive without the support nor repay their debt. Thus, while earning governmental support, farmers could neither maintain nor improve their economic situation. Because neoliberalism could enhance the power of non-state actors at a local level, the interpretation of Peine and McMichael (2005) on farmers' power under the WTO rule sounds too narrow. This leads to the question about the reactions of farmers against neoliberalism as well as globalizing agriculture. In the case of European agriculture, the change of agricultural policies was contested in efforts to adopt globalization of agriculture and neoliberalism (Potter 2006; Potter and Tilzey 2005). European negotiators of the WTO and policy makers introduced and promoted multifunctional agriculture as a concept to protect the environment and landscape of the

countryside. On the other hand, some countries, especially France, resisted multifunctionality to adapt neoliberalism and tried to retain policy supporting agricultural production.

2.4. Agents of Japanese Agriculture

2.4.1. Governments and Related Agents in Japanese Agriculture after WWII

The 1946 Land Reform made farmers cultivate their own farmlands and almost completely suppressed the existence of landlords (McDonald 1997). The Supreme Commander of Allied Powers (SCAP) in Tokyo commanded the Japanese Diet to conduct the Agricultural Land Reform in 1945 (Dore 1959; McDonald 1997). Next year, the Diet commanded the compulsory land transfer from landlords to tenant farmers and removed the agricultural land transactions. The SCAP in Tokyo identified the poverty of tenant farmers as the basis of Japanese militarism. Farmers' sons joined the military to escape poverty and landlords prevented democratic thought. The social and political process of land reform was the focus of Dore (1959). The reform made small farmers the dominant style of farming in Japan and increased food production. The LDP could gather the votes of farmers and ruled over Japan from the 1950s. On the other hand, McDonald (1997) traced the change of agricultural laws in Japan. She showed that the impact of reform continued while the change of laws allowed farmers to divide their interest between landowners and new tenants, thus destabilizing the LDP's ability to secure the interests of the farmers, which were in fact diverging.

SCAP demanded the Japanese government keep the result of land reform so it enacted the 1952 Agricultural Land Law. The law strictly controlled the sale and lease of

farmlands. A farmer could only buy local farmlands with the acreage limitation set by the prefectural governments (Dore 1959; McDonald 1997). To be entitled, they had to be a farmer who owns more than 2 hectares in Hokkaido and more than 30 ares in other places. To create a lease, the approvals of prefectural governor and the municipal Agricultural Commission were necessary. The prefectural governors had to be a mediator of the conflict over leases. Tenants could continuously keep the lease. To cancel it, they needed to give the landlords their notice one year before.

By the 1961 Basic Law of Agriculture, the government started to deregulate the transaction and conversion of farmland (McDonald 1997). In 1962, the regulation on farm size was abolished. From the 1990s, a non-farm individual or corporation could invest in a farm corporation. McDonald (1997) saw that the change would not deny small farmers. This accepted differentiated needs of farmers as Japan developed each decade after WWII. Also, to decrease the rice price at the farm gate, the Japanese government promoted enlargement of farm size by land leasing.

Based on the 1942 Food Control Law, the MAFF and its Food Agency controlled the distribution of staple crops until the enactment of New Food Law in 1994 (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). The law originally attempted to secure food during the war and right after it. In its initial form, the Food Agency collected all rice except farmers' own consumption through local to national agricultural cooperatives. The agency sold rice to licensed wholesalers linking with licensed retailers. Throughout the system, the agency decided the price. When the rapid economic growth in the 1950s caused more income growth among urban workers than rural population, the Food Agency raised the rice price and supplemented the income gap between the two populations. This enabled the MAFF

and the LDP to keep the support of farmers. Agricultural cooperatives represented farmers' interest and affected bureaucrats and politicians. Boestel, Francks, and Kim (1999) explained state intervention in rice production and distribution in East Asia as the Food Control System. The Food Control System satisfied food security while the nation rapidly developed its economy by protecting its agricultural sector.

The MAFF deregulated aspects of the Food Control System from the late 1970s. The oil crisis ended the rapid economic growth, and rice price seemed too high (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999, p. 89). Also, consumers preferred rice with better taste than standardized government rice. This established the voluntary *jishu* market. Agricultural cooperative could directly sell rice to a wholesaler organization. While the Food Agency deregulated distribution of rice a little, it kept control of the rice price. It decided the price limits of rice in the market.

The Japanese government also tried acreage reduction of rice production from 1971. Boestel, Francks, and Kim said this was the attempt to control the "supply-side" of the Food Control System while the voluntary *jishu* market was for the demand side. In order to keep the rice price high through the Food Control System and lower the cost to keep the system, the government carried out acreage reduction. Later, the government promoted the production of crops other than rice. Boestel, Francks, and Kim explained that acreage reduction showed the government control of farmers. The government penalized a village if the village did not follow the goal of acreage reduction. It reduced the government purchase of rice and withdrew other kinds of subsidies for agricultural production.

During and right after WWII, the SCAP and the Japanese government focused on the food shortage (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). While this was reflected in policies in this period, this became one of the core ideologies to guide policies and motivation for domestic agriculture. The agricultural land reform provided individual farmers with their own land and motivated them to produce more crops (McDonald 1997). The Food Control System protected production and distribution of staple crops for urban workers (Boestel, Francks, and Kim). The focus on food shortage relaxed; however, this still guided major agricultural policies and attitudes of major actors to draft them. Burmeister (2000) explained that rice production, JAs, and policies “remained rooted in an ideology of food security through self-sufficiency” (p. 446). Burmeister studied the shift of agricultural policies and related institutions in Japan and South Korea as global governance of the Uruguay Round and WTO progressed. He claimed that state would not completely withdraw while there was the possibility to shift policies to sustain agriculture.

In addition, the government promoted the improvement of agricultural management. First, it supported the increase of rice production with modern agricultural measures; later, from the 1961 Basic Agricultural Law, it tried to develop core farmers (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). Modernization measures included machinery and land readjustment. According to Jussaume (1991) and McDonald (1997), that did not quite increase farm size but reduced labor to produce rice. Core farmers started to be the focus of support from the 1970s. Projects to carry out agricultural adjustment regarded the support of core farmers as the driver to carry out scale enlargement (Boestel, Francks, and Kim). The LDP and MAFF expected that they could efficiently produce rice with a larger farm size and diversify agricultural production.

These could contribute to the maintenance of Japanese agriculture including the Food Control System. According to Boestel, Francks, and Kim, in spite of the support directed toward core farmers, the attraction of producing rice was still too high to change the structure of Japanese agriculture very much.

The Japanese government also lowered trade barriers of food products. The government kept trade barriers for major crops until the 1960s (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). As consumers increased their incomes, they diversified their demand for food products (Boestel, Francks, and Kim). This increased food imports and caused international pressure to lower trade barriers to agricultural products. The Japanese government went through negotiation conferences such as the Tokyo Round of GATT from 1973 to 1979 resulting in the reduction of trade restrictions on major products such as soybeans and feed crops (Boestel, Francks, and Kim). In 1988, the Japanese and US governments liberalized the trade of “the most contentious agricultural products, beef and oranges” (Boestel, Francks, and Kim, p. 96). On the other hand, in case of rice, until the early 1990s, the Japanese government completely avoided imports. This completed self-sufficiency of rice in Japan.

Japanese consumers contributed to the change of Japanese food market and imports while they supported food security with domestic food production. As their income grew, consumers diversified food consumption and increased food imports (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Also, consumers had supported and trusted domestic food production, and they supported food security (Burmeister 2000). The belief was strong as Burmeister said, “This ideology resonated well in a populace that had personal

experience with wartime privations and that was worried about national vulnerability to food shortages in an uncertain postwar world” (p. 446).

2.4.2. Neoliberal Policy Change in Japanese Agriculture

While postwar Japan experienced industrial growth from the 1950s, the Japanese government under Prime Minister Nakasone tried neoliberal policy direction such as the reduction of social welfare and freer international trade in the 1980s (Kokusai Kyōchō no Tame no Keizai Kōzō Chōsei Kenkyukai 1986; Sorensen 2004). This was because the US became frustrated with Japan causing its trade deficit and pressured Japan to restructure domestic economic and social regulation to increase domestic consumption. Neoliberal policy direction became manifest in Japan in the 2000s under the Cabinet of Prime Minister Koizumi after Japan fell into long-term depression from the 1990s. While Koizumi mainly targeted the privatization of Japan Post, he promoted more competitive agriculture in order to prepare for freer international trade. Through the decades, in spite of resisting market openings, Japan tried to develop domestic agriculture to adapt slowly to the opening of agricultural trade. The Japanese government agreed to the negotiation in the Uruguay Round of GATT in 1993 and allowed restricted import of rice. Davis (2005) studied the factors to decide the results of international negotiation on agricultural trade from 1970 to 1999. According to her, “the high institutionalization of the issue linkage” decided the liberalization of rice trade in the agreement in the Uruguay Round (p. 347). While Burmeister (2000) studied the change of agricultural policies in South Korea and Japan and claimed that the states of these countries did not withdraw from policy-making, he explained the agreement on rice imports to Japan by the agreement in the Uruguay

Round. By 2000, the agreement required Japan to import eight percent of average consumption from 1986 to 1988. The Food Agency was the only importer of rice. It was allowed to add \$2,920 per ton. In the following WTO negotiation, the Japanese government tried to have the WTO accept rice production of Japan under the safeguard clause. Food security concerns and the concern for the survival of farming could justify safeguard treatment (Burmeister; Conklin 1995, p. 383).

Responding to the agreement in the Uruguay Round, the Japanese government replaced the 1942 Food Control Law with the New Food Law. According to Boestel, Francks, and Kim (1999), this change reflected that the government lost the power to protect rice production against trade liberalization and lost the legal will to keep the rest of the Food Control System. Under the new law, the rice distribution market would be “privatized” (Boestel, Francks, and Kim, p. 101). The government would not buy more rice than the amount to secure supply. Farmers did not need to sell rice to the state-controlled channel; in addition to JAs, private corporations could participate in the distribution of rice. As a result, the rice price within the voluntary distribution channel decreased by more than 6000 yen/60kg in the last fifteen years, or approximately a third of its value to the producer (Takizawa et al. 2003).

Almost at the same time as the end of the Uruguay Round negotiation, the government adopted *The Basic Direction of New Policies for Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas* (New Policy) (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). While the government promoted the enlargement of farm structure since the 1961 Basic Agricultural Law, the government furthered this under the New Policy and disqualified farm households from being the dominant form of farm management in the near future

(Boestel, Francks, and Kim). Non-farmers could now invest in farms. McDonald (1997) showed that the government would no longer require a legitimate farm operator to be a farmland owner. Because the government adopted the New Food Law and decreased the intervention in rice market, the government assumed that this market-driven price would rationalize farm management (Boestel, Francks, and Kim). Boestel, Francks, and Kim expected that the government would allocate more resources and emphasize areas to develop large-scale agriculture. The Japanese government pursued this concept and started the Multi-Product Plan in 2007. This new scheme was only going to supplement the income of designated large farmers who manage rice, wheat, soy beans, sugar beets, and potatoes for starch (Isoda, Takatake and Murata 2006). The government planned to abolish price supports for small rice producers and abolished the acreage reduction scheme entirely in 2010.

While the Japanese government participated in international negotiations and exposed its agriculture to the market environment, the government kept the policy intervention in agriculture. The government accepted the import of rice; shifted its domestic policies to develop large-scale farming; decreased the intervention through the Food Control System. While this seemed to be the withdrawal of government, Burmeister (2000) claimed that the government would keep its power in the farm sector. While it seemed reduced, the government kept its involvement in rice market. It would resist further trade liberalization and protect domestic agriculture. George-Mulgan (2006) claimed that this policy trend would continue because the government as an “intervention maximizer” kept its power in the agricultural sector. JA pursued the protection of domestic agriculture as it argued for a high degree of food security (Burmeister 2000).

2.4.3. Agency of Japanese Farmers Since WWII

After the 1946 Land Reform equalized the size of Japanese farms, Japanese agriculture increased its production and supplied urban consumers (McDonald 1997). Thus, the supply of food through the Food Control System indirectly sustained industrial recovery in Japan. In 1950, agricultural production reached the level before the war (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999).

In the late 1950s, while the income of urban workers grew faster than agricultural income, farmers stayed at a small scale. They could combine off-farm income with subsidized agricultural income (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Farmers could purchase machines and work off-farm. Farmers could save time with machines like tractors and harvesters. This enabled them to work off-farm. Growing economy could accommodate farmers as workers (Jussaume 1991). Boestel, Francks, and Kim explained that farmers' continuous investment in agricultural machines decreased the level of efficiency by adding capital. Part-time farmers insisted on rice production owing to the government policy of the Food Control System. Boestel, Francks, and Kim (1999) and McDonald (1997) said that the government's focus in the Food Control System and consequent high rice price made farmers part-time farmers specialized in rice production. Agricultural machines helped this transformation because it shortened labor use in agriculture. Jussaume (1991) showed how this process formed Japanese part-time farmers. He also mentioned that the process caused Japanese farming to be more individualistic and weakened its communal character. In addition, Boestel, Francks, and Kim said that diversification was limited because most farmers were focused on rice production.

Since the 1950s, farmers had become politically strong (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). They could press their concerns such as high rice price to sustain their income because they provided the valuable support for the LDP, especially the “agriculture tribe,” sympathetic politicians in the party (Boestel, Francks, and Kim). Boestel, Francks, and Kim explained the reasons for this strength by election district and JAs. Rural votes represented more power to select national politicians because rural-urban migration in the period of rapid economic growth was not accompanied by the amendment of election districts based on population change. JAs could mobilize the votes of farmers for national politicians and appealed to them for the support of farming.

As the government deregulated the transaction of farmland from the 1960s, some farmers could expand their operations (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). They expanded as they contracted some of their subprocesses in farming to other farmers (“custom task contracting”) (McDonald 1997). This practice became popular as many farmers could not conduct farming as before. Some became committed to off-farm work. Some became unable to farm with age. In spite of its increasing popularity, Boestel, Francks, and Kim and McDonald maintained that large-scale farms did not play a major role in Japanese agriculture.

While large-scale farmers might not dominate over Japanese agriculture, Boestel, Francks, and Kim (1999) and McDonald (1997) observed that they emerged to divide Japanese farmers. Boestel, Francks, and Kim explained that farmers became divided into small part-time rice farmers and large-scale farmers. The former accounted for the majority of farmers. They remained dependent on the government and cooperatives and sustained rice production. The latter were innovative commercial farmers. McDonald

claimed that this division accompanied the destabilization of equality in the rural community and the split among farm interests. The eventual related legal changes favoring large-scale agriculture broke the promise of land reform.

At the same time, cooperative farming became a policy target to develop local agriculture from the 1970s (Tashiro 2006) (Table 4). The post-war land reform reinforced small rice owner-farmers as the principal type of Japanese agriculture. They became mechanized and started to work off farm and depended on the mix of a high rice price and off-farm income (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). At the same time, farmers recognized contracting some tasks to other farmers and cooperative farming as useful practice (McDonald 1997). Cooperative farming is not novel but traditional in Japan. One MAFF document explained, “Rural communities have collectively managed waterways for rice farming and conducted rice farming activities such as rice planting and harvesting” (Kei’eiseisaku Ka n.d. a, p. 1). Thus, rural communities in Japan developed with rice production. From the 1970s, full-time engagement in farming was not economically viable for most farmers. Farmers mostly became part-time, and they had to follow production control in rice. To continue rice farming, farm households started cooperative management and depended on other farmers and organizations. This led to the emergence of cooperative farming after WWII and caused the discussion of regional agriculture and its policies inside Japanese academia.

Cooperative Farming was supposed to develop in the absence of the state regulation of the producer rice price. From 2007, the government mandated the Multi-Product Plan (Isoda, Takatake and Murata 2006). The plan would basically support farmers and farming establishments only if their size met a new minimum standard.

Table 4. Recent Policies and Events in Japanese Agriculture

1970s	Cooperative farming attracted experts' interest.
1992	The 1992 Basic Direction of New Policies for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas (the New Policy) The New Policy recognized cooperative farming.
1995	The Food Control Law ended. The New Food Law
1998	The Rice Management Stabilization Policy
1999	The Basic Agricultural Law ended. The Basic Law on Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas
2000	The First Basic Plan
2002	The Broad Outline to Reform Rice Policy
2003	The New Food Law was revised. The Basic Outline to Reform Rice Policy The United States and the EU compromised on the WTO's agriculture negotiation.
2004	The WTO negotiation recognized important items. The Policy to Stabilize the Management of Core Farmers as part of the Reform of Rice Policy The Subsidy to Create a Production Area
2005	The 2005 Basic Plan The Forecast on Agricultural Structure The Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan The Broad Outline decided the Multi-Product Plan.
2007	The Multi-Product Plan began receiving applications.
2009	The Law to Secure the Income of Individual Farmer

Produced by the author

Cooperative Farming became the plan's target. In 2010, the government intended to quit regulating the rice price and to quit subsidizing farmers who participated in the fallow or set-aside programs (Takizawa et al. 2003). The Multi-Product Plan was a subsidy to select farmers and Cooperative Farming for the continuance of income protections for Japanese agriculture post regulation of the producer rice price. While the plan implied

that Cooperative Farming could develop local agriculture, the plan's first effect was to develop groups of farmers following policy rules for subsidies.

Still, many scholars could say that small part-time farmers would dominate Japanese agriculture in the near future (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; Davis 2005; Jussaume 1991). Farmers would become old and depend on government subsidies and cooperatives to produce rice for them in the near future (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Jussaume (1991) explained that farmers would be part of a strong agricultural interest group and stay the same. Furthermore, the general public supported the status quo. Only greater social and economic incentive could cause the change in farming.

2.5. Conclusion

To understand the views and reactions of farmers toward agricultural policies in neoliberal Japan, I reviewed the literature on neoliberalism and its impact on transnational to local institutions and agents and agency facing globalizing agriculture and its effect on farmers (Peck 2004; McMichael 2005). The literature reveals diversity in the capacity of actors at a local level. In the case of globalizing agriculture, farmers could not develop well as local agents (Peine and McMichael 2005). Peck (2004) claimed that neoliberalism challenged the state and its control over the territory down to the local scale. Neoliberalism could cause the emphasis on civil society. On the other hand, Peine and McMichael (2005) told us that globalizing agriculture and its emphasis in multilateral negotiation and agribusiness strictly limited development of farmers in both developing and developed countries. Thus, we need to explore how farmers think and react against

the change of policy favoring neoliberalism. This can tell how much farmers can contribute to the change in agriculture in each place.

This chapter also introduced the literature on the change in Japanese agricultural policy and historical description of institutions of state-farmer links after WWII. From the early 1990s, trade liberalization led to rice imports, and the government favored development of large-scale farmers. The Multi-Product Plan would mark a discontinuity in state-farmer relations, supplementing the income decrease of only designated rice farmers (Isoda, Takatake and Murata 2006). I studied the implementation of this policy to understand how farmers can generally react to the policy change inspired by neoliberalism.

Chapter 3: Research Design

This research was a case study using multiple data collection methods to triangulate the findings to understand in detail the practices and perspectives of state agents, leading farmers, and related officials in a region as they attempted to protect their livelihood with the advancement of global food trade (Creswell 2003). This study also took a multi-scale approach as I collected the data from national to local scales. From 2007, new policies including the Multi-Product Plan concentrated farm support on a smaller number of farmers. The plan limited its support to larger farmers and Cooperative Farming and tried to incorporate Cooperative Farming (MAFF 2011b). This attempt came along with decreased intervention in the rice market and a lowering of the producer rice price (Hattori 2010; Takizawa et al. 2003). This policy change should have transformed Japanese agriculture into larger competitive farmers. In this situation, what possibilities did farmers and related agents have to change their own practices and views to counter the policy change to neo-liberal agricultural policies? To answer these questions, this study conducted interviews and utilized documents by governments and related agents. The policy I studied began recruiting applications in Fall 2006, so farmers, rural communities, agricultural cooperative officials, public officials, and politicians were all presently involved in the beginnings of the policy implementation. In 2008 and 2009, I interviewed national and prefectural officials about the policy introduction via institutional channels across the Tōhoku prefectures.

To study the local fit of the policy in the practices of situated producers, I interviewed farmers, specifically leaders of Cooperative Farming, in Daisen City, Akita Prefecture in the Tōhoku region. Tōhoku is highly dependent on rice, the crop most likely

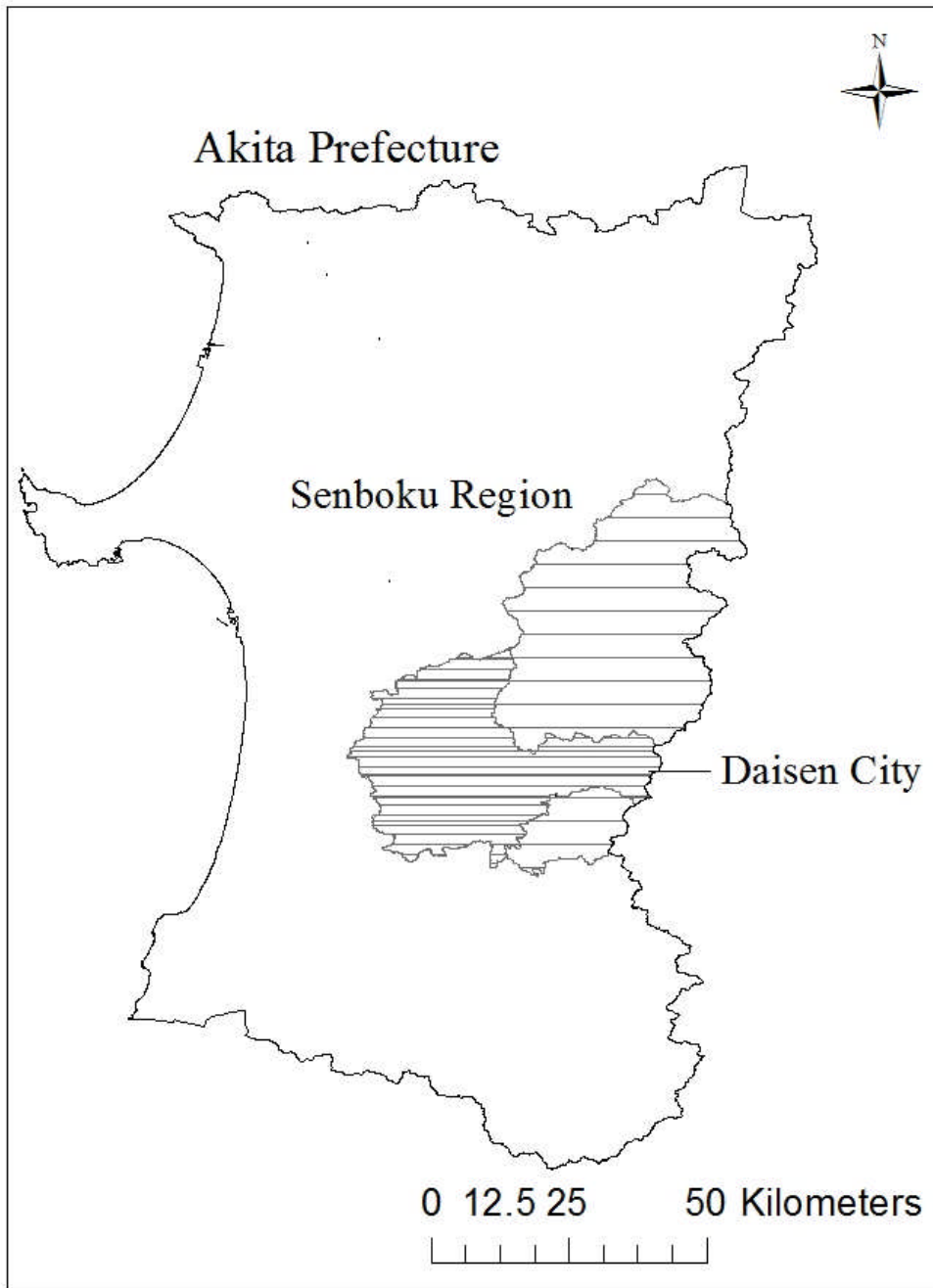


Figure 2. Akita Prefecture, the Senboku Region, and Daisen City.
Source: Adapted from Natural Earth.

to suffer steep price declines from market opening. Relatively large scale operations do exist here and were likely to persist with governmental support (McDonald 1997; Takeuchi 2004) (Figure 1; Figure 2). To apply for the Multi Product Plan,

leaders of Cooperative Farming and designated individual farmers had to evaluate how effective the plan was for them. They had to understand the decreasing rice price and government support. They needed the support of local governments and agricultural cooperatives to apply for the plan. They had to work with community members and landowners to revise field leases and membership rules. Thus, from March 2009 to August 2009, I interviewed designated farmers and leaders of Cooperative Farming and probed what farmers had to deal with to conform to the neoliberal agricultural policy. In further interviews, I questioned the interests of policy makers, agricultural cooperatives, public officials, mass media, and academics to understand how they perceived the intention, result, and future of agricultural reform. I also asked how they evaluated the current state of policy reform for future policies. To supplement the findings from the interviews, I collected secondary materials including newspaper articles, government documents, documents from agricultural cooperatives and other farm organizations, and academic articles and monographs in Japanese. The following sections describe the data collection methods in more detail to answer the major questions of this study.

3.1. Access to Data Sources

In this study, I interviewed leaders of Cooperative Farming in Daisen City and governments and related agents from national to local levels to understand the practices and perspectives to promote and react to the Multi Product plan. I interviewed ninety nine leaders of Cooperative Farming. They came from fifty nine Cooperative Farming organizations and one incorporated Cooperative Farming. They represented Cooperative Farming as leaders. They could tell me their practices and perspectives to deal with the

Multi-Product Plan and past and current attempts of Cooperative Farming in their communities. Their opinion could be different from their entire community's farmers, especially farmers outside of Cooperative Farming. Even so, they told me their part in the practices and struggles to situate themselves in their community to deal with the Multi-Product Plan. Forty-nine staff of governments and related agencies participated in the study. As official agents to implement agricultural policies, government officials told me about the promotion and effectiveness of the Multi-Product Plan in their jurisdiction and their involvement with other agents. I asked about their involvement so that I could find agents in snowball fashion for further interviews to understand the structure and situation of policy promotion better. As agents cooperating with the governments in the Multi-Product Plan, JAs and related agencies told me their roles and thoughts in promoting the Multi-Product Plan within their areas. I chose Daisen City because its agriculture was focused on rice production. It also had the large number of Cooperative Farming groups. The staff of Akita Prefecture said that the sale of rice from Daisen City was the greatest among JAs in the nation. At the same time, about seventy Cooperative Farming organizations were formed to join the Multi-Product Plan. This was one of the highest numbers among towns in the prefecture. Finding leaders of Cooperative Farming to interview, I conducted semi-structured interviews to ask about their decisions to commit farmland and labor to the new plan, and the rationale for their decisions. As a result of the survey, I expected to understand farmers' perspectives on their farms, families, policy change, globalization, and equity in their community and society and to see how their practices reflect their perspectives. Since this study was going to deal with the plan to lower the state support for rice farming, I wished to choose communities in Akita

Prefecture where rice plays a major role in agriculture. According to Takeuchi (2004), in Akita Prefecture in Tōhoku region, the rice sale is 63.5% of total agricultural sales in 2000. This is the highest ratio in the region of Tōhoku (41.2%) and well above the national average (25.4%).

To find this municipality and communities in Akita Prefecture for field study, I first interviewed a staff member of the Akita Prefectural Government. When I interviewed him, I tried to know cities and towns the plan affected the most and the least in the prefecture. I asked these questions when I interviewed staff of governments and related agents from national to prefectural levels. Then, I interviewed officials in the local municipality and local JAs to find suitable communities and farmers to study. At each interview, I also asked about the plan's effectiveness and its reasons in each area and community in the prefecture and cities/towns. Before this process, I reviewed the Japanese protocol for meeting officials with graduate students at the Geography Department in Tōhoku University and Miyagi University of Education, Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. The protocol included how I contacted staff.

Over the same months, I interviewed related state agents to understand their intentions to promote the plan and their evaluation of the plan implementation from local to national scales, and their view of farmers, farmlands, and agriculture at each scale. Takatake (2006) explained the plan's origin from the early 1990s to 2006 and local agents for the plan implementation. The MAFF wanted to form productive farmers and farm organizations that could cope with the price fluctuation of a market economy and drafted the plan for Multi-Product Management. The Minister of Agriculture promoted the plan. JA-Zenchū (the central body of Japanese agricultural cooperatives) or Central

JA checked the plan formation to study differential effects on state support by the scale of farm operation. The implementation at a local scale involved prefectural extension branches, municipalities and local agricultural cooperatives.

I contacted the MAFF and Central JA to see the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming at a national level. I accessed organizations and agents at prefectural and local scales in the same way. By interviewing people, I sampled interviewees in various interest positions, and asked them about other related individuals, in snowball fashion. As for interviewing leaders of Cooperative Farming, I observed Japanese manners to meet interviewees. I asked staff of the Daisen City, local JAs, and the Daisen City Center to Assist Cooperative Farming and its Incorporation. The Daisen City staff called me when I could interview farmers. I conducted most interviews when the Daisen City Center to Assist Cooperative Farming invited leaders of Cooperative Farming to survey their situation. The staff let me ask questions near the end of each interview.

In addition, I conducted a printed document search. I collected books in a public library by interlibrary loan and scanned them to take back to Hawai'i. The Kurihara City Library in Miyagi Prefecture, a public library, was accessible to walk-in visitors with a city address. I also tried to collect other kinds of documents, especially government agency documents. Since the locations of interviews included city/town halls and other offices, I requested documents from each office.

3.2. Research Questions and Data Type

This section introduces the questions of this study in relation to the data to answer these questions. Appendix 1 shows the examples of questions I asked participants.

Appendix 2 shows the Informed Consent Form I used.

1. How did the Multi-Product Plan contribute to land consolidation and the change in labor and material practices in agricultural production?

What did farmers do to increase the productivity of agriculture? Variables include farming practices, labor use, land ownership, land rent, machine use, agricultural products, and income at national and regional scales (governmental documents and interviews of staff of governments and related agencies) and at communities (interviews to farmers). In fieldwork, I simply asked how farming changed with the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan.

2. What difficulty did the Multi-Product Plan face in developing more profit-oriented farmers and Cooperative Farming under the plan?

I asked farmers about the promotion of the plan and Cooperative Farming (in interviews with farmers). The questions dealt with the promotion methods, the suggested goals, farmers' reactions to the goals, the suggested incentives, farmers' reactions to the incentives, the communication with other farmers, family members, officials, and other related individuals and farmers' thoughts on the promotion of Cooperative Farming and the plan (interviews with farmers, related officials, organizations, and documental search). Then I asked farmers about their perceptions of the community's agriculture and its development as well as the situation of their own farmlands. This made me understand the reasons and constraints behind their choice of practices.

In fieldwork, as I felt the need to simplify the questions, I asked how farmers changed farming and what difficulty farmers had in reacting to the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan. This elicited what they expected with the promotion based on community's situation, too. In regard to the relations among farmers in a community, farmers' answers were focused on farmers participating and non-participating in Cooperative Farming bodies.

Staff of governments and related agents answered my questions regarding the promotion of the plan and Cooperative Farming, their collaboration in the promotion, and the program's goals. I supposed what they promoted reflected the goals. As well, they explained the evaluation and reaction of farmers to the plan.

3. How did politicians, public officials, researchers, and related people evaluate the plan and evaluate the reactions of farmers?

What was the expectation of promoting the Multi-Product Plan among governments and related agents from local to national scales? What was the reason for the expectation? How strongly did they support the plan? What values or reasoning did they use to promote the plan? How committed was their promotion? How valid was their promotion in terms of their relation with farmers, other state organizations and other organizations? How did governments and related agents evaluate each other in promoting the plan? Was their promotion authoritative, democratic, or neo-liberal? In other words, what did the governments and agents do to promote the plan, and why did they care?

I asked related officials and organizations about their thoughts on the implementation. Was it successful or not? What were the reasons for their evaluation? How did they think about the communication with farmers? How did the interviewees

consider the future of communities, farmlands, and Japanese agriculture? Then, I compared their answers with farmers' interpretation to understand the way farmers dealt with the policy's structure. I could also consider the possibility to develop Cooperative Farming further.

Table 5 shows what information each data collection method provided.

3.3. Data Analysis

Neo-liberal agricultural policies changed the strategies of state agricultural supports and the space, the possibilities and constraints farmers and public and coop officials faced to attain desired outcomes. According to Lefebvre (1992) and Soja (2000), space is power-laden to constrain actors' practice. Actors are positioned to practice over space (Cresswell 2004). My study aimed to show actors' practices and structure for the plan implementation and to explain the process and power of farmers and other agents to secure their resources and to pursue their wishes. The plan implementation involved farmers and public and agricultural cooperative officials at a local scale. While the officials imposed the plan, farmers changed their practices. Interviews and secondary data showed what people were involved and how they behaved. Understanding the behaviors and the reasons would show structure, the negotiations among actors, and actors' constraints (or available resources) for negotiation. I could understand the negotiation because each actor in the study could continuously evaluate the behaviors of other actors and decide the next action. Along with the physical environment, rules and norms affected behaviors (Cresswell 2004; Pred 1984). The change of farming practices would show the negotiation between farmers and the social and physical environment

Table 5. Data Collection

Data Collection Method	Information Expected
Farmers (Interview)	Agricultural practices, Thoughts on the plan, Perspectives on farmlands and Japanese agriculture
Public and cooperative officials and related informants (Interview)	The promotion of plan, The evaluation of plan implementation, Perspectives on farmlands and Japanese agriculture
Documents	Farm income and sale at regional and national scales, Media's presentation of the plan, Governments' promotion

(farms, families, and communities). To practice the negotiation, each farmer had its own constraints including farm size and age. The result would show the acceptable change in labor practices and resource use among farmers. Public and cooperative officials followed the norms of their own institutions and they also had the financial, temporal, or other constraints to promote the plan. Their attitudes toward their farming community might be based on other kinds of institutions such as property rights rather than themselves. The processes and results of the plan implementation showed the negotiation between participants and structure mentioned above. The negotiation showed participants' views toward farming, communities, and agriculture from local to national scales. Agricultural restructuring was a matter of negotiation that went through changing power relations among agents and farmers. Thus, agricultural policy reform involved power relations. The processes I researched showed the way neo-liberal policy changed views and decisions. The policy change could change the way farmers and staff of governments and other agents practice, as well as exercise their power. This could simultaneously explain current and future practices of Japanese agriculture.

Although I designed this research to see how the state eased a neoliberal policy into the farming sector, even as I was asking these questions from month to month, I

could see difficulties and doubts welling against the plan. Despite the partial implementation I was seeing, the Multi-Product Plan could neither continue nor restructure Japanese agriculture. While MAFF and the LDP had the power to design and implement the plan, they were not powerful enough to continue the plan. Farmers' political power could stall the implementation of the plan and keep agricultural policy a delicate political issue. The Multi-Product Plan gathered enough participants to continue after a year of implementation; however, the plan frustrated farmers and became the reason to cause the defeat of the LDP in national elections (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007).² This led to the withdrawal of the Multi-Product Plan from major agricultural policy and resulted in the re-equalization of subsidies through to the law to secure the income of individual farmers (Mainichi Shimbun 2010).

² Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

Chapter 4: Agricultural Policies and International Negotiation after WWII

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I review studies of Japanese agricultural policies after WWII to understand the changing aims of intervention and the meanings of developmental philosophies in each decade. This review includes the objectives and contents of major policies, the types of promoted products, and the stakeholders concerned with these policies, including governments, agricultural cooperatives, and farmers. This chapter also describes the liberalization of Japanese agricultural markets brought about through international negotiations, demonstrating how these negotiations affected domestic agricultural policies.

This chapter first introduces Japanese agricultural policies prior to the 1970s. These policies provided the base for the sustenance of small farmers and the control of agricultural cooperatives, trying to balance rural stability with urban food needs. Next the chapter describes international negotiations concerning agricultural trade until the Uruguay Round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). These negotiations forced Japan to yield to an international division of labor in agriculture and weakened protections on agricultural production in Japan. Japan's developmentalism needed to secure markets with industrial trade partners abroad, so had to accept widening food import streams. Lastly, this chapter discusses *the 1992 Basic Direction of New Policies for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas (the New Policy)* after the Uruguay Round. The policy has attempted to address newly framed developmental bottlenecks to farm survival inside Japan, and form a more viable form of Japanese agriculture.

4.2. Food Control System in the 1930s: Intervention in the Crises of Development

Rice was the base of Japanese agricultural policies, especially the Food Control System after WWII. In the 1930s the government recognized that the rice purchases could stabilize the income of agricultural households, and this served as the basis for post-war agricultural policies. Burmeister (2000) agreed with McMichael and Kim (1994) in characterizing agriculture in Japan and Korea as “the state-rice complex” in contrast with the Western crop/pastoral system (Bray 1994). The “complex” centered on rice because of the environmental and socio-demographic situation. The modern policies reflecting this system date from 1921. To stabilize the supply of rice, the government started purchasing and storing rice (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). As the Depression in the 1930s decreased the price of agricultural products such as silk and destabilized the income of farm households, the Japanese government increased rice purchases to stabilize small farm income. The legislation prescribed the method for the government to decide farm-gate and consumer prices of rice. At the farm-gate price, local cooperatives bought rice from farmers. This price was set annually according to production cost in order to sustain farm households. The consumer price was decided to sustain consumer households. This government rice purchase with two different prices, the dual-price mechanism, became the base of the post-war food control system to assist Japanese farmers.

4.3. Food Control System after WWII: Intervention for Even Development

The Food Control System after WWII provided income for small farmers and served as the focus of interaction and bargain among farmers, politicians, and bureaucrats

while the implementation of regulation became less and less totalitarian (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). After WWII, the Food Control System smoothed the distribution of rice and alleviated the problem of hunger. As Japan modernized its industries and became involved in WWII, the government shifted its interest in the Food Control System from sustaining farmers' income to securing food for the war effort through the new Food Control Law passed in 1942 (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). This law continued until 1994 when the New Food Law was enacted. When WWII ended, the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) prioritized addressing severe food shortages in urban areas. The Food Control Law smoothed the distribution of staple crops. Simultaneously, the government strengthened its control to distribute crops including rice and wheat. Farmers were forced to sell all rice except their rationed amount to government authorized distributors: the network of agricultural cooperatives from village to national levels. Once rice was gathered by the national cooperative, Zennō, the cooperative sold rice to the government. Agricultural cooperatives became popular among farmers from the 1930s (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999, p. 75). After WWII, the national network of cooperatives became much strengthened as the agent to implement state policies as well as the base of farmers' political influence. Then, the government sold rice to authorized wholesalers and retailers. Under the Food Control Law, the government authorized all distributors and decided the prices for all transactions, eliminating all private rice merchants. During the war and for some time after the war, consumers could only buy a rationed amount of rice. Later, as the Japanese economy improved, the Food Control Law became less strict; for example, mandatory purchases from farm households relaxed (Burmeister 2000).

Small rice farmers became prominent in Japanese agriculture as a result of the post-war land reform and increased rice production (McDonald 1997). Furthermore, beginning in the 1950s, the government used the Food Control System to increase the farm-gate price of rice in favor of farmers (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). As the economy grew in Japan, per-capita income of urban workers quickly increased to surpass that of rural workers. This income gap between urban and rural areas became one of the most social concerns so that the high rice price became demanded from the government to sustain rice cultivation. The Food Control System increased the farm-gate price for rice to ensure the well-being of small farmers. Small farmers could sustain themselves as they combined nonfarm income with their agricultural income based on a high rice price. A large number of small farmers were beneficial for the cooperatives because the farm population preserved the cooperative's political power. Also, according to Davis (2005), consumers rather welcomed the regulation over the distribution of food items. In addition to food security, they seemed to trust that food safety and quality would result from the regulation (Burmeister 2000; Davis 2005).

According to McDonald (1997), the Food Control System in conjunction with the land laws contributed to the position of small farmers after WWII. Under the Food Control Law, farmers did not have sufficient incentive to scale up production or try new types of crops as they could sell the government rice at an artificially high price (Komari 1991; McMichael 2000). Furthermore, in the 1960s, the government steadfastly increased its rice price, encouraging still more rice production (McMichael 2000; Moore 1991). The heightened rice price increased the price difference between Japanese and foreign

rice (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Also, the policy direction to promote full-time farmers was not as effective as intended in the 1961 Agricultural Basic Law.

Thus, after WWII, as the Food Control System became a major income support for small farm households, it became the focus of interaction and bargaining between farmers, politicians, and bureaucrats (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Based on this system, all these parties could pursue their interests. This became the reason to continue the system and weakened the promotion of large-scale efficient farm managements. Bureaucrats of the MAFF controlled farm-gate and consumer prices of staple crops while farmers bargained their political influence for high farm-gate rice prices. While postwar economic growth caused rural-urban migration, electoral districts were not simultaneously redrawn, which increased the importance of rural votes. The cooperatives became the strong and efficient organizational base of rural votes, provided organized votes for preferable candidates, and appealed to national politics as the representative of rural interest. Rural voters normally supported the LDP which ruled Japan for most of the period after WWII. In return, the LDP's powerful "agricultural tribe" (*nōrinzoku*) in the Diet pursued the interests of rural voters. As well as national politicians, the cooperatives' national organization could appeal to bureaucrats for their member farmers and conduct public appeals and demonstrations in support of the members' interest.

The Food Control System started to relax its strict distribution rules for rice in the 1970s. As rapid economic growth continued until the end of the 1960s, the Food Control System faced problems from both supply and demand sides (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Because the Food Agency increased the farm-gate rice price, farmers continued to cultivate rice. On the other hand, increasing affluence led urban consumers to diversify

their food choices, and hence the demand for rice decreased. In this situation, the Food Agency could not balance the demand and supply of rice. This agency could neither increase the consumer price of rice to match increased farm-gate price nor sell all rice that the farmers sold to the agency. In 1970, the Food Agency stored a full year's harvest of rice; the cost to sustain this system was equal to half the MAFF budget. According to Boestel, Francks, and Kim (1999), the maintenance of the Food Control System started to be regarded as a problem. As rapid economic growth ended, inflation became an issue. The government seemed unable to continue the Food Control System as was. It would become a problem to balance a government budget.

The Food Control System also needed to deal with the limit of its control over distribution (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Under this system, all distributors were supposed to deal in government rice as a uniform product. However, to address consumer preferences, some distributors sorted rice and sold some for a higher price (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). This type of rice is called *jiyu* rice (free rice), and the interests of the Food Control System such as the Food Agency, the cooperatives, and authorized sellers needed to handle this problem to control the system's rice price and distribution.

In 1969, *jishu* rice was introduced and promoted to meet differentiated consumer preferences. This allowed the controlled distribution of rice differentiated by brand based on variety and origin (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). To distribute *jishu* rice, the cooperatives kept their role as a rice collector. The cooperatives were then allowed to skip the Food Agency and sell the rice directly to wholesalers. The Food Agency joined the negotiation with Zennō to decide the price and amount of *jishu* rice. Because *jishu* rice was sold for higher price, the amount of rice sold to the Food Agency decreased. As

the Food Agency was required to buy less rice, the government could diminish the increase of farm-gate price and decrease the price gap with the consumer price. The gap decreased to zero in 1987. As well as the cooperatives, local governments promoted the production of *jishu* rice. They promoted rice by location and variety. While local governments subsidized the promotion of *jishu* rice, the cost to maintain the Food Control System was lowered to satisfy the Ministry of Finance (Boestel, Francks, and Kim; George-Mulgan 1993). Therefore, *jishu* rice was successful at alleviating the financial pressure on the Food Agency, keeping the involvement of stakeholders, and satisfying the consumer demand.

Jishu rice did not adversely influence the government's control of rice prices and Zennō's rice collection (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). The government, especially the Food Agency, remained to regulate the agricultural market until 2003 (Burmeister 2000; Tokyo Shimbun 2003; Riethmuller, Kobayashi, and Shogenji 1996). Burmeister explained that this bureaucratic agent was sustained through the postwar years owing to "an ideology of food security" (p. 445): Japan's lasting concern over food shortages. Because of this ideology, consumers continued to support the Food Control System (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; Burmeister 2000). While consumers were able to diversify their diet and purchase a variety of imported food thanks to rising incomes, they still remembered the food shortages immediately after the war, and they remained concerned about the risk of food shortage (Burmeister 2000).

While the Food Control System experienced problems with rice distribution and government control since the 1960s, farmers and consumers regarded the system as a means of addressing food security and the sustenance of the rural environment (Boestel,

Francks, and Kim 1999). While consumer preferences changed to decrease the demand for rice, the Food Control System was valued as the response to “an ideology of food security” (Boestel, Francks, and Kim, p. 445). Also, according to Boestel, Francks, and Kim, while the Food Control System protected Japan’s rice farming, it caused a severe debate with the United States in the context of alleviating trade frictions (p. 83).

4.4. Intervention in Land: Agricultural Land Reform and the 1952 Agricultural Land Law

Agricultural Land Reform and the Following 1952 Agricultural Land Law reinforced small farmers, and their land tenure sustained them as well as agricultural interests such as the MAAFF and agricultural cooperatives. Land reform got rid of larger farms and formed small farms. Small farmers became the political clout to support the LDP government and the MAFF as policy makers to devise the policies for small farmers. Agricultural land policies also supported the sustenance of small farmers in the late 1990s. After WWII, the SCAP demanded the Japanese government conduct agricultural land reform (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; Davis 2005; McDonald 1997). In addition to low agricultural production and food scarcity, the SCAP was concerned about the consequence of rural tenancy such as the increasing presence of communists and left-wing politicians in rural areas (Boestel, Francks, and Kim; McDonald). Moreover, rural tenancy was regarded as the base of support for Japan’s militarism (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). The authorities hoped that agricultural land reform formed stable and conservative small farmers and solved these social issues in rural areas. Agricultural land reform distributed land to increase the number small farmers in Japan and resulted in substantial social equity in rural Japan (Davis 2005). This provided farmers with political

importance, so all political parties agreed to sustain a high rice price (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). Parker, Arker, and Amati (2009) added that the reform created “a new middle class” (p. 149). Due to agricultural land reform, small farmers became one of the most important political forces to support the LDP government for more than a half century.

Basically, agricultural land reform distributed farmland to cultivators (McDonald 1997). Agricultural landowners were required to sell the land to the government while they were allowed to keep enough land for their own cultivation. The government transferred land to tenant farmers at low cost. Based on these principles, in most prefectures in the western Honshū Island, the limit of farm size was 2.5 ha; in other prefectures except Hokkaidō it was 4.5 ha. While almost half of farmland was tenanted before agricultural land reform, this decreased to 10 percent by 1950 (Davis 2005; McDonald 1997). Land reform enabled three million households to purchase land. The same number of farm households had farm size of less than 1 hectare. Overall, 70 percent of farm households ended tenancy to own their own land to cultivate. Only 30 percent were full owners before the reform.

The 1952 Agricultural Land Law regulated transactions of farmland enabling the government to make cultivators land owners (McDonald 1997). The law regulated lease, sale, and conversion of farmland, protecting farmers as both cultivators and land owners. Boestel, Francks, and Kim (1999) emphasized that this regulation on agricultural land preserved small farmers.

While agricultural land reform increased the number of small farmers, McDonald (1997) cautioned that its effect on actual agricultural practice was not very dramatic.

Farm size in Japan was small for centuries (Davis 2005; McDonald 1997). As the Great Depression and the WWII disrupted rural society, landlords' control over their tenants had been weakened (Davis 2005; McDonald 1997). Then, in the 1950s, as fertilizer and labor became available for agriculture, these farmers increased food production to a pre-war level (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). The investment in agriculture continued. As farmers invested in rice-farming machinery such as machines to plant seedlings and a harvester, their economic efficiency continued to decrease.

In addition to this, agricultural cooperatives became part of "a statist form of agriculture" to form a mutually beneficial relationship with farmers and the LDP government from 1955 (McMichael 2000; Parker, Arker, and Amati 2009). Thus, small farmers emerged through agricultural land reform and became the base of support for the LDP government from 1955.

4.5. The 1961 Agricultural Basic Law: Even Development

As the Japanese economy entered the era of rapid growth in the 1960s, the 1961 Agricultural Basic Law was introduced (Davis 2005). The law was meant to ensure that agricultural productivity kept up with productivity in other industries. Many farmers saw their nonfarm income exceed their farm income. To keep up with the productivity of other industries, the consolidation of farmland and management became encouraged under this law so that farmers' needs to expand their management would be met (McDonald 1997). Thus, through this law, the government intended to consolidate farm management and increase farm size. Without intervention in land tenure, farmers were encouraged to lease their land; they were also encouraged to pool their land. Along with the Basic Law, the 1952 Agricultural Land Law was revised in 1962 to abandon the limit

on farm size. McMichael (2000) said the 1961 Agricultural Basic Law started the government's trial to restructure Japanese agriculture relaxing the regulation on scale management. Burmeister (2000) and McMichael observed that this direction to increase large-scale farms had not been successful. According to McMichael, this was because the price of agricultural land was so high that farmers kept land for themselves. This policy direction continued to the 1990s.

4.6. Acreage Reduction (*Gentan*): Intervention in Overproduction

Jishu rice took some of the pressure off the Food Agency to raise farm-gate prices; however, this did not address the problem of decreasing demand caused by changing consumer preferences. MAFF set rice price high through the Food Control System in the 1960s and increased rice production (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). MAFF soon started to regard the Food Control System as costly and began to restructure it. To maintain the Food Control System with a high farm-gate price for small farm households, a new measure would be necessary to decrease the supply. For this purpose, the government introduced acreage reduction in 1971 (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Boestel, Francks, and Kim explained that Japan's acreage reduction was compulsory in contrast to the United States and European counterparts. Farmers initially earned a payment for participating in acreage reduction of rice production. This caused broad criticism based on "an ideology of food security" (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). People generally complained that Japan should not fallow farmland because resources were scarce. People wanted to remain prepared for a time of food shortage as they remembered post-war food shortages (Burmeister 2000, p. 446). Later, from the 1970s,

the government changed its emphasis on acreage reduction to subsidize farmers for producing other types of crops besides rice on registered rice fields (*tensaku*) (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). According to Boestel, Francks, and Kim (1999), because it was not certain that individual small farmers would commercially produce wheat, the MAFF and the cooperatives worked in villages and promoted acreage reduction.

According to Boestel, Francks, and Kim (1999), at the village level, farmers tended to share the target with other village farmers. As farmers could not fully utilize their land, they were discouraged from improving their management. After the government decided the target for acreage reduction based on demand at the national level, the target was scaled down to prefectural and village levels. At the village level, the Nōkyō cooperative was involved in meeting the target. When a village did not meet its target, it could sell less rice via official distribution. The village would also be unable to apply for many subsidy programs in agriculture. Owing to the high rice price, farmers continued to increase rice production and maintain their income (McDonald 1997). Because farmers were reluctant to follow acreage reduction, the target was equally shared among village farmers. As almost all types of farmers joined acreage reduction, willing or “viable” farmers were unable to strengthen their management (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999, p. 92). Thus, acreage reduction did not help restructure agriculture and farming communities. Ōuchi and Saeki (1995) argued that farmers would stop fallowing or producing other types of crops without acreage reduction because farmers did not see fallowing and producing other crop types as economically viable. Rice continued to be overproduced while acreage reduction increased to one third of rice fields by 1990 (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999).

4.7. 1976 Policy Shift: Sacrificing Agriculture for Industrial Development

In 1976, in order to sustain the Food Control System, the government initiated another policy shift in agriculture to restructure and diversify domestic agriculture (Davis 2005). Besides decreasing the level of price support, the government tried to decrease rice production which had become chronically excessive (Davis 2005; Terasawa 1984). As mentioned above, this was the reason to start acreage reduction planning in the late 1960s. The policy shift tried to assist the production of commodities other than rice: vegetables, fruit, and livestock (Davis 2005). This reform was introduced independent of the Tokyo Round of GATT, which was taking place at the same time. Davis (2005) claimed trade liberalization entirely dissuaded the government from restructuring agriculture and diversifying domestic agricultural production. The negotiations targeted quotas that protected these products and their high price.

4.8. US-Japan Negotiations and GATT Negotiations

As Davis (2005) observed, from the 1970s to 1990s, the United States continuously pushed for the liberalization of Japanese agricultural markets, which was vehemently resisted within Japan. To liberalize quotas and import bans of controversial items such as beef and citrus, the United States took advantage of rules of multilateral institutions and talks. Davis argued that protection of agricultural products in Japan was due to the government's strong interest in agriculture. The counter force to resist this government interest was weak in Japan. Agribusinesses, industrial interests, and consumers were not a force to resist this interest. Consumers tended to be concerned

about the safety of foreign products. Industries could not ignore farmers as active consumers who would boycott their products and give negative media attention.

Furthermore, the United States and Japan moved the negotiation on rice imports to the multilateral negotiations of the Uruguay Round (Davis 2005), where, in addition to the United States, the Cairns Group supported efforts to enhance liberalization of agricultural products. As the Round tried to reach one agreement for all sectors, this broadened the support for rice imports within Japan. Business interests and politicians supported the Uruguay Round (Davis 2005). Japanese politicians thought Japan could not afford to be the only country to deny Round's results. The denial of the round could be regarded as the denial of free trade. This led to endangering many companies involved in trade in other industrial sectors.

4.9. The Tokyo Round

The Tokyo Round of GATT was held from 1973 to 1979. Along with the bilateral negotiation with the United States, Japan consented to end some minor quotas and expand the quotas of major items (Davis 2005). While the United States requested Japan to negotiate over 130 items, they compromised on 108 items. This did not cause the major change to promote or distribute agricultural products in Japan. From the 1970s to the 1980s, the United States encouraged the Japanese to liberalize markets for beef and citrus (Davis 2005). In 1972, the United States started to demand increased market access for agricultural products. Responding to the United States' demands, the Tokyo Round from 1973 to 1979 took up this issue as a major topic (Davis 2005; World Trade

Organization n.d.). Additionally, talk on this issue occurred in the setting of bilateral talks (Davis 2005).

Japan's involvement in trade liberalization also became a major issue in "the London summit" in 1977 (Davis 2005). The United States urged Japan to play a major role and discuss major issues of trade liberalization as a bundle. This reflected the wish of the Carter administration to relieve the problem of the trade deficit with Japan. The United States demanded that Japan along with the United States and West Germany should increase domestic demand to decrease trade surplus, balance international trade, and contribute to international economy. Toward Japan, the United States aimed to liberalize the Japanese market for agricultural products.

To restart the Tokyo Round, Japanese politicians and the MAFF were hard set against the liberalization of agricultural products. They jointly opposed ending any quota throughout the Round (Davis 2005; Fukui 1978). The Japanese Cabinet and Diet received this claim (Davis 2005). In the meetings to decide the negotiation processes, the inclusion of agricultural trade concerns in the wider process became an issue of debate. While the United States demanded the inclusion, Japan and the European Community resisted it. This resulted in the division between industrial and agricultural products throughout negotiations. Furthermore, agricultural products were divided by major items such as dairy and beef. In this regard, compared with industrial goods, the negotiation of agricultural products became "special" (Davis 2005, p. 145).

However, as the Tokyo Round restarted in 1977, Japanese business interests became concerned about the liberalization of Japanese agricultural markets (Davis 2005). The protection of agricultural markets would damage Japanese industries because the

United States could raise protections against Japanese products without the liberalization of Japanese agricultural markets. Business interests feared that without agricultural liberalization, the United States would complain about the trade surplus of Japan and the US Congress would move to protect US markets against Japanese products. In spite of the strong opposition to the trade liberalization within Japan, owing to the US threat, some Japanese including business interests preferred the market liberalization of agricultural products.

While the United States demanded the opening of Japanese agricultural market in the Tokyo Round, the round ended in December 1978 with the expansion of some quotas. The degree of expansion was smaller than the United States demanded (Davis 2005).

4.10. US-Japan Bilateral Negotiations

From the 1970s to the 1980s, bilateral talks between the United States and Japan were carried out with the aim of ending Japan's quotas on agricultural products. Partly owing to these talks, liberalization progressed incrementally. The Japanese government had used quotas to prevent agricultural products from being imported and to protect domestic agriculture (Davis 2005). In 1955, when Japan first participated in the GATT, the Japanese government justified the quotas because GATT Article XII permitted a quota as an exception to protect the balance of international payments. In 1963, as the Japanese government ended this justification, the quotas became “residual import restrictions” (Davis 2005, p. 140). As GATT Article XI clearly prohibited the use of quotas as import restrictions, Japan’s quotas became questionable under GATT’s laws. Japan decreased the number of items under a quota from 103 in 1964 to fifty eight in

1970 (Davis 2005; Murata 1995). This was further reduced to five in 2000. This resulted from many negotiations between the United States and Japan and within the Tokyo and Uruguay Rounds (Davis 2005).

In order to address the problem of Japan's quotas, the United States demanded bilateral negotiations in 1971 (Davis 2005). By the liberalization of quotas on agricultural products, the United States wanted to increase exports to Japan, especially beef. Their talks partly accompanied the Tokyo Round. The United States demanded Japan end all quotas on agricultural products. As a result, some minor quotas were eliminated. Most items were kept, but their quotas were increased.

Again, in the early 1980s, as the trade deficit with Japan became a very important political issue in the US Congress, the United States restarted negotiations with Japan to end quotas (Davis 2005, p. 155). As a result of these talks, Japan could resist the US threats to end the quotas while the United States could win the limited liberalization of the Japanese agricultural market.

As the United States' push to liberalize the Japanese agricultural market was strongly countered by the Japanese government in the early 1980s, the United States tried another tactic: it advanced its complaints within GATT's legal framework (Davis 2005). In 1986, the United States complained about Japan's quota on thirteen agricultural products. This led to the end of negotiations with partial concessions on both sides (Davis 2005). Japan increased the quota on beef and grapefruit juice and increased the US share in the Japanese beef market.

4.11. Beef and Citrus Issue

Through bilateral channels and GATT, Japan and the United States negotiated Japan's agricultural quotas (Davis 2005). Beef and citrus quotas were major controversial topics until GATT determined them to be illegal. From 1977, with the liberalization of beef and citrus, the Carter administration thought it could persuade the US Congress to decrease the degree of concern about Japan's trade surplus and to accept the results of the Tokyo Round (Davis 2005; Fukushima 1992). At the end of the Tokyo Round, along with compromises on other products, Japan compromised with the United States to increase the quotas of "beef, oranges, orange juice, and grapefruit juice" (Davis 2005, p. 151). As a compromise, the MAFF chose domestically acceptable kinds of quotas to minimize the damage. They chose the quotas of less controversial crops such as non-edible seaweed.

In 1985, bilateral negotiations concerning Japan's agricultural quotas resumed (Davis 2005). The United States demands for the termination of Japan's agricultural quotas met determined resistance within Japan. In 1986, the United States formally complained to GATT about agricultural quotas on twelve items. While twelve items were less controversial than beef and citrus, the United States expected that GATT decision could affect negotiations on beef and citrus quotas as well. As a result, GATT confirmed that the quotas on ten out of twelve items were unacceptable. Japan accepted this judgment.

Subsequently, in 1988, the United States formally complained to GATT about quotas on beef and citrus. This was followed by similar complaints from Australia and New Zealand on the beef quota (Davis 2005). Rather than waiting for GATT's judgment, the Japanese government decided to accept the abandonment of beef and citrus quotas

through bilateral negotiations with the United States. The Japanese government increased these quotas for next three years, and it abandoned the quotas and decided to import with tariffs.

4.12. The Uruguay Round

As a result of the Uruguay Round from 1982 to 1993, Japan accepted US political pressure to discuss the import of its most politically and socially significant commodity, rice, and the gradual increase of imports of rice. In 1982, a new round of GATT meetings began with ministerial-level talks (the Uruguay Round from September 1986) (Davis 2005). One goal of the meeting was to advance the integration of agriculture into GATT and to increase the effectiveness of GATT in world trade by increasing market access and export competition.

In terms of the liberalization of agricultural trade, the Uruguay Round involved three camps. The United States and Cairns Group strongly advocated agricultural liberalization (Davis 2005). The Cairns Group was established in 1986. As this group was composed of exporting countries of agricultural products, this group pursued the liberalization of agricultural trade in the Uruguay Round and other international negotiations (Cairns Group n.d.). Developing countries regarded the talks on agriculture as an opportunity for economic gain (Davis 2005). On the other hand, in addition to Japan, the EC only reluctantly participated in negotiations on agricultural trade.

Because of pressure from the U.S. Rice Millers Association (RMA), the Japanese government agreed with the United States Trade Representative (USTR) to talk about the issue of rice imports through the negotiation of the Uruguay Round (Davis 2005). In 1986, RMA submitted a petition for Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 (Super 301).

Super 301 would allow the US government to sanction another country for creating unreasonable barriers to the US trade (*Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974*). Federal political figures such as all congress members from California and the House subcommittee on agriculture showed support for the petition (Davis 2005). The Japanese government became highly concerned about this petition and negotiated with USTR officials. Then, the USTR decided to withdraw the petition and urged the Japanese government to introduce the issue of rice trade as a topic of the Uruguay Round negotiation. Therefore, the Japanese government openly declared that it accepted the US's suggestion on the liberalization of rice trade and regarded this issue as a topic in the Uruguay Round negotiation. In addition, Japanese rice importation was a possible topic to discuss in the legal framing of the Uruguay Round, although it was less likely.

However, in 1980s Japan, it was neither socially nor politically acceptable to liberalize the agricultural market and speak about it in international negotiations (Davis 2005). As George-Mulgan (2006) claimed, while MAFF faced pressure on the Food Control System and its high rice price, it could continue intervention in the rice price and agriculture and collect the support of farmers and politicians. Politicians repeatedly claimed, "Japan should not import a single grain of rice" (Davis 2005, p. 181). The Diet was in agreement to pass resolutions twice in the 1980s (1980 and 1984). The resolutions advocated increasing food security and opposed trade liberalization of agricultural products emphasizing rice. In addition to the government's decision to decrease the farm-gate rice price in 1987, the trade liberation of products such as oranges and beef resulted in farmers' rage and the defeat of the LDP to minority status in the Upper House in 1989. Japanese individuals ate rice to fill 25 percent of their daily calorie intake.

As to the acceptance of rice imports, Prime Minister Hosokawa explained that rice imports were an inevitable change (Davis 2005). In a news briefing on December 14, 1993, he explained that Japan would face a severe criticism if it became an only country to deny the Round rules. Japan's denial could imperil Japan's trade, the growth engine of the Japanese economy. Japan could not ruin the Uruguay Round because it immensely depended on GATT's principle of free trade.

Thus, in 1993, the Japanese government ended the import ban on rice and decided to advance the liberalization of rice imports (Davis 2005). Japan agreed with the Uruguay Round to end the import ban on rice and accepted rice import under minimum access in 1993. Because of the Uruguay Round agreement, the government ended up accepting rice imports. In 1998, the Japanese government decided to adopt tariffs on rice imports. The imposition of quotas on rice imports was regarded as "special treatment." The rice import with minimum access was regarded as "compensation" for the treatment. As compensation, Japan agreed to import a certain amount of rice as minimum access, "4 to 8 percent" of domestic rice consumption (Davis 2005, pp. 197, 215). At last, Japan was ready to accept tariffs on imported rice in 1998. On the other hand, the tariffs should be high enough to sustain the protection of domestic rice. Under the Uruguay Round, the tariffs would keep the same level of protection on rice as the special treatment. Also, as the continuation of quotas required negotiation to renew compensation, the tariffs seemed a better way for the Japanese government to protect its rice farming after 2000.

4.13. The New Policy after the Uruguay Round: Intervention to Face Global Markets

To follow the Uruguay Round agreement, the new agricultural policies seemed to be neo-liberalizing and “reregulat[ing]” agriculture and its markets (Bulkeley 2005, p. 889; Gibbs and Jonas 2000). As the liberalization of international and domestic rice market progressed, the new policies tried to restructure agriculture and its markets (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). While the government shifted its emphasis to market rule, the government and agricultural cooperatives continued to maintain control over agricultural industries (Burmeister 2000; McMichael 2000). As the import of rice became more liberalized, agricultural policies upheld the objective of restructuring rice farming. In this situation, McMichael expected the reorganization and consolidation of rice farming. Other agricultural sectors such as livestock and dairy advanced their consolidation owing to the trade liberalization of their products (McMichael; Webb and Coyle 1992). In 1992, the MAFF (1992) revealed *the New Policy. The New Policy* introduced the measures to restructure the agricultural sector in a rather radical way. It intended to form an agricultural sector viable enough to thrive under the deregulated domestic market in addition to the freer trade (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). The 1961 Agricultural Basic Law and the 1986 Maekawa Report guided this direction. The Maekawa Report urged the promotion of principal farmers along with the restructuring of domestic agriculture and agricultural markets (Kokusai Kyōchō no Tame no Keizai Kōzō Chōsei Kenkyūkai 1986). The report was published by the Research Council on Economic Structural Adjustment for International Cooperation advising Prime Minister Nakasone of the long-term path of internationalizing the Japanese economy.

McDonald (1997) claimed that this policy hastened the break up of the premise of the agricultural land reform. The reform made a farmer both a landowner and a cultivator. In *the New Policy*, for the first time in a policy document of agriculture, *nōka* disappeared, no longer indicating farm or agricultural households (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Such an emotive term became inappropriate for governmental use (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999, p. 100). Moreover, under *the New Policy*, non-farmers could invest in farm corporations owning farmland (McDonald 1997). Further, to enlarge farm size, land leasing was emphasized again (McDonald 1997). The government planned that farm enterprises with more than 10 ha would conduct 80 percent of rice farming by consolidating farm households. McDonald observed that the government was so optimistic about their plan that it also planned to increase the paddy fields of 1 hectare tenfold to 30 percent. McDonald mentioned that the government's trial to increase rice farming managements could be more effective this time than the past deregulation of farmland transactions. McDonald raised the government's decision to lower the farm-gate rice price in 1987 as the reason for this observation.

The government also reviewed the Food Control Law and enacted the New Food Law in 1994. Under the New Food Law in 1994, the government would no longer control rice prices but would instead rely on the market mechanism (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Farmers became able to sell rice outside the controlled channels. The participation in acreage reduction would be voluntary while the cooperatives would be responsible for surplus rice. At the same time, the government would buy rice for the purpose of emergency stockpiles. Farmers could continue to sell rice to the government as long as they followed acreage reduction. Boestel, Francks, and Kim mentioned that the

government did not clarify the way to decide the price of government purchase. The government would not provide a protective rice price any more. Boestel, Francks, and Kim continued that agricultural cooperatives would continue to be a prime collector of rice at a village level. Instead of the government, the cooperatives and “the *jishu* market organization” would be responsible for the rice inventory and for the maintenance of the rice market (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999, p. 101). Boestel, Francks, and Kim mentioned the maintenance of the market would become privatized in this sense. However, they were going to compete with other private distributors. Other types of merchants such as supermarkets and trading companies could take part in rice distribution and sale. With this new arrangement, the producer rice price declined twenty percent at most (Figure 3). Rice price per sixty kilogram was 18,505 yen in 1985 and 14,185 yen in 2007.

The new agricultural policies seemed to neo-liberalize and “re-regulate” agriculture and its markets (Bulkeley 2005; Gibbs and Jonas 2000). As Burmeister (2000) and McMichael (2000) discussed, while the government shifts its emphasis to market rule under globalization, the government and agricultural cooperatives continued to keep the control over agricultural industry. While agricultural policies changed their emphasis to trade liberalization and globalization, related agents would continue to receive government resources in the same way as before (Burmeister). In order to alleviate the impact of starting rice imports, the Japanese government demanded to allocate \$6 billion (McMichael). This budget was going to be allocated to farmland improvement, the promotion of enlarging farm managements, and funds for local governments and

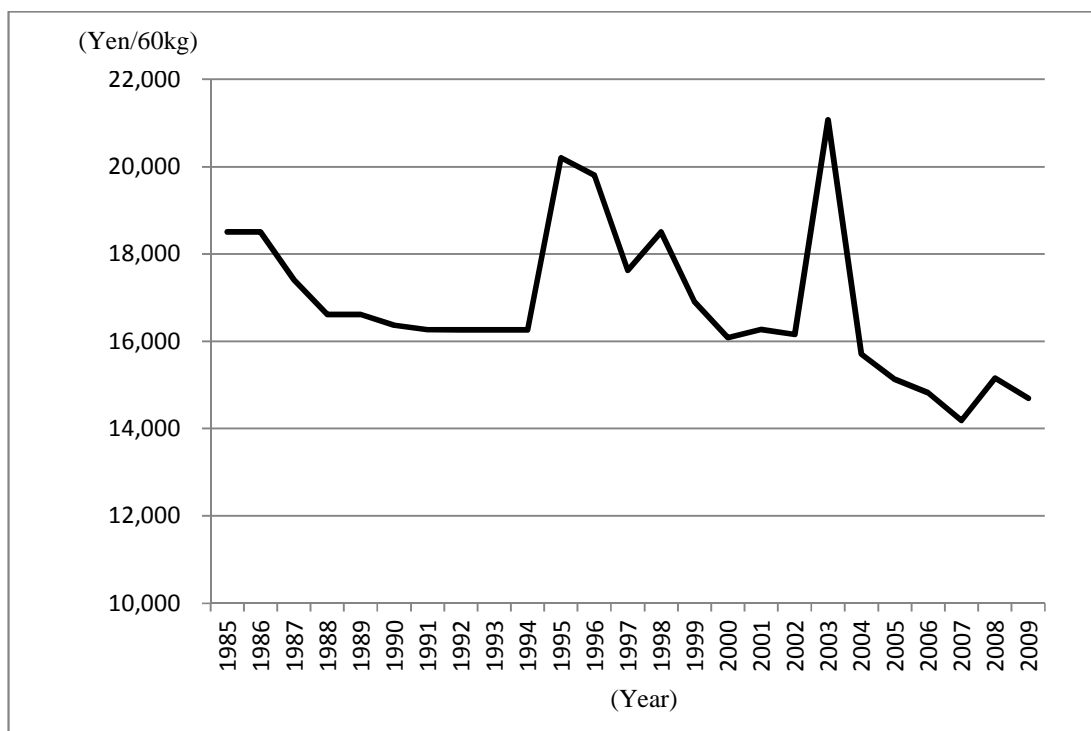


Figure 3. Japanese Producer Rice Price from 1985 to 2009.

Sources: Beikoku Antei Kyōkyū Kakuho Shien Kikō. n.d. and MAFF. 2008b. Notes: The price was government purchase price to 1994 and weighted average price of all brands from 1995.

businesses. Because of this, the political parties changed their attitudes to support rice import (McMichael; *Trade.news*, October 26, 1994). Cautiously, McMichael pointed out that Japanese rice farming might not become internationally competitive even with government support.

4.14. Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the evolution of Japan’s major agricultural policies and international negotiations to liberalize agricultural markets and policies in Japan. While the Japanese government controlled agriculture and sustained small farmers through its post-war policies, the government seemed to “re-regulate” agriculture in order to respond

the liberalization of agricultural markets under globalization (Bulkeley 2005, p. 889). After WWII, agricultural policies established small rice farmers and provided enough income for them to sustain themselves. The control of agriculture and its market led to the sustenance of a mutually beneficial relationship of power among political parties, agricultural cooperatives, and bureaucrats. The United States continuously demanded that Japan liberalize agricultural markets from the 1970s and utilized multilateral institutions and talks (Davis 2005). The continuous demand of the United States broadened the support within Japan to abandon the quotas on major agricultural products and accept the import of rice after the Uruguay Round. Since 1960s, the government had devised policies to restructure Japanese agriculture with different intentions through time. In the 1980s, the Prime Minister from the LDP aimed at deregulation. The government drafted the Maekawa Report to adapt the Japanese economy to the international economy and targeted agriculture for restructuring (Kokusai Kyōchō no Tame no Keizai Kōzō Chōsei Kenkyūkai 1986). Following the Uruguay Round, to respond to the beginning of rice imports, the government seemed to retain its power with the agricultural cooperatives in planning to neo-liberalize and “re-regulate” its agriculture (Bulkeley 2005, p. 889; Burmeister 2000; McMichael 2000).

To understand the ongoing policy trends and the current trends in Japanese agriculture, we need to explore the historical trends of Japanese agriculture, policy implementation, and the reaction to the policies. The next chapter will explore the policies after *the New Policy*, the general trend of Japanese agriculture, and views toward the policies by the media.

Chapter 5: The Design and Promotion of the Multi-Product Plan at the National Level

5.1. Introduction

With the agreement to accept rice imports, both the LDP and non-LDP governments interpreted the GATT as a commitment toward freer trade and directed state agents to reduce the support in the rice price. Leaders also directed that agricultural structure be able to compete in the environment of the lowered rice price. The Japanese government responded to the Uruguay Round of GATT and adopted *the Basic Direction of New Policies for Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas* (New Policy) (Table 4) as the next developmental necessity. The policy assumed the withdrawal of intervention in the rice market and the concentration of support on more viable core farmers (Yokoyama 2008). The policy also assumed that while farmers may be earning less from rice, they should be encouraged to produce more of the crops in which Japan was overwhelmingly import-dependent. Based on this contemporary discourse of Japanese agricultural policies and the adaptation for the WTO rule, MAFF designed and promoted the Multi-Product Plan. To implement policies aimed at particular farmers for subsidies, in this case large farmers, proved politically sensitive. The launch of and retreat from the Multi-Product Plan were carried out by MAFF at particular moments of political change at a national level. MAFF decided to start the Multi-Product Plan when the LDP under neoliberal reformist Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi won the Lower House election in 2005, as shown below in Table 6 (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2006). The Multi-Product Plan retreated when the LDP under Tarō Asō lost their Diet majority in the election in 2009.

This chapter will first introduce rationalizing policies leading to the Multi-Product Plan after the government started to prepare to deal with wider opening of the rice market

Table 6. Prime Ministers and Largest Parties by Normal and General Election

	Prime Minister	Largest Party in the Lower House (party's seats/total)	Largest Party in the Upper House (party's seats/total)
Before	Kiichi Miyazawa LDP	LDP (275/512)	LDP (109/252)
1992			LDP (107/252)
1993	Morihiro Hosokawa New Party	LDP (223/511)	
1994	Tstomu Hata Renewal Party		
	Tomiichi Murayama Social Democratic Party		
1995			LDP (110/252)
1996	Ryutaro Hashimoto LDP	LDP (239/500)	
1998	Keizō Obuchi LDP		LDP (104/252)
2000	Yoshiro Mori LDP	LDP (233/480)	
2001	Junichiro Koizumi LDP		LDP (111/247)
2003		LDP (237/480)	
2004			LDP (115/242)
2005		LDP (296/480)	
2006	Shinzō Abe LDP		
2007	Yasuo Fukuda LDP		DPJ (109/242)
2008	Tarō Asō LDP		
2009	Yukio Hatoyama DPJ	DPJ (308/480)	
2010	Naoto Kan DPJ		DPJ (106/242)
2011	Yoshihiko Noda DPJ		

Sources: Mashiba and Yanase (2005); Rekidai naikaku (2011); Shūgi'in/sangi'in no giseki haibun (8 November 2012).

Notes: a. A prime minister column contains the name of prime minister and his party at the time in office.

under the WTO regime (Yokoyama 2008). Then, I will explain the Multi-Product Plan and its introduction by MAFF, Central JA, and other related agents. For the first year of implementation, the Multi-Product Plan gained enough participants to continue.³ For implementation, MAFF demonstrated strong leadership and conducted active information exchange with other agents. Finally, this chapter will describe the promotion of land and labor pools called Cooperative Farming. Although the central government tried to promote Cooperative Farming as a stable core farmer in Japanese agriculture, the plan caused the formation of Cooperative Farming with uneven forms of organizing and management (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007; Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2006).

This chapter opens with understandings of crises and proposed solutions. The Japanese government accepted the decrease of rice price from the 1980s (McDonald 1997). From the 1990s to 2000s, the participation in the WTO negotiation furthered the policy direction to open the rice market and accept lower rice prices (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Yokoyama 2008). This provided a dim prospect for Japanese farmers. In addition, continuing rural-urban migration for decades decreased the agricultural population. This caused the government to make policies to support core farmers because the government considered that they would take over Japanese agriculture. According to Hattori (2010), rice price at the farm gate decreased 25% in a decade (Figure 3) from 17,050 yen per 60 kg to 12,790 yen. Farm households decreased from 6 million in 1995, to 4.3 million in 2000, to 2.8 million in 2005. Commercial farmers decreased from 2.6 million in 1996 to 1.9 million in 2004 (MAFF 2011a).

³ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

After 1992, agricultural policies encouraged bodies known as Cooperative Farming to take over Japanese agriculture like a core farmer.⁴ Cooperative farming, a collective way of farming at a community level, existed for centuries. Cooperative Farming bodies increased to apply for subsidies under the Multi-Product Plan. According to the 2005 Census of Agriculture and Forestry, there were 139,465 agricultural communities in Japan. In a different survey, from 2005 to 2009, Cooperative Farming increased from 12,095 to 13,436 (Kei'eiseisaku Ka n.d. a). In 2009, 1,731 incorporated and 7,194 unincorporated bodies participated in the Multi-Product Plan (Kei'eiseisaku Ka n.d. b). This chapter will focus on the increase of Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan.

5.2. The Design and Aims of the Multi-Product Plan

5.2.1. Japanese Agricultural Policies Leading to the Multi-Product Plan

Yokoyama (2008) commented that the agricultural policy shaping the Multi-Product Plan was first based on the New Policy. The government introduced the New Policy in 1992 to anticipate rice imports after the Uruguay Round and restructure and reinforce Japanese agriculture with large efficient farmers (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). Yokoyama interpreted the New Policy as a neoliberal adaptation to the WTO regime because the basic principle of the New Policy claimed that agricultural policies would further embrace the market and a laissez-faire economy. The New Policy demanded the renewal of intervention in the rice market and prices with concentration of policy support on “efficient and stable agricultural managements.”

⁴ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 18, 2008.

“Efficient and stable agricultural managements’ became an official policy term later” (Yokoyama 2008, p. 69).

Further, the Japanese government under Prime Minister Tomi’ichi Murayama (in the late days of the Socialist Party) decreased its intervention in rice market as it replaced the Food Control Law with the New Food Law in 1995 (Yokoyama 2008). This was the same time as the WTO’s establishment. The shift of laws changed the principle of rice market policy from state price support to market-determined price (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). The Food Control System under the Food Control Law maintained the control over price and distribution of rice from producer to consumers; however, under the New Food Law, the rice price became based on a deregulated market price. Therefore, rice farmers were more exposed to the market-based rice price (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; Yokoyama 2008).

Hattori (2010) explained that Japan started the Rice Management Stabilization Policy in 1998 as a policy to stabilize participating farmers’ income without direct intervention in the rice price (Table 4). The Multi-Product Plan derived from this policy. The government under Prime Minister Keizō Obuchi started the Rice Management Stabilization Policy to avoid the intervention in rice market and to compensate farmers for eighty percent of the difference between their standard compensation price and the annual rice price (Zenkoku Nōgyō Shimbun 2003). This policy was supposed to alleviate the damage to farmers from the fluctuation of rice price in the market. This policy was not enough, however, so the government adopted emergency policies to purchase more rice through stockpiling to support the rice price (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006).

The Stabilization Policy could not provide farmers with enough compensation to make up for the decreased rice price.

Also, Isoda, Takatake, and Murata (2006) claimed that the Multi-Product Plan, a selective income support for core farmers, derived from the replacement of the Basic Agricultural Law with the Basic Law on Food, Agriculture, and Rural Areas. As the replacement of the Food Control Law with the New Food Law tried to decrease the intervention in rice price, the change of basic laws represented the introduction of support for the income of selected farmers. According to Kotaki, a staff of the National Chamber of Agriculture, the new basic law said, “Market decides price. Policy supports income” (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2006, p. 6). Isoda, Takatake, and Murata saw that the New Basic Law led to the Multi-Product Plan. The New Basic Law in 2000 was enacted under Prime Minister Obuchi (Tables 4 and 6). It said that the government would provide income support for selected agricultural management bodies. The government would not provide income support by price support for a certain type of product (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai). While price support benefitted all producers of the product, the new basic law intended to replace price support with income support for selected agricultural management forms. According to the New Basic Law, future policy would support the income of selected farmers when freer markets decreased the prices of agricultural products and decreased the farmers’ income. Thus, the basic law suggested the idea of the Multi-Product Plan. The plan supported the income of core farmers when their income from multiple kinds of products decreased. Also, the new basic law required the government to revise its basic plan every five years (Shogenji 2006). The government

followed this and drafted the 2000 Basic Plan. The plan mentioned the consideration of a policy involving multi-products.

The Reform of Rice Policy from 2002 set the attainment of “truly appropriate figure of rice production” as its objective in 2010 (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006) (Table 4). This aim started under Prime Minister Jun’ichirō Koizumi (Table 6). The objective said, “Efficient and stable agricultural managements will become sixty percent of rice farms. These farm managements can actively conduct demand-supply adjustment. Business would become the framework in market and price formation” (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006, p. 15). Isoda, Takatake, and Murata claimed that the Reform could withdraw the government from policies to adjust rice production.

The Reform of Rice Policy led to the Policy to Stabilize the Management of Core Farmers in 2004 (Table 4). This policy limited farmers who would receive subsidies because this provided additional financial support for core farmers (MAFF n.d. b). To receive this subsidy, core farmers must have a certain farm size and consolidated bookkeeping (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Isoda, Takatake, and Murata said that the participation in this policy was “limited” (p. 17). Cooperative Farming organizations could apply for this policy because the Reform of Rice Policy clarified which organizations could be qualified as a core farmer (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata; MAFF staff1 2009). To apply for the Policy to Stabilize the Management of Core Farmers, the organizations must have a plan to become legally incorporated.

5.2.2. Multi-Product Policy as Reaction to the WTO Negotiation in 2003

Negotiations in the WTO furthered the discussion to introduce a multi-product policy. In August 2003, the EU and the United States submitted the proposal to compromise over the WTO's agricultural negotiation (Hattori 2010) (Table 4). This was still under Prime Minister Koizumi (Table 6). This seemed to anticipate the WTO's negotiation on agriculture in spite of the failure to reach the agreement on modalities in March 2003 (Shogenji 2006). Hattori (2010) emphasized that the possible impact of the proposal was a severe threat to Japan. Japan's imports of rice and dairy products would have flooded the Japanese market under the lowered tariffs. In July 2004, the situation was alleviated by an agreement on exceptions for "important items" (Hattori 2010, p. 45) (Table 4). These items could avoid lower tariffs.

Taking account of the proposal by the US and the EU in August 2003, Shizuka Kamei, the MAFF minister, provided a talk about agriculture (Hattori 2010) (Table 4). He said, "Referring to the foreign system of de-coupling, Japan needs to consider a multi-product policy to stabilize agricultural managements" (Hattori 2010, p. 44). He continued that the introduction of a multi-product policy descended from the 2000 Basic Plan. The MAFF expected a multi-product policy to be "the conversion to a policy system adapting a stricter international norm" (Hattori 2010, p. 28). Land-intensive agriculture was considered to be a policy target because "the productivity differential from foreign countries was large" (Hattori 2010, p. 28). Hattori explained that the Multi-Product Plan did not include rice farming for de-coupling. Possibly, rice would remain an "important item."

5.2.3. The 2005 Basic Plan

The 2005 Basic Plan was approved by the cabinet in March 2005 (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006) (Table 4). Isoda, Takatake, and Murata claimed the 2005 Basic Plan was more than the revision of the 2000 Basic Plan. They said that this would form a large step toward agricultural policy revolution. According to them, the government foresaw that the WTO negotiation would result in stricter rules toward free trade. The government would devise the policies to adapt to freer trade and change farm structure to increase the competitiveness of domestic agriculture. The government published the Forecast on Agricultural Structure to push more drastic structural reform of farms than under the 2000 Basic Plan. Isoda, Takatake, and Murata felt that the Multi-Product Plan would be “the best card” to accommodate the potential result of the WTO negotiation, to advance the reform of farm structure, and to accomplish industrial agriculture while focusing government support on core farmers (2006, p. 13).

Because the 2005 Basic Plan did not specify the target of a multi-product policy, the MAFF introduced the Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan in October the same year (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006) (Table 4). This outline introduced the Multi-Product Plan in order to form “desirable farm structure and enhanced international competitiveness” (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006, p. 44).

5.2.4. The Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan: The Start of the Multi-Product Plan

The Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan was decided in October 2005 (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006) (Table 4). While this detailed the application of the Multi-Product Plan, the outline regarded the Multi-Product Plan as “a profound

overhaul of post-war agricultural policies” (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata, p. 13). This was because the Multi-Product Plan intended to support the income of core farmers. In the past, agricultural policies set the price of major products to support all farmers. Furthermore, Kajii and Taniguchi (2007) interpreted the Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan as a measure for “the dramatic revolution of farm structure, to go through ‘the largest change of generation since WWII’” (p. i). The Multi-Product Plan was regarded as a measure to add core farmers. In the broad outline, MAFF related the Multi-Product Plan to the new basic law (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). As explained above, the basic law mentioned the idea of the Multi-Product Plan. The plan supported the income of core farmers when their income from multiple kinds of products decreased, and encouraged diversification and multi-cropping. The Multi-Product Plan shared the goal with the Reform of Rice Policy because the plan attempted to form “the desirable farm structure” (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata, 2006 p. 44).

Central JA staff (2009) campaigned to have Cooperative Farming qualify for the Multi-Product Plan. They argued that core farmers should not be the only target of the Plan and that an organization to cultivate crops besides rice should be eligible (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2006). Farm size was another major topic in the discussion of qualified farmers for the Plan. The discussion to draft the broad outline was interrupted with the general election in September 2005 (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2006) (Table 4). The victory of the LDP made public the Broad Outline.

Because the Multi-Product Plan narrowed its target to core farmers, the Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan regarded the plan as “the profound overhaul

of post-war agricultural policies” (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006, p. 13). Kotaki explained that designated farmers and Cooperative Farming meeting certain conditions became core farmers qualified for the Multi-Product Plan as a result of discussion about qualified farmers for the Plan (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Organizations to cultivate crops other than rice also qualified. Kotaki mentioned that this was the desire of organizations related to agriculture.

Toru Narikawa, an agricultural journalist, explained the negotiation to decide who could apply for the Multi-Product Plan (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2007). MAFF first considered that the size of an applicant’s farm should be at least half the size of an efficient and stable agricultural management body (Kei’eikyoku 2008). To this proposal, the JA group wanted to add locally decided core farmers and demanded an ease-up of the minimum farm-size standard. Satoshi Imai, the leader of Planning Evaluation Division at MAFF’s Minister’s Secretariat softly explained that the applicant standard reflected the real situation with various exceptions (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2006). Because of these arguments, Narikawa evaluated the eligibility standard of the Multi-Product Plan as the product of compromise (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007).

Following the Broad Outline, the Multi-Product Plan officially started in 2007 (MAFF staff1 2009) (Table 4). In the fall a year before, MAFF collected applications from farmers producing winter wheat in the prior fall. In the year 2007, the Multi-Product Plan paid 50,000 qualified farmers and organizations 180 billion yen (Mainichi Shimbun 2009). The Multi-Product Plan contained an income supplement for rice producers and de-coupling for wheat and soybean producers.⁵ Farmers could join the Multi-Product Plan for each kind of crop. Rice producers joining the plan could get their income from

⁵ Kei’eiseisaku Ka, MAFF. E-mail message to author, June 1, 2009.

rice supplemented when the income was less than their standard income (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). Their income would be supplemented with ninety percent of the difference between the income and the standard income. Standard income was calculated by averaging the income of their last five years excluding the years of highest and lowest income. The participants in the plan were required to save a quarter of the funds for this supplement while the government paid the rest.

MAFF regarded de-coupling for wheat and soybean producers as the payment to make up for the difference between sale and production cost (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). De-coupling was divided into two parts: fixed payment and annual payment. According to MAFF, fixed payment was made regardless of harvested amount. This payment was made when farmers continuously produced these crops from 2004 to 2006. Annual payment was indexed to “quantity and quality of production that year” (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008).

As discussed above, core farmers could apply for the Multi-Product Plan. They included Cooperative Farming bodies such as organizations to cultivate crops other than rice (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). To apply for the plan, individual farmers and farm corporations originally had to be a designated farmer and manage more than four hectares of farmland. In Hokkaido, they had to manage more than ten hectares. To be a designated farmer, farmers must have their local government accept a plan to improve agricultural management. To apply for the Multi-Product Plan, Cooperative Farming originally had to manage more than twenty hectares. Additionally, Cooperative Farming had to meet five conditions. It had to have the goal to manage two thirds of the farmland in its community. It had to have by-laws to manage the

organization. It had to receive sales proceeds into a bank account of the Cooperative Farming body. It had to write a plan to legally incorporate in five years. It had to have an income goal for major workers.

The Multi-Product Plan broadly intended to strengthen agricultural management, stabilize food supply, and adapt to stricter trade rules toward free trade (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2007).⁶ This could meet the premises of Basic Plan and the objective of the Reform of Rice Policy. The Multi-Product Plan concentrated its support on core farmers. According to MAFF, “farm structure continued to be weakened because of the decrease of people engaged in farming and aging” (Kei’eikyoku 2008, p. 77). “To create efficient and stable agricultural management bodies throughout most of the farm structure is an immediate task” (Kei’eikyoku 2008, p. 77). The Plan’s concentration of support on core farmers would guide smaller or part-time farmers toward core farmers including designated farmers and Cooperative Farming (Tō’ō Nippō 2007). This would further guide the plan’s participants to be more profitable and corporate (Mainichi Shimbun 2010). This would end in farms with increased size and competitiveness and strengthen farm structure (MSN Sankei Nyūsu 2009). Thus, the Multi-Product Plan tried to concentrate on the support of large farms, change farm structure, and sustain land-intensive agriculture including rice farming. At the same time, the Multi-Product Plan tried to adapt the direction of the WTO negotiation and its “green” policy (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2007). Because the Multi-Product Plan did not sustain the rice price but make up for part of decreased income from rice production, it would not stimulate production.

⁶ Kei’eiseisaku Ka, MAFF. E-mail message to author, June 1, 2009.

5.2.5. The Inclusion of Cooperative Farming in the Multi-Product Plan

Cooperative farming is not novel but traditional in Japan. One MAFF document explained, “Rural communities have collectively managed waterways for rice farming and conducted rice farming activities such as rice planting and harvesting” (Kei’eiseisaku Ka n.d. a, p. 1). Jussaume (1991) explained this community situation had changed with the post-war land reform and mechanization. Farmers became individualistic with these changes in agriculture.

The promotion of cooperative farming after WWII started in the 1970s (Tashiro 2006, p. 18) (Table 4). In that period, full-time engagement in farming was not possible for most farmers. Farmers mostly became part-time, and they had to follow production control. To continue rice farming, farm households started contract-based cooperative management and depended on other farmers and organizations to undertake actual production tasks. This led to the emergence of cooperative farming after WWII and caused discussion of regional agriculture and its policies inside Japanese academia.

Central JA staff (2009) explained that cooperative farming did not develop well in the 1970s in spite of the government’s and JA’s support. Cooperative farming could organize to receive government support and rationalize machines; however, not everyone could use a machine at their own best timing. It frustrated them so much that they could not continue to share one machine. Rice production was still profitable for small farmers. As part-time farmers increased, they could not wait for their turn to use a shared machine.

Since 1992, MAFF has recognized Cooperative Farming as a target of agricultural policy (Table 4). In 1992, the New Policy recognized Cooperative Farming within

agricultural policy.⁷ In 2004, the Reform of Rice Policy recognized Cooperative Farming as equivalent to a type of core farmer (Table 4). The Reform's secondary policy, the Policy to Stabilize the Management of Core Farmers recognized Cooperative Farming as a policy target. This continued into the Multi-Product Plan. A MAFF staff explained that the recognition of Cooperative Farming was a kind of "turning point" because management policy supported individual farmers (MAFF staff2 2009). He continued, "There were many organizations which did only contract work. There was a discussion to include them as [a policy target of] management organization. Because there emerged many organizations with the functions of management in recent years, MAFF decided to include them." According to a MAFF staff1, these organizations tried "efficient management and incorporation." In 2005, there were 120,000 to 130,000 rural communities (Hattori 2010). About eighty thousand rural communities had rice fields, and half of them had core farmers and potential ones.⁸ To add core farmers, MAFF tried to support Cooperative Farming. According to MAFF, in addition to individual core farmers, Cooperative Farming would receive support in order to "sustain and develop agriculture in communities including ones without core farmers."⁹

Cooperative Farming was eventually included as a body that could receive the support of the Multi-Product Plan. It would be an umbrella organization that would include small farms unable to qualify on their own as a Core Farmer. Primarily, the body needed more than twenty hectares under management. In addition, Cooperative Farming had to meet five conditions (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). It had to have the goal of managing two thirds of the farmland in its community. It had to have by-

⁷ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 18, 2008.

⁸ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 18, 2008.

⁹ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 18, 2008.

laws to manage its organization. It had to receive sales proceeds with a bank account of Cooperative Farming. It had to write a plan to incorporate in five years. It had to have an income goal for major workers.

Standards for Cooperative Farming became necessary to provide policy support. These narrowed the number of communities who could apply for the plan. Because MAFF regarded the Multi-Product Plan as a policy to stabilize agricultural management, Cooperative Farming must show some nature of management to apply for it (MAFF staff1 2009). Management must be improved and profitable. A MAFF staff2 (2009) mentioned, “Although Cooperative Farming did not have any fixed standard, simple ones become necessary. Cooperative Farming can be monitored; it can be easily understood. There are surely cooperative farming organizations out of the standards” (MAFF staff2). Regarding the condition of the goal to incorporate in five years, a MAFF staff1 said, “The objective of incorporation is to form a strong management.” Because MAFF supported Cooperative Farming as management, it may well become corporate.

Thus, the Multi-Product Plan would group smaller and older farmers into a body equivalent to a core farmer via Cooperative Farming. As a result, the Plan would “enlarge farm size, and increase efficiency, and competitiveness” (Tō’ō Nippō 2007). To devise the Plan, MAFF wanted Cooperative Farming to be a type of efficient and stable management. It was considered primarily a standard farm size to apply for the Plan (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2007, p. 7). Therefore, the Plan would increase corporate farms and efficient and stable farm managements within the MAFF’s “Management Perspective” (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai, p. 7). A MAFF staff1 (2009) said that MAFF could add more support to incorporate Cooperative Farming while he explained the merit of incorporating.

When Cooperative Farming became efficient and stable, it could sustain agricultural land use and increase credibility. It could easily borrow money and try new things. He continued, “Because it is important to discuss (about local agriculture) within an organization, the government could support it” (MAFF staff1); for example, the government could provide half the revenues to buy a new machine when Cooperative Farming incorporated.

5.3. The Introduction of the Multi-Product Plan and Later Changes

5.3.1. Implementation by the Central Government

Farmers started applying for the Multi-Product Plan from Fall 2006 (MAFF staff1 2009; Tō’ō Nippō 2007) (Table 4). In Fall 2006, wheat farmers became able to apply; from April 2007, rice and soybean farmers did (Tō’ō Nippō 2007). MAFF’s regional and prefectural offices received the applications.¹⁰ At a more local level, some of MAFF’s statistics and information centers received applications, too.

After the Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan became accepted in 2005, MAFF designed the plan in detail¹¹. Because MAFF regarded the Plan as “the great transformation of postwar agricultural policies,” it tried to inform related agents and farmers of the plan’s “importance and necessity” as much as possible. For this purpose, it published an information pamphlet called *Yukidaruma Panhulletto* (Snowman Pamphlet) and published Qs & As on its website. In addition to these publishing and online activities, numerous meetings to explain the plan and meetings for information exchange

¹⁰ Tōhoku Nōsei Kyoku (Tōhoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office). E-mail message to author, March 6, 2008.

¹¹ Tōhoku Nōsei Kyoku (Tōhoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office). E-mail message to author, March 27, 2008.

were held. According to the MAFF's regional office in the Tōhoku region (Tōhoku MAFF), it held more than 6,800 meetings together with region's prefectural offices by March 2008. A MAFF newsletter mentioned the close collaboration with a local conference of the comprehensive support to nourish core farmers in order to add meetings.¹² This conference included local agents like local government, the prefecture's local office, and local JAs.

In the Diet's Upper House election in July 2007, the neoliberal reformers met backlash when the DPJ defeated the LDP (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007). According to Kyōdō Tsūshin, the election result was attributed to the Multi-Product Plan. The Multi-Product Plan was regarded as "a policy to concentrate on large farm households" and criticized as "striking down small farmers" (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007). At the same time, the DPJ boosted a universal policy to support individual farmers in its platform to counter the LDP (Democratic Party of Japan 2007). The LDP's Sub Committee on Agricultural Basic Policies reviewed agricultural policies from October to November (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007; LDP 2008b). In November, the committee decided to revise the Multi-Product Plan. The revision included "relaxing the sizes to qualify as designated farmers and Cooperative Farming, adding crop types covered by the plan's support and simplifying the application procedure" (LDP 2008a). To relax the size qualification, municipalities could adopt a special measure and accept the application from core farmers regardless of their size. They had already been in a community because they were designated under the community to receive subsidies for participating in production control (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). The revision was supposed to reduce the criticism toward the LDP and act as counter-policy against the DPJ's proposal of a law to secure the income of

¹² Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

individual farmer (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007). In spite of the revision, the Multi-Product Plan faded. Soon after the DPJ won dominance in the Lower House in August 2009, the law to secure the income of individual farmer replaced the Multi-Product Plan as the main agricultural policy to support the income of farmers (Mainichi jp 2010).

In the newsletter of MAFF's Management Bureau in March 2008, more relaxed standards were explained for the Multi-Product Plan.¹³ MAFF relaxed some strict application of the plan to keep the plan's participants and keep the support for the plan. MAFF made sure that local governments would not use an age limit to decide core farmers, i.e. farmers qualified for the Multi-Product Plan. While the Multi-Product Plan required Cooperative Farming organizations to have a plan to incorporate in five years, MAFF made sure that the organizations knew they could delay incorporation without any penalty. It also ordered agents at the field level not to push incorporation on Cooperative Farming organizations.

5.3.2. Implementation by Central JA

JA's involvement in the Multi-Product Plan showed us that this agency played various functions from policy making to implementation. JA became popular as farmer cooperatives in the 1940s (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). It has represented the farm interest in Japan, assisted farming and finance of farmers, and helped policy implementation including the Food Control System and acreage reduction from national to local levels (Boestel, Francks, and Kim; Local JA Staff1 2008) (Table 1). Thus, after WWII, JA has been part of "a statist form of agriculture" (McMichael 2000; Parker and Amati 2009). Through the rural vote, JA has contributed to the LDP government and

¹³ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, March 25, 2008.

MAFF's policy implementation. Because JA represents member farmers, JA is consistently opposed to trade liberalization of agricultural products. As a farm co-op system, JA was part of the state's "problem" of keeping many smallholders in the business of agriculture, and the JA might have felt threatened by MAFF's efforts to stand up more independent profit-oriented corporate farm bodies. But I found the JA deeply involved in working together with the MAFF in pooling smallholders together under the Multi-Product Plan.

To implement the Multi-Product Plan, the Central JA worked to include Cooperative Farming bodies as qualified applicants for the plan and provided suggestions to related policies (Central JA staff 2009). As well, it heard problems from farmers and asked MAFF for improvement. Problems mentioned were about cash flow, farm size to be qualified for the plan, and incorporation in five years. In 2007, farmers producing wheat and soybean faced a cash flow problem when they started to receive the subsidy of the Multi-Product Plan. This happened because the Multi-Product Plan divided the subsidy for wheat and soybean production into annual and fixed payment and paid them at different time (Hasegawa 2008). Farmers were not prepared for the change, expected to receive the full subsidy for producing wheat and soybeans at once, and planned to make payments on their own debts. Also, Central JA staff mentioned that it tried to gain the support of MAFF in order to hold training sessions about bookkeeping for Cooperative Farming organizations. It seemed necessary for JAs to hold the sessions at a prefecture level.

From 2004 to 2007, the Central JA was engaged in organizing Cooperative Farming (Central JA staff 2009). In 2004, the Policy to Stabilize the Management of Core

Farmers started as part of the Reform of Rice Policy and recognized some Cooperative Farming as a core farmer (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). This policy might have corresponded to JA's engagement in Cooperative Farming. When I interviewed Central JA staff, they had finished the last attempt to assist Cooperative Farming in 2008. The official mentioned the publication of two documents. Around 2005, Central JA with the National Chamber of Agriculture published the first book called *Aohon* (Blue Book). It dealt with the establishment of Cooperative Farming, its management, and some precautions. Central JA staff added, "This is basically understood in the field." JAs at the prefectural level were likely to use this book and publish their own version. Prefectural JAs took account of local crops and farmers' demography as well as characteristics shared with other prefectures.

In 2007, the Central JA published a book to explain bookkeeping and taxes for Cooperative Farming bodies (Central JA staff 2009). Central JA staff explained that it took three to four years to write this book. It first asked tax accountants to write this book then revised it with the voices from the field. This was the style of Central JA to publish guidance. Central JA first gave the guidance to form Cooperative Farming, and then it started to hear the feedback from local and prefectural JAs for improvement. Central JA understood that it needed feedback. This was because it tended to have limited understanding when it discussed a topic "only in Tokyo" (Central JA staff). In addition to the books about the formation and management of Cooperative Farming, JA was willing to disseminate the information about successful attempts of cooperative farming.

Central JA staff (2009) knew that JAs at more local levels tried to stabilize the management of Cooperative Farming. They financed Cooperative Farming with a better

loan, suggested diversifying crops, and provided the discount on agricultural inputs like fertilizer. When Cooperative Farming had a cash flow problem in 2007, JAs recognized the problem and delayed its deadline to pay for agricultural inputs. According to one Central JA staff, this was a serious favor. JAs absorbed interest cost for free. This might have been done because JAs were the one to promote Cooperative Farming. The Central JA staff thought that normal corporations would demand the payment on time.

Therefore, Central JA collected the opinions and concerns of farmers through JAs at a prefectural level and guided those (Central JA staff 2009). When several prefectures shared the same problem, Central JA talked to MAFF about it. Central JA also provided MAFF with the opinions about proposing policies and support. Because bookkeeping of Cooperative Farming became a shared problem, Central JA staff negotiated with the staffs of MAFF and the National Tax Agency to solve it. Also, mentioned above, Central JA negotiated with MAFF to provide the support via training.

5.3.3. The National Conference for Core Farmers

At the national level, Central JA and the National Chamber of Agriculture formed a secretariat office for the National Conference of Comprehensive Support to Nourish Core Farmers (Central JA staff 2009). Both Central JA and the National Chamber discussed the conference's projects. When it seemed necessary, Central JA would take the lead for Cooperative Farming.

The National Conference of Comprehensive Support to Nourish Core Farmers was established based on the order by the Director General of MAFF's Management Bureau (Kei'eikyoku 2008). This conference was composed of twenty-three related

agents and organizations such as National Chamber of Agriculture, Central JA, and Japan Agricultural Corporation Association (Central JA staff 2009; Kei'eikyoku). The conference aimed to devise and execute projects to nurture and support core farmers. The conference could be an agent to conduct and manage government projects for this purpose.

The Conferences of the Comprehensive Support to Nourish Core Farmers was also established both at prefectural and local levels. Some prefectural conferences might have more members than others (Central JA staff 2009). Most conferences at a lower level should include prefectural governments, agricultural committees, local JAs, land improvement districts, and prefectural and municipal agricultural corporations. To conduct conference projects, each conference member seemed to take a role based on its strength.

The National Conference for Core Farmers was responsible for the projects targeted at farmers and organizations qualified for the Multi-Product Plan and aimed to develop them to an efficient and stable agricultural management in the Forecast on Agricultural Structure. The Conference's main task was to conduct the Project to Promote the Management Innovation of Core Farmers (Kei'eikyoku 2008). It primarily tried to increase core farmers including the target of the Multi-Product Plan. At the same time, it tried to improve the management of farmers and organizations qualified for the Multi-Product Plan. The conference considered that the target of the Multi-Product Plan should meet the minimum condition to be an efficient and stable agricultural management. Developing the target of the Multi-Product Plan to be an efficient and stable agricultural

management would advance the Forecast on Agricultural Structure. As a result, agriculture would include more large farmers and innovative agriculture.

To develop Cooperative Farming, the National Conference could conduct the Comprehensive Project to Support Cooperative Farming (Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai 2008a). This project included the Support Project to Organize Cooperative Farming; the Project to Support the Follow-up Survey of Cooperative Farming; the Support Project for Management Stabilization of Cooperative Farming. Under the Support Project to Organize Cooperative Farming, a conference for core farmers could conduct the survey of community's farming situation and farmers' prospect; hold the explanation and consulting meetings; and devise an action course for Cooperative Farming. This was the policy to form new Cooperative Farming in a disadvantaged area (MAFF staff1 2009). MAFF staff1 explained that some work should be done to form new organizations in depopulated areas with abandoned farmland.

The Project to Support the Follow-up of Cooperative Farming tried to smooth management of Cooperative Farming. The project included detailed advising and consulting of organizing and management (Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai 2008a). These activities must be based on the condition of each community. The activities included support for mundane management tasks such as bookkeeping and annual planning and reporting. In addition, with this project, Cooperative Farming could gain advice on more professional topics such as personnel administration, cost reduction, and marketing. According to MAFF, the project with detailed advising and consulting would develop Cooperative Farming to be an agricultural corporation in future and to be

“a community’s stable and continuing core farmer” (Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai, p. 14).

In 2008, to conduct the Project to Support the Follow-up of Cooperative Farming, MAFF ordered the creation and revision of a “follow-up sheet” for each Cooperative Farming organization under the Multi-Product Plan (Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai 2008b, p. 14). This could provide more appropriate guidance and advice corresponding to the situation of each organization (Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai 2008a). While data were not aggregated, the sheet would become a summary sheet to show the activities of Cooperative Farming (Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai 2008b).

The Support Project for Management Stabilization of Cooperative Farming intended diversification of Cooperative Farming to develop and stabilize its management (Kei’eikyoku 2008). This project supported an experimental project and activities of Cooperative Farming leaders for diversification such as learning projection techniques. The project would support introducing new crops, processing products, and selling products in new marketing channels.

In addition, the Project to Test Comprehensive Measures to Strengthen the Management Base of Core Farmers in a Local Area provided core farmers with subsidies to pay part of the down payment when these core farmers bought agricultural machinery or facilities (Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai 2008a). The project was carried out from 2007 to 2009. Cooperative Farming organizations under the Multi-Product Plan were qualified to apply for this project. The project’s subsidy amounted to up to three tenths of a down payment.

5.4. The Evaluation of the Multi-Product Plan and its Implementation

5.4.1. Critiques of the Plan's Standards

This section describes opinions about the Multi-Product Plan among agency staff and scholars. Aspects of the plan such as the qualifying standards, the system of income supplementation, and the inclusion of cooperative farming caused controversy. The Multi-Product Plan was first evaluated by the standards for participating farmers. Agricultural economists such as Isoda, Takatake, and Murata (2006), Kotaki, and Tashiro (2006) evaluated the plan's prospect based on farm size and work days of major operators in Cooperative Farming (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Kotaki and Tashiro felt that most farmers were not qualified for the Multi-Product Plan. The prospect of Cooperative Farming to follow the plan's standards would not be bright (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). To apply for the Multi-Product Plan, designated farmers must primarily manage four hectares (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008, p. 3). According to Isoda, Takatake, and Murata, the 2000 Agricultural Census showed that forty percent of farmers were not qualified in prefectures outside Hokkaido. Also, these farmers managed less than twenty percent of rice paddy-fields (Tashiro 2006). Kotaki judged that most Cooperative Farming organizations were not qualified for the Multi-Product Plan (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Fifteen percent of cooperative farming organizations decided land use and sale as a body. In most organizations, individual members decided these. While the Multi-Product Plan required Cooperative Farming to set an income goal of major operators, the operators would not increase their income owing to their short number of days of work. Most cooperative farming organizations did not need an operator to work for more than 100 days (Isoda,

Takatake, and Murata 2006). In many cooperative farming organizations, operators ended up sharing farm work of less than thirty days.

The consolidation of farm management units was necessary to succeed in the Multi-Product Plan. MAFF explained that the applicants of the Multi-Product Plan would cultivate half of country's fields and rice paddies (Tashiro 2006). Tashiro argued that the success of the Multi-Product Plan might depend on Cooperative Farming because potentially qualified farmers managed less than twenty percent of farmland in prefectures outside Hokkaido. Owing to this small number of qualified farmers, Kotaki commented that the Multi-Product Plan would not attract so many farmers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Even when Cooperative Farming existed, its prospect discouraged farmers from joining the Multi-Product Plan. The Multi-Product Plan required Cooperative Farming to develop a plan of incorporation in five years with major operators having a certain level of income (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). A concerned farmer said, "It goes without saying that individual farmers cannot take care of all farmland. While it is ok to add Cooperative Farming (to the plan), I wonder if it will be taken care of to the end" (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006, p. 13). The plan added Cooperative Farming bodies in addition to large independent farmers this time. We do not know how long the government would keep Cooperative Farming within the policy target.

5.4.2. Debates about the Multi-Product Plan to Restructure Japanese Agriculture

MAFF regarded the Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan and the following Multi-Product Plan as part of policy shift toward restructuring agriculture (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Imai explained that the Multi-Product Plan attempted to

improve the structure of local agriculture reflecting its conditions (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). He regarded the Multi-Product Plan as part of policy shift toward structural change and tried to persuade all related agents and organizations to understand this change. While he understood the persuasion might take time, he hoped that the plan would be evaluated as a trigger to change agriculture and rural areas. According to Kajii and Taniguchi (2007), smallholding agrarian structure had been a problem very slow to solve in order to sustain Japanese agriculture with enough core farmers. The Multi-Product Plan would expedite restructuring. Once restructuring was accomplished, the core farmers would keep producing under production control as well as keep the Japanese farm environment eco-friendly. Also, stable farm management units would stabilize domestic food supply.¹⁴

Imai stated that the Multi-Product Plan was favorably accepted because of its concentration of support on larger farmers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006, p. 85). Before, the price policy was criticized for contributing to pork-barrel spending because price policy provided support for all farmers producing targeted crops. The Multi-Product Plan concentrated support on larger farmers, and this was regarded as a major transformation of agriculture policy. Because of its concentrated support, the plan would positively contribute to restructuring the country's agrarian structure and increasing its competitiveness. At the same time, he was careful to mention that the plan's purpose might not be taken well to promote the plan. He said that it was difficult to balance preaching the plan's purpose with explaining how to get subsidized. Without emphasizing the subsidies, farmers might be less interested. In addition, Mr. Satoshi Takeuchi, an executive at Watami Farm, a branch farm of a national bar restaurant chain,

¹⁴ Kei'eiseisaku Ka, MAFF. E-mail message to author, June 1, 2009.

criticized the plan's qualifying farm size as not large enough, likely to end up in pork-barrel spending (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). He stated that many qualified farmers of the plan would be part-time because rice was not profitable. These farmers should not be so competitive.

To decide the Multi-Product Plan, the qualifying farm size was controversial (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). The plan could have been too selective to be acceptable; however, thresholds seemed to become acceptable. Tashiro (2003) emphasized that the plan was an exclusive policy. An exclusive policy would not develop community through agricultural development. Kotaki explained that the dire situation of Japanese agriculture including decreasing and aging farmers justified this (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). A qualified farm size could increase enough larger and competitive farmers. Furthermore, with the plan, qualified farmers would be able to rent fields more easily than before and expedite restructuring (Shogenji 2006). The exclusive support on qualified farmers would decrease the land value of the unqualified.

In relation to domestic agricultural policies and laws in the prior ten years, the Multi-Product Plan seemed to be promising to emerge. The Multi-Product Plan derived from the new basic law and the Basic Plan in 2000 (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Shogenji 2006, p. 26) (Table 4). Also, Tashiro (2003) discussed the Multi-Product Plan in relation to the Forecast on Agricultural Structure in 2005. The central government attached the Forecast to the 2005 Basic Plan to advance drastic structural reform in agriculture anticipating the potential results of the WTO negotiation (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Because the Multi-Product Plan attempted restructuring of domestic agriculture, its direction was parallel to the Forecast. Thus, Tashiro (2003) was concerned

that restructuring by the Multi-Product Plan would conflict with development of the whole village and community.

Kashihagashi (reassigning rented fields) became a major concern in promoting the Multi-Product Plan because of the plan's focus on large farmers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). To be qualified for the plan, smaller farmers and Cooperative Farming tried to add farmland. For this purpose, they would ask landowners to change tenancy agreements and rent to them. This concerned individual farmers who had already rented land and enlarged their operation. While the oversupply of farmland and the shortage of farmers concerned the nation, the Multi-Product Plan might have caused the competition among farmers for land in some areas (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Tashiro (2006) mentioned that the criticism of business interests toward *Kashihagashi* was not valid. *Kashihagashi* was just possible because restructuring agrarian structure was not yet complete with large individual farmers and corporations still unsettled. Large farmers and corporations were not yet the only trusted option to whom small landowners could rent their farmland. On the other hand, some large individual farmers were not honestly happy about the promotion of Cooperative Farming in the plan (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). This was likely to happen in a place where farmers argued whether they should develop agriculture individually or cooperatively. Shōichi Fukuhara, a president of an agricultural corporation suggested, "The voices of large individual farms should be heard well in order to discuss the compartmentalization between large farms and Cooperative Farming" (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006, p. 12). Also, Fukuhara recommended that related agencies should seriously be involved to answer who would take over farming in a community. The agencies should develop the ones chosen.

Additionally, MAFF's attempt to increase farm size was questioned as large individual farmers became too large to manage farmland well (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Sometimes Fukuhara, a president of corporate farm, emphasized that core farmers and related agents should recognize this problem and try to avoid this.

The Multi-Product Plan assumed a decreasing rice price as it attempted to make up for decreased income from rice. Decreased rice income would be attributed to the trade liberalization by the WTO negotiation as well as declining policy protection in domestic rice distribution. Shogenji (2006) claimed that this "broke the barrier" of Japanese agricultural policies. Formerly, he explained, "It was taboo even to mention the possibility of liberalizing rice trade" (p. 39). To introduce the Multi-Product Plan, MAFF was strongly aware of trade liberalization while it was determined to stop the liberalization of rice imports. Thus, according to Shogenji, MAFF introduced the Multi-Product Plan and signaled the future liberalization of rice imports. The signal would soothe the concern of farmers. They were not sure of the commitment of the government to oppose farm trade liberalization. In addition, some could say that the policy assuming tariffication would still overprotect rice production because Japan would keep a high tariff on rice imports. Shogenji explained that the Multi-Product Plan was necessary to supplement decreasing income from rice because the rice price would definitely decrease in the Japanese market.

Further, the plan's way to supplement the income from rice was criticized (Hattori 2010; Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Tashiro 2003). When rice producers joined the Multi-Product Plan, they could get their income from rice supplemented (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). Their income would be supplemented with ninety

percent of the difference between the income and the standard income. One could charge that the plan would not stop the decrease of income (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata). When the rice price continuously decreased, farmers' income would decrease at the same rate. Compared with the Policy to Stabilize the Management of Core Farmers, the Multi-Product Plan would not stabilize farmers' income well. While the former based the standard income on the rice price for the past seven years, the latter did for the past three years (Hattori 2010; Tashiro 2003). That is to say, the Multi-Product Plan reflected a shorter time of price change than the former policy. Also, because the Multi-Product Plan required farmers to pay one third of reimbursements for their share of the compensation, this ended up in lowering the plan's support (Hattori 2010). In this respect, the plan worked like partial insurance (Tashiro 2003). Tashiro claimed that participation should be voluntary.

Further, some criticized the plan's targeted crops (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Because the Multi-Product Plan tried to stabilize the farmers' income from certain types of crops such as rice and soybeans, some wondered why the plan did not target other crops, especially feedstuffs like corn. Japan imported feed corn, thus decreased the rate of self-sufficiency.

The Multi-Product Plan was not an independent policy to succeed, let alone develop qualified farmers (Shogenji 2006). Shogenji explained that the plan would not completely develop core farmers while this was an important aim. Kei'eikyoku (2008) explained that the Multi-Product Plan provided "the minimum standard to be a desirable core farmer" (p. 77). The plan was not enough to develop qualified farmers to be the Forecast's "efficient and stable farm managements" (p. 77). Kei'eikyoku demanded

management improvement such as enlarging a farm size and introducing new technology. Shogenji recommended various policies to increase core farmers. The policies were decided to increase farmers and organizations qualified for the Multi-Product Plan and develop their management. These included the Project to Promote the Management Innovation of Core Farmers and the National Conference to conduct the Comprehensive Project to Support Cooperative Farming (Kei'eikyoku; Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai (The Convention for the Comprehensive Support to Develop Core Farmers) 2008a). These policies could also contribute to the development of core farmers and Cooperative Farming.

5.4.3. The Policy Implementation

After the Broad Outline for a Management Stabilization Plan became accepted in 2005, MAFF designed the plan in detail.¹⁵ MAFF regarded the Plan as “the great transformation of postwar agricultural policies.” To publicize the Plan, MAFF conducted the comprehensive campaign to make a pamphlet and the website. In addition, they conducted meetings at various levels.

From Fall 2006 to Spring 2007, MAFF gathered the participants in the Multi-Product Plan for the first time. The plan got more participants than MAFF expected (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). According to Kajii and Taniguchi (2007), in order to apply for the plan, core farmers and Cooperative Farming increased faster than ever. According to Narikawa, this was because of the efforts of governments and related organizations such as JAs as well as meetings of various occasions to increase the plan's

¹⁵ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.; Tōhoku Nōsē Kyoku (Tōhoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office). E-mail message to author, March 27, 2008.

participants (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai). Kajii and Taniguchi explained that MAFF utterly mobilized its entire offices from national, regional, and prefectural levels and used this system to increase the number of core farmers. Its leadership was strong, and information exchange was very active. MAFF established a department to advance the Multi-Product Plan in its regional and prefectural offices and attributed the successful number of participants to these departments.¹⁶ MAFF evaluated that these departments closely cooperated with related agents and organizations, held meetings to explain the plan “in a polite manner,” and heard the demands from people in the field. According to MAFF, these departments took enough time to conduct these activities. All in all, MAFF was gracious about the positive result.¹⁷ This would let MAFF continue the plan to the next year. Its newsletter explained that MAFF would hear the voices from the field and analyze the result for next year. On the contrary, all these promotion did not promote the plan in order to attain the goal of restructuring agriculture (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). It was likely that farmers just got serious about the plan because they must continue to depend on the government’s financial assistance (Kusumoto 2006).

Besides broadly appreciating the cooperation with related agents, MAFF staff2 (2009) positively evaluated the Conference of the Comprehensive Support to Nourish Core Farmers to promote the Multi-Product Plan and advice core farmers. Regional and prefectural offices participated in the conference.¹⁸ For farmers and leaders of Cooperative Farming, this could be the first place to go for advice. Farmers and

¹⁶ Kei’ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

¹⁷ Kei’ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

¹⁸ Tōhoku Nōsei Kyoku (Tōhoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office). E-mail message to author, August 7, 2007.

Cooperative Farming organizations could ask the conference office about their managements as well as management consolidation (MAFF staff2).

5.4.4. Revision after a Year of Implementation

Although the Multi-Product Plan gathered enough participants to continue, it had to be revised in the first year (Hattori 2010). As mentioned above, in the Diet's Upper House election in July 2007, the DPJ defeated the LDP (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007) (Table 6). According to Kyōdō Tsūshin, the election result was attributed to the Multi-Product Plan. According to Shogenji (2006), the Multi-Product Plan was not supported because the plan would not completely stop the income loss from rice production and because farmers were not large enough to apply for the plan. Because the Multi-Product Plan partially supplemented the income loss from rice, it would not completely stop the income loss. Shogenji explained that the income loss was about thirty percent from 1997 to 2007 as the rice price decreased about thirty percent. The income loss was not made up for by efficiency increases. Production cost decreased eighteen percent (Shogenji 2006). Secondly, the plan's concentration of support on large farmers was regarded as another reason for the LDP's defeat (Shogenji 2006). While the LDP mostly kept farmers' support after the 1950s, the plan's target seemed to be too selective. While the farmers' interest was diverging, the majority of farmers were largely small part-time rice farmers, and they resisted the selective support (McDonald 1997). The plan set four hectares as one of the standards for individual farmers to be qualified (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Many designated farmers did not have enough size for the plan even while they were serving locally as a core farmer.

Responding to the LDP's defeat, a special measure was added to the Multi-Product Plan (Hattori 2010; LDP 2008a). The size qualification was relaxed (LDP 2008a). Municipalities could adopt a special measure and accept the application from core farmers regardless of their size. A special measure would accommodate motivated farmers in the plan regardless of their size (Chūnichi Web 2008). While Hattori said that a special measure was a necessary improvement, he insisted that this basic problem would continue as long as the plan had a size qualification.

In addition, the Multi-Product Plan was not so attractive because it did not provide farmers with sufficient subsidy to sustain their income (Yokoyama 2008). In 2007, the income from rice and wheat production did not sustain producers. Rice oversupply decreased its price; the income from wheat decreased. In 2008, some areas had lower or no income supplement of the plan because production increase just caused income increase.¹⁹ Kei'eiseisaku Ka continued to recommend the plan. It explained that the farmers' deposited shares for income supplementation would be saved for next year.

5.5. The Evaluation and Prospect of Cooperative Farming

5.5.1. Diverse Views About Promoting Cooperative Farming

To admit Cooperative Farming into the Multi-Product Plan caused different expectations among agricultural economists and journalists in Japan (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007; Tashiro 2003). Tashiro felt that the Multi-Product Plan would not develop agriculture in a community as a whole because the plan did not support small farmers. He also criticized the plan's base, the Forecast on Agricultural Structure, as the forecast tried to see stable and efficient agricultural management units as major farms to take over

¹⁹ Kei'eiseisaku Ka, MAFF. E-mail message to author, June 1, 2009.

Japanese agriculture. In addition, Narikawa criticized the plan because the plan saw Cooperative Farming as a way to consolidate farms (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai). Tashiro claimed that the government use of communities to consolidate farms was “opportunism” (p. 157). Cooperative Farming should have been better emphasized in the plan.

Kusumoto (2006) claimed that Cooperative Farming would play a more major role in future Japanese agriculture. Its promotion should be the government goal.

When the Multi-Product Plan accepted Cooperative Farming as a target of support, Cooperative Farming received more interest (Kusumoto 2006). Kajii and Taniguchi (2007) explained that this reflected that the consolidation of individual farmers for restructuring had been difficult. Tashiro (2006) explained that local governments and JAs promoted Cooperative Farming because they could support as many farmers as possible. Tashiro mentioned that this would be different from the policies’ objective to focus the support on competitive individual farmers. Furthermore, the inclusion of Cooperative Farming caused concern because many more farmers became supported (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). The plan could be another form of pork-barrel spending.

Cooperative Farming primarily needed to be more than twenty hectares to apply for the Multi-Product Plan (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). MAFF staff2 (2009) mentioned that the plan’s requirement of farm size was meaningful to provide the support for large farmers and to develop them. He understood that this had been an issue debated, and he personally thought that there should have been a better requirement than a farm size. Before the implementation of the plan, agricultural economists such as Isoda, Takatake, and Murata and Kajii and Taniguchi (2007) stated that Cooperative Farming would not be popular to apply for the plan while this contradicted with the positive view

toward Cooperative Farming as a target of the plan (Tashiro 2006). Much cooperative farming was too small to apply for the plan (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). Kajii and Taniguchi reviewed the Summary of Results from the Survey on the Situation of Cooperative Farming and found that more than half of cooperative farming was below twenty hectares. Even when cooperative farming was more than twenty hectares, it might not be so profitable (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Joining Cooperative Farming, less profitable part-time farmers would end up receiving the support. Takeuchi claimed that the plan would just be more pork barrel (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai).

Developing Cooperative Farming was another issue of discussion. The Multi-Product Plan required Cooperative Farming to have a plan to conduct contract work on two thirds of the community's farmland as well as a plan to incorporate in five years (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). To conduct contract work on two thirds of farmland, Isoda, Takatake, and Murata (2006) assumed that a community had to have high solidity among community leaders and landowners. Additionally, incorporating Cooperative Farming seemed very difficult (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). The Summary of Results from the Survey on the Situation of Cooperative Farming showed that corporate cooperative farming was eight percent of all cooperative farming (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). Moreover, 63.4 percent of cooperative farming was not going to write a plan to incorporate. Besides, the summary showed that twenty percent of corporate cooperative farming was a limited private company (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). This showed that many units of cooperative farming tried to control the financial gains.

5.5.2. The Evaluation of Agents Promoting Cooperative Farming

a. The evaluation of the promotion by the central government

To increase Cooperative Farming for the Multi-Product Plan, related agents made total efforts (Hattori 2010). This involved most related agents of agricultural policy: MAFF's national to prefectural offices, prefectural and local governments, their extension, JAs, and other organizations (Hattori 2010; Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). MAFF provided the Multi-Product Plan and other related policies such as Comprehensive Project to Support Cooperative Farming to guide these agents (Tashiro 2006). These efforts to increase Cooperative Farming were not only justified by the motivation to succeed in the plan's implementation (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). The efforts were necessary for the LDP to win nationwide local elections in March 2007 and the Diet's Upper House election in July 2007. Mr. Hayato Ishii of Kyōdō Press was very concerned that the Multi-Product Plan, an important policy for restructuring agriculture, became a short-term political issue.

Imai was concerned about the explanation of Cooperative Farming to promote the Multi-Product Plan (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2006). He wanted the explanation to be honest about the plan's intention. He said that Cooperative Farming was not supposed to support small farmers. He wanted Cooperative Farming to be a type of core farmer like designated farmers. Cooperative Farming would contribute to restructuring agriculture and continuing to make the best of Japanese farmland.

Several policies including the Multi-Product Plan helped Cooperative Farming to increase for the plan. Isoda, Takatake, and Murata (2006) assumed that the plan's relaxing exception would increase Cooperative Farming. While Cooperative Farming was

primarily required to be more than twenty hectares, there were some exceptions for this size requirement. The plan accepted smaller Cooperative Farming in a region with small farmland. To increase and develop Cooperative Farming, MAFF provided a bundle of policies such as the Comprehensive Project to Support Cooperative Farming (Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai 2008a). This assisted a community in a very detailed way such as funding the meetings about the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming at a community level

While these policies sounded like a generous luxury, MAFF staff2 (2009) explained that this was necessary care to promote the Multi-Product Plan. He assumed that people would not probably follow the plan without various assistants and community-level arrangement. In addition, the Subsidy to Create a Production Area helped the increase of Cooperative Farming. The distribution of subsidies among farmers was different by municipality (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). MAFF staff2 explained that Cooperative Farming could be an organization to combine individual pieces of production control and produce designated crops like wheat and soybeans. Some municipalities provided large subsidies for this attempt (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai). Cooperative Farming increased because of the Multi-Product Plan as well as the policy to encourage the production of wheat and soybeans (MAFF staff2 2009). Still, the development of Cooperative Farming is an issue (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). The MAFF staff2 understood that the government and related agents mentioned this problem; however, he questioned how bold they were. While he heard that farmers and their organizations made efforts, he thought that progress was not visible.

Kajii and Taniguchi (2007) imagined that Cooperative Farming in the plan would have various levels of organizing and management. In the Summary of Results from the Survey on the Situation of Cooperative Farming, Kajii and Taniguchi explained that 2,941 cooperative farming organizations planned to join the Multi-Product Plan compared to 1,628 organizations to manage community's entire agriculture. Kajii and Taniguchi argued that many cooperative farming organizations probably joined the Multi-Product Plan just to receive the plan's subsidy. While they contributed to the successful number of applicants in the plan, many organizations did not develop enough to be "a truly stable organizational core farmer in a community" (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007, p. ii). Many cooperative farming organizations would not currently contribute to restructuring Japanese agriculture as the plan intended. Therefore, Kajii and Taniguchi argued that there emerged a problem to develop organization and management of many Cooperative Farming organizations. To consider that Cooperative Farming took advantage of the plan for its own development regardless of policy's intention, Cooperative Farming became more various than the ones to restructure community's agriculture. Kusumoto (2006) recommended that many should experience Cooperative Farming and its advantage independent of the policy's intention. Kusumoto thought that Cooperative Farming could use natural and human resource to a full and sustainable degree.

To implement the Multi-Product Plan, Cooperative Farming became more varied than the plan's intention (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). This caused the concern about the plan. The plan would provide pork-barrel money. Additionally, the plan had several exceptions for application; for example, the plan accepted smaller Cooperative Farming

in a region with small farmland (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Imai said that this could help the plan to be pork barrel (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). According to Imai, “because local people strongly pressured to relax the plan, this would cause unintended implementation at a local level” (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai, p. 85).

With smaller holders in Cooperative Farming eligible for the Multi-Product Plan, *kashihagashi* (reassigning rented fields) became even more of a concern. Narikawa criticized the government in this regard (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). According to Narikawa, some claimed that the preference of applicants should be clarified between a designated farmer and Cooperative Farming. Some claimed that a designated farmer should be preferred; Cooperative Farming should be promoted in an area with difficulty finding a designated farmer. Narikawa thought that *kashihagashi* may well happen because farmland was limited in a community. Even if the government preferred a designated farmer, the community would have “blood on the floor” (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai, p. 14). People in a community must somehow discuss to find a solution by themselves.

While some concerns existed, the Multi-Product Plan earned a successful number of applicants and provided some opportunity for Cooperative Farming. MAFF staff² considered that they could not reverse the policies regarding Cooperative Farming nor discourage this momentum. At the same time, Cooperative Farming experienced a difficult time (Central JA staff 2009). When I asked about the Diet’s Upper House election in 2007, Central JA staff said that that was “just a serious time.” He said that there were reasons including climate. Even farmers in the Multi-Product Plan became suspicious of LDP’s agricultural policies including the Multi-Product Plan. Like other

designated farmers, Cooperative Farming experienced a slower cash flow. It also had difficulty in required paperwork. Furthermore, owing to a rich harvest, it was concerned about the decrease of the rice price. The plan would not entirely cover this.

Because the Multi-Product Plan required Cooperative Farming to have a plan of incorporation in five years, incorporation became the measure to know the continuing success of the plan (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). MAFF staff2 (2009) thought that spending five years supporting Cooperative Farming would be the time to understand the policy's success toward incorporation. He mentioned that it would add some support in order to push incorporation. On the other hand, Central JA staff (2009) cautioned about additional policies for incorporation. He thought that it would be fine for Cooperative Farming to incorporate one year earlier and gain additional support like the support to lease a machine. If Cooperative Farming incorporated in a hurry, this would change cash flow and cause suspicion among the members.

Also, some could posit that incorporation was not necessary for some Cooperative Farming. Cooperative Farming could function to sustain community and its agriculture whether it was profitable or not (MAFF staff2 2009). The community could just cooperate for agriculture. MAFF staff2 said that policy did not define these functions. He said that this was homework. If policy mentioned it, Cooperative Farming might increase. Policy could promote multifunctionality. This could add more varied Cooperative Farming than the Multi-Product Plan stipulated. Without explicit mention, policy could not recognize nor support various kinds of cooperative farming.

b. The evaluation of JA's promotion

JA also participated in total efforts to increase Cooperative Farming for the Multi-Product Plan (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Ishii, a journalist, mentioned that JA tried to preserve its organizational strength while it promoted Cooperative Farming (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). This could be one of the parallel motivations besides restructuring agriculture. Kazutaka Hashimoto of the National Chamber of Agriculture said that the JA did not want to admit the discord on the success of Cooperative Farming in the Multi-Product Plan (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). He explained that JA showed many successful cooperative farming organizations online. These were more related to policies for land readjustment than the Multi-Product Plan.

In 2007, JAs accepted delayed payment from Cooperative Farming owing to a slower cash flow (Central JA staff 2009). Central JA staff explained that this was a severe issue for Cooperative Farming as well as JAs. JAs had to make their own payments. Central JA staff considered that Cooperative Farming did not face a severe issue like this afterwards.

Toshikatsu Matsuoka, a former LDP politician, thought that the JAs' involvement would be essential for both Cooperative Farming and JAs (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). He said that JA could develop along with Cooperative Farming. Concretely, Cooperative Farming was a small JA (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). A JA staff in Nagano Prefecture said that JA must guide Cooperative Farming to be profitable. The success of guidance would be a continuing concern (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). Central JA staff (2009) recognized the same problem as he thought that the number of Cooperative Farming was enough. Past failure of organizing and farmers' suspicion could slow development of

Cooperative Farming. This slowness to develop Cooperative Farming could also have frustrated some farmers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). While they understood that governments and organizations like JAs tried to develop Cooperative Farming, they were disappointed that governments and organizations were not serious about this issue. Besides, a Central JA staff also thought that incorporation would not be the essential goal to develop Cooperative Farming. He said, “Incorporation was just a measure; it would not improve the management of Cooperative Farming.” Cooperative Farming could incorporate, lose money, and still receive subsidies.

As Central JA staff (2009) recognized some processes that slowed development of Cooperative Farming, JAs could be sensitive to the attitudes of community members toward Cooperative Farming. Because JAs recognized that it was important to support community leaders, JAs had a staff assigned to communities. The staff could understand community’s agriculture and talk to each leader very well. Central JA staff claimed that policy would progress with human relations. It would not progress only with the rules of economy and laws. Even when JAs and local governments tried to establish Cooperative Farming, they were likely to start with informal conversation with leaders. When the leaders did not agree, Cooperative Farming would not be discussed any more.

Once a community pursued Cooperative Farming, JAs held meetings to explain the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming. A JA staff said that he tried to take advantage of these meetings to strengthen the relationship with elderly farmers again (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). JAs had to be sensitive about community’s reaction in these occasions. Central JA staff (2009) said that a policy must not be any joke to cause a conflict in community’s daily life. This was the serious demand on implementation.

Tashiro (2006) added that JA's contribution to organizing Cooperative Farming was retired staff. Many retired staff of JAs became a core member like "an organizer and leader" of Cooperative Farming. While this could also happen to the staff of local governments, it was more common for the JA staff (p. 265). Tashiro explained that these retired JA staff were likely to continue their work in the community. Central JA staff (2009) saw that these retired staff from the JA's local government could easily tell the JA's team for core farmers about the community's concerns and needs.

5.5.3. The Role of Other Agents

In addition to governments and JAs, more agents cooperated to establish Cooperative Farming and agricultural corporations. These agents played a role based on their routine functions. Prefectural and local extension services could easily help the establishment of Cooperative Farming. Tashiro (2006) explained that the extension services were good at establishing a community meeting to discuss its agriculture based on government policies. Also, a local agricultural committee provided farmers with the knowledge and guidance for incorporation. This was exactly the same as the work of the committee.

An assistance center was the focus of cooperation for establishing and incorporating Cooperative Farming as well as supporting core farmers (Tashiro 2006). The government supported the management of the center. According to Tashiro, as the recent merger of local governments decreased their leadership to guide local agriculture, it was important for local governments to cooperate with other agents' practices. MAFF staff² (2009) commented on the importance of an assistance center. A farmer could

consult this center to take advantage of agents' cooperation. Tashiro was also critical about the popularity of assistance centers. These could not continue without government support. They would not evenly support individual farmers and Cooperative Farming for restructuring agriculture. An assistance center would rather support Cooperative Farming. This might not support individual farmers to enlarge their operation. Tashiro recommended the equal emphasis as before. An assistance center should pursue land readjustment because the center tended to miss the readjustment. For Tashiro, the center should be more practical than assisting farmers just through consultation.

5.5.4. Specific Concerns in Promoting Cooperative Farming

a. Concerns about major operators

According to Isoda, Takatake, and Murata (2006), the most severe issue of Cooperative Farming for the Multi-Product Plan was to identify a major operator. Owing to the lack of farmers due to rapid aging, a Central JA staff (2009) said that this was the last chance to establish Cooperative Farming. The plan required Cooperative Farming to identify a major operator (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). Isoda, Takatake, and Murata explained that the goal income of major operators should be the same as that of designated farmers in each municipality (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata; MAFF n.d. c). Designated farmers were supposed to be stable and efficient agricultural management in future. As mentioned above, because major operators of most cooperative farming don't have enough farm work to support their livelihoods, cooperative farming had difficulty in identifying major operators (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Isoda, Takatake, and Murata explained that cooperative farming was less likely to find a major

operator. When a community did not have a designated farmer, cooperative farming would have difficulty to identify an operator with the same level of income as the designated farmer. On the other hand, Isoda, Takatake, and Murata added that another community could not identify a few major operators because it had too many operators.

Central JA staff (2009) said that a leader with assistant leaders was “the key to success” in Cooperative Farming. A leader should not be alone. He would feel sorry if a leader ended up being ignored in a community once the leader failed in Cooperative Farming. Leaders were the first people to talk to when governments and JAs promoted Cooperative Farming. To maintain Cooperative Farming, leaders could gain the help from JAs and other agents.

As mentioned in the evaluation of JA’s promotion of Cooperative Farming, besides leading farmers, many retired JA staff and retired local government staff became the leaders of Cooperative Farming (Tashiro 2006). They could easily inform related agents of the community’s concern and need (Central JA staff 2009).

b. Concerns about consolidated bookkeeping

The Multi-Product Plan demanded that Cooperative Farming conduct consolidated bookkeeping (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). The degree of consolidation could vary among organizations. Isoda, Takatake, and Murata (2006) explained that most cooperative farming organizations conducted bookkeeping to keep farm machines within an organization and give wages for work. On the other hand, most cooperative farming let individual farmers count their individual production and sale to determine their own income. To sell rice under the Multi-Product Plan, Cooperative Farming did not need to divide and distribute the income to pay rents and

personnel costs (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Further, Cooperative Farming did not need to consolidate bookkeeping so well that each farmer could receive a share of income reflecting the member's production, especially for the quantity and quality of rice. Farmers received the income based on rice coming from their own field. This low degree of consolidation caused suspicion to Fukuhara (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Fukuhara said that an organization with less consolidation of bookkeeping was not so determined to function as community's agriculture (p. 41). It just organized to receive the plan's subsidies. He critically recommended the detailed discussion led by governments and JAs in order to restructure agriculture through the plan and Cooperative Farming.

The consolidation of bookkeeping might not be the best requirement for Cooperative Farming to integrate individuals. Members could be more concerned with the sale and management of Cooperative Farming than with their own crops. Shogenji (2006) explained that Cooperative Farming could conduct consolidated bookkeeping and improve sale. Central JA staff (2009) believed that all organizations should standardize bookkeeping. When Cooperative Farming was hard to manage, it could provide its JA with its financial statement showing financial realities. Based on the financial statements, JAs could see problems of financial management in Cooperative Farming around the nation. Central JA could ask the central government to deal with the problem.

Kotaki, a journalist, mentioned that farmers had difficulty in keeping up with business practices including consolidated bookkeeping to manage Cooperative Farming for the Multi-Product Plan (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Kotaki demanded detailed support for Cooperative Farming.

c. Concerns about individual sale

The Multi-Product Plan allowed Cooperative Farming to distribute the divided income based on the quantity and quality of rice from each field (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). This allowed *edaban kanri*, translated as management by member number. By this, individual farmers in Cooperative Farming could produce rice by themselves like before. Although Cooperative Farming followed the Multi-Product Plan and sold all rice, it knew what quantity and quality of rice each field produced and distributed the income based on fields. Isoda, Takatake, and Murata explained that farmers wanted to manage by member number because they were proud of their skills and fields. Naturally, they wanted to sell rice under their own names.

MAFF staff2 (2009) explained that lots of Cooperative Farming managed by member number and showed no concrete evidence of cooperation within their organization. These organizations allowed individual agriculture, and MAFF staff2 said that these had difficulty in development and incorporation. When Cooperative Farming managed by member number, the organization remained voluntary and became less motivated to develop Cooperative Farming as a whole. It got less motivated to save earnings and incorporate. MAFF staff2 explained that many Cooperative Farming organizations were just satisfied with the subsidies from the Multi-Product Plan. They would not develop further. Once the subsidies ended, these organizations would end. In this situation, the MAFF tried to keep the momentum toward organizations' establishment and keep Cooperative Farming on track for incorporation (MAFF staff2). MAFF staff2 claimed that Cooperative Farming might well consider how to develop further, but he did not know what policies could effectively provide the opportunity to

develop Cooperative Farming and change voluntary management by member number to incorporation.

At the same time, MAFF staff² explained that management by member number contributed to the initial success of the Multi-Product Plan. Farmers could not start Cooperative Farming if the plan did not accept management by member number but strictly demanded the distribution of income based on rent and personnel cost. Also, Central JA staff (2009) explained that Cooperative Farming provided a place of discussion while most managed by member number. To make a place to discuss cooperative farming was hard. Members of Cooperative Farming could discuss whether members continued to farm their own fields or not. They could decide to continue the discussion. If Cooperative Farming had the agreement to prevent the individual purchase of machines, members could think of the rationalization of management later. It might be very important because many elderly farmers could not farm in five or ten years (Central JA staff).

d. Concerns about *kashihagashi* and rent

The promotion of Cooperative Farming could limit the choices of individual farmers. In spite of the will to develop further, smaller farmers could not help joining Cooperative Farming. They needed to keep their association in a community, or they could not individually gain the subsidies from the Multi-Product Plan (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). Moreover, while some large farmers felt responsible for Cooperative Farming and tried to join Cooperative Farming, some municipalities denied their intent (p. 84).

Furthermore, Cooperative Farming could conflict with individual farmers in terms of consolidating managements in a community (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006; Shogenji

2006; Tashiro 2006). Kotaki claimed that governments needed to hear individual farmers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006, p. 12). In some communities, an organization and an individual farmer experienced conflict over who took over the management of community's agriculture. Promoting Cooperative Farming in the Multi-Product Plan would be unfair for the individual farmer.

In the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan, the conflict between Cooperative Farming and individual farmer resulted in *kashihagashi* (reassigning rented fields). *Kashihagashi* became the major concern in promoting the Multi-Product Plan because of the plan's focus on large farmers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006, pp. 11, 12). To be qualified for the plan, smaller farmers and Cooperative Farming tried to add farmland. For this purpose, they would ask landowners to cancel tenancy agreements and rent fields to the group.

Tashiro (2006) argued that the criticism of industrial interests was not right. Industrial interests objected to farmers' demanding their land back, to return rented land to the Multi-Product Plan. Tashiro claimed that industrial interests just tried to support corporate agriculture. *Kashihagashi* happened because core farmers and corporate farms did not yet complete restructuring agriculture (Tashiro 2006). That is to say, the society, the rural society at least, did not agree that core farmers and corporate agriculture would take over Japanese agriculture.

Mr. Hashimoto at the National Chamber of Agriculture explained the view of core farmers when governments promoted and developed Cooperative Farming (Nōsēi Jānaristo no Kai 2007). If Cooperative Farming developed, core farmers could not expand their operation. Some core farmers were concerned that Cooperative Farming

would surround core farmers in five years. If this were true, core farmers would not find any way to develop.

5.5.5. The Prospects for Developing Cooperative Farming

a. The concerns about developing and incorporating Cooperative Farming

To develop Cooperative Farming became the next issue after organizing it (Central JA staff 2009; Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). Cooperative farming used to be subordinate to individual farmers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai). Cooperative farming had been a group to share farm machinery. Tamiya, a journalist, claimed that Cooperative Farming started to take a more major role and manage community's agriculture (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). On the contrary, according to him, to develop Cooperative Farming reflected the lack of prospect for individual farmers. He protested, "No prospect for individual management, no core farmer, no successor" (p. 95). As each individual farm household lost future prospects, Cooperative Farming would develop into more than an organization to share machinery.

Shogenji and Tazawa, a journalist, commented on the prospect for Cooperative Farming (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007; Shogenji 2006). Tazawa simply introduced a comment of a Cooperative Farming chair: Cooperative Farming would develop to be stable; however, agricultural policies changed. It would not depend on a subsidy. Many expected that Cooperative Farming would continue for many years. Tazawa said, "What is the most important thing in Cooperative Farming and corporation? Everyone first and surely says the continuity. I think that this is surely the strongest management"

(Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai, p. 86). However profitable agriculture was, the strong will in Cooperative Farming would be oriented to sustainability.

Incorporating Cooperative Farming in five years was one of the major goals of the Multi-Product Plan. The Central JA heard that incorporation in five years was hard (Central JA staff 2009). Owing to the reluctance to develop Cooperative Farming in the past and the concern to develop it today, people got cautious about pursuing development. This might not be an appropriate goal. Central JA staff also said that the five-year deadline did not have a solid rationale. Incorporation did not necessarily improve management.

Because incorporation did not easily happen, a president of a corporate farm was frustrated with the guidance of governments and JAs (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). While he understood that many governments and JAs started to provide the guidance, he said that the results were not so obvious, so he worried.

b. Simplifying land ownership and cultivation

Tamura, a journalist at *Nihon Nōgyō Shinbun* (*Agricultural Newspaper of Japan*) said that the best advantage of Cooperative Farming was to simplify and separate land ownership and cultivation (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). Cooperative Farming could cultivate land inside its community. In comparison, many large farmers did contract work on distantly distributed land.

Tashiro (2006) explained that land ownership and operation of Cooperative Farming could belong to different groups in the community. This could facilitate young farmers to take over main operation. The difference of groups could reflect farmers' age, and the groups were the group of landowners, the group to do main operation, and the

group to do minor maintenance work. Main operation could involve more young people; on the other hand, landowners and workers in minor tasks could be more elderly.

While the greatest advantage of Cooperative Farming could be the separation between landownership and cultivation of community's farmland, it might not secure the income of major operators (Tashiro 2006). According to Tashiro, as long as Cooperative Farming tried to do contract work and rent land for cultivation, it would not provide major operators with enough income to be full-time farmers. Thus, the government's assumption was wrong as long as it assumed that Cooperative Farming would be profitable doing contract work and renting farmland. Cooperative Farming could easily do contract work and rent land for cultivation within its community; however, owing to high rent, Cooperative Farming would not provide enough income for major operators to sustain their lives only by agriculture.

c. Cooperative Farming in more than one community

Farm size did not determine the quality of management (Walker 2004). This caused questions about the size of Cooperative Farming required to incorporate. A Central JA staff questioned the possibility of enlarging the size. The consolidation of farms had been hard in Japan (McDonald 1997). Moreover, MAFF could not decide the size of Cooperative Farming for incorporation (MAFF staff2 2009). A MAFF staff added that a prefecture could perhaps indicate the size. According to Tashiro (2003), although the size was below twenty hectares, some cooperative farming in hilly and mountainous areas incorporated (p. 162). Tashiro claimed that these were very developed cooperative farming.

To enlarge Cooperative Farming, Tashiro (2003; 2006) and Central JA staff (2009) mentioned the consolidation of several Cooperative Farming. Tashiro (2006) explained that developing Cooperative Farming in more than one community became typical (p. 248). It became hard when neighboring communities existed beyond a hill (Tashiro 2003, p. 162). Moreover, Tashiro (2006) argued that this was not just economical and quantitative (p. 248). We should not just count the number of communities belonging to the same Cooperative Farming. Instead, Tashiro claimed that the emphasis on historical communities was important. Historical communities included the premodern village in the Edo period and the village demarcated in the Meiji period (Tashiro, p. 247). At the same time, historical development of the region could be the reason to consolidate Cooperative Farming. A Central JA staff claimed that villages might not want to consolidate farming if they belonged to different premodern lords.

d. Keeping the profit

As Cooperative Farming tried to incorporate, it had to be profitable. A JA staff in Nagano Prefecture understood that Cooperative Farming provided agricultural service for community members and worked like a small cooperative (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007, p. 31). JAs had to provide the guidance for Cooperative Farming to be profitable. While the JA staff acknowledged that it was hard, Cooperative Farming must find the ways to reduce cost and sell products with high prices. A MAFF staff² (2009) argued that Cooperative Farming should keep the profit for development from the beginning. For this purpose, Cooperative Farming should not distribute the cost and sale at the end of year but gain the trust to keep the profit (Shogenji 2006, p. 35). A MAFF staff² explained that it was hard, but a corporation must be profitable because of the tax system.

e. The rationalization of agricultural machines

The rationalization of agricultural machines was a typical objective of Cooperative Farming for decades (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). This was still a typical step for profitable Cooperative Farming. Because this demanded individual farmers to abandon or sell their machines, it sometimes became the hardest obstacle to establishing Cooperative Farming.

f. New crops

A Central JA staff explained that new crops were a key to increase the revenue of Cooperative Farming. This could increase the work, and more people could work for Cooperative Farming. On the contrary, if Cooperative Farming did not find enough people, it could not introduce a new crop.

g. Conscious marketing

In addition to the introduction of new crops, Cooperative Farming could emphasize processing and marketing of crops in order to enhance itself as management (Shogenji 2006). As management, MAFF staff² mentioned, Cooperative Farming could establish some strategies from production to sale. Kusumoto explained that Cooperative Farming could process crops and sell value-added products; furthermore, it could add “home delivery, a vegetable stand, an antenna shop, a rural restaurant” and directly transact with consumers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006, p. 27). According to Kusumoto, with these features, Cooperative Farming would hire many community people including the elderly and make them essential in the community.

Managing Cooperative Farming with conscious marketing and strategy was considered to be important. At the same time, this was not feasible for all Cooperative

Farming. MAFF staff² explained, “(Japanese agriculture) was the world without sale and strategy. I think that there are various chances. How early to grab the chance matters. This also applies to Cooperative Farming.” Also, saying, “There will surely be winners and losers,” he admitted that all Cooperative Farming could not succeed with marketing and strategy. He could probably claim that conscious marketing and strategy in Cooperative Farming would be pursued while the difference between winners and losers was observed.

h. Leaders’ age

The leaders’ age would be important to decide strategy of Cooperative Farming. According to Central JA staff (2009), the younger, the more profitable operation would be pursued. He said that management strategy is different between Cooperative Farming led by retired workers returning to agriculture and the one led by people in their 30s and 40s. The former tried to keep agriculture forever; the latter tried to pursue more profitable operation.

5.5.6. Cooperative Farming beyond Agricultural Development

a. Interests differing from policy

Kusumoto (2006) and Tashiro (2006) expected Cooperative Farming to sustain a rural community and its environment. Tashiro related the history of Japanese rural communities and the background of current Cooperative Farming. Tashiro claimed that the direction of agricultural policies did not match the background of current yearning for Cooperative Farming. The Multi-Product Plan reduced Cooperative Farming to a step to corporate agriculture, i.e. an efficient and stable agricultural management. On the

contrary, Tashiro explained that enhancing agricultural management was a secondary objective for cooperative farming. Cooperative farming should truly protect agriculture of verdant rice paddy fields and people's lives in a rural village. Scott (1999) might have said that the Japanese state tried to design agriculture, agrarian structure, and rural communities in Japan. At least, this seemed the difference of interests between rural communities and the Japanese state. The state would articulate this difference and add a new policy. According to Tashiro (2006), a Japanese rural village was historically a geographical unit of rice farming. MAFF staff1 explained that the lives in villages included rice farming. A rural village emphasized mutual help in the celebrations and crises in daily lives such as child upbringing and diseases. In terms of agriculture, a village was an organization to manage common resources and waterways in order to protect agriculture and other livelihood (Tashiro 2006). MAFF staff1 told me that villages historically fought against each other at the time of water shortage.

Although Japanese agriculture modernized, villages were often the base to decide agriculture there. They established an organization to share agricultural machinery (McDonald 1997). This increased the efficiency of agriculture in a village. As well, the community had been the base to follow agricultural policies. Farmers in a community had shared the target of production reduction (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999).

Tashiro (2006) expected that cooperative farming would sustain rice farming as a core farmer. Japanese agriculture faced the problem of aging farmers. Individual farmers could not enlarge enough to sustain agriculture. According to Tashiro, cooperative farming was expected to sustain agriculture of verdant rice paddy fields and keep people in a community. This was a way to involve all people related to a village and to keep rice

farming. Tashiro claimed that people would lose “the condition to live in a village” once paddy fields were abandoned in the middle of community (p. 34). Rural communities conserved their life with rice farming.

In addition, Tashiro (2006) thought that contemporary Cooperative Farming was a result of globalization. He said that globalization did not increase the competitiveness of Japanese agriculture. This led to Tashiro’s claim that Cooperative Farming would be a core farmer in a community. He explained that large farmers could not steadfastly increase while agricultural market was liberalized to import cheap agricultural products from the 1980s. This caused a rural community to involve as many people as possible in order to form Cooperative Farming and keep the community’s agriculture.

Tashiro (2006) explained that the geographical extent of cooperative farming could be various. While cooperative farming could be based on an organization for rice farming, this could range over a village in various historical periods such as the Edo and the Meiji periods. This generality of geographical extent could be attributed to Tashiro’s definition of rural community. Tashiro described, “‘A village’ requires a farm household to call for all others in order to conduct an organizational attempt; it at least requires some agreement among all households” (p. 246). At the same time, “This does not necessarily require a stronger relationship.” While the tie in a village is not strong, villagers respect this even to today.

Thus, according to Tashiro (2006), while cooperative farming has a various geographical extent, this attempted to involve as many people in the community as possible in order to sustain rice farming. This did not necessary mean that Cooperative Farming should incorporate for this purpose while the Multi-Product Plan and other

agricultural policies tried incorporation. This was why Tashiro claimed that the policies would reduce various cooperative farming to “management” (p. 16).

b. Involving various people

Cooperation in a rural community could lead to development of a whole community while the Multi-Product Plan tried to develop Cooperative Farming as a core farmer and a corporation (Tashiro 2003). According to Kusumoto (2006), it would not be favorable to entrust community’s agriculture to a few efficient farmers and to marginalize the rest. Tashiro claimed that selective and restructuring agricultural policies including the Multi-Product Plan would contradict the development of a whole community. The policies could accelerate population decline and destroy the society of rural community (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Furthermore, according to Tashiro (2006), as long as the Multi-Product Plan cornered a community to be a core farmer with subsidies, the plan would be part of pork-barrel politics; continue the dependence of farmers on the government; dissolve and distort the local idea for agricultural development. Cooperative Farming for the Multi-Product Plan would be “typical cooperation biased toward agricultural policies” (Tashiro 2006, p. 16). As the Multi-Product Plan was involved, local people could not keep the pace and ideas to develop Cooperative Farming.

To develop Cooperative Farming, Central JA staff (2009) and Kusumoto (2006) recommended that it should involve various types of people in a community. Central JA staff suggested that Cooperative Farming could involve all owners of farmland. They could include both members and non-members of Cooperative Farming and non-farmers having farmland. Kusumoto (2006) said that it was important to involve ordinary people of various professions and ages. To involve various people, Kusumoto suggested that

Cooperative Farming could add food processing, shops, and restaurants (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). To employ village elders, Cooperative Farming could end up hiring village elders with little profit (Central JA staff). Cooperative Farming could pay appropriate wages if it worked very well and broke even. Central JA staff said, “While Cooperative Farming breaks even, wages and the sale of goods would be likely to enrich a village.” He liked this type of Cooperative Farming as it increased the vitality of community. Some Cooperative Farming could hire elders. Villagers could hold trips and festivals. These expenses enriched a village. Kusumoto said that the involvement of various people could give “a purpose and thrill in life” (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006, p. 27). This led to the argument that cooperative farming was “the problem of people’s mind” (Tashiro 2006, p. 16). To succeed in Cooperative Farming, leaders should care about people’s mind. At the same time, when leaders did not comprehend this sensitive local mental arrangement, Cooperative Farming would not even get established.

c. Protecting the rural environment

Kusumoto expected that Cooperative Farming would play a major role to protect both rice farming and the rural environment (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). As mentioned above, Tashiro (2006) expected that cooperative farming attempted to sustain rice farming and “the condition to live in a village” (p. 34). Because a Japanese village had been a village for rice farming, the life in a village would be different without farming, well-maintained irrigation, and other farming infrastructure. Thus, cooperative farming was the attempt to protect these village characteristics. Furthermore, Kusumoto claimed that agriculture could be regarded as the protection and management of commons (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006, p. 26). Because agriculture involved a rural society and its

physical environment such as hydrology and ecology, it worked to protect both elements in the rural environment. In this sense, Cooperative Farming as a community attempt would possibly continue this nature of agriculture and contribute to the protection of environment.

d. Revitalizing the village lives

Cooperative Farming might not only sustain agriculture and the rural environment but also revitalize the lives in a village. A Central JA staff explained that this was beyond agricultural production. Cooperative Farming could hold other events like a festival to gather villagers. It could also give a time for people from urban areas and children in the village to experience rice planting. Some Cooperative Farming did not plainly distribute the income among members. As well as a festival and event, they held a trip to somewhere else. The payment for these could contribute to the village economy. Thus, Cooperative Farming could leave a positive impact in village life while it could leave a grudge especially when it failed or caused trouble about income.

e. A potential policy for Cooperative Farming to sustain the rural environment

MAFF staff² understood the discussion about the necessity to incorporate Cooperative Farming. MAFF could develop a policy to support Cooperative Farming sustaining agriculture in a community. Many cooperative farming organizations would not be so profitable, but would contribute to the sustenance of community's agriculture and conduct countermeasures against farmland abandonment. MAFF could develop a policy for this purpose. Furthermore, MAFF staff² admitted that it might be better to devise a policy for the multi-functionality of Cooperative Farming. For MAFF, to accept

Cooperative Farming for sustaining agriculture in a community meant that it would somehow provide a new policy support. It needed to define Cooperative Farming again.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter introduced the policy background of the Multi-Product Plan and the implementation and views of the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming at a national scale. MAFF tried to expedite restructuring Japanese agriculture with the Multi-Product Plan including Cooperative Farming. The Multi-Product Plan was preceded by major policy changes from the New Policy in 1992. Since then, the Japanese government tried to replace the support of the rice price with that for the income of selected farmers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006; Yokoyama 2008; Zenkoku Nōgyō Shimbun 2003). As the government retreated from the intervention in the rice price, these policies could be considered as neoliberal to adapt the WTO regime and advance a market rule in agriculture. To accommodate the WTO's stricter rule, the Multi-Product Plan was supposed to restructure farm structure and to accomplish industrial agriculture while focusing government support on core farmers (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Cooperative Farming became qualified for the plan as long as it had a certain size and a plan to incorporate (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). As a result, while Cooperative Farming increased, its intention and organization tended to be different from the plan's intention.

After MAFF decided the detail of the Multi-Product Plan, it regarded the plan as transformational and revolutionary.²⁰ It conducted massive information exchange with

²⁰ Tōhoku Nōsē Kyoku (Tōhoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office). E-mail message to author, March 27, 2008.

related agents. By this activity, MAFF tried to convey the “importance and necessity” of the plan.²¹ When the LDP was defeated by the DPJ in the Upper House election in July 2007, the government relaxed the standards for applicants of the Multi-Product Plan. Central JA was involved in organizing and supporting Cooperative Farming as it demanded that the government allow Cooperative Farming to join the Multi-Product Plan. It continued to gather feedback from the prefectural level and ask MAFF for improvement (Central JA staff 2009). In addition, MAFF ordered the establishment of the National Conference of Comprehensive Support to Nourish Core Farmers in order to increase core farmers as the target of the Multi-Product Plan and to improve the managements of core farmers and Cooperative Farming (Kei’eikyoku 2008). The conference included a number of related agents and organizations such as the National Chamber of Agriculture and Central JA. It could conduct the policies to organize and develop Cooperative Farming.

MAFF expected that the Multi-Product Plan would expedite restructuring Japanese agriculture. Because the plan assumed the price decline of rice, this was the way to react to the trade liberalization of rice (Shogenji 2006). Because the plan concentrated its support on core farmers, it could avoid being the policy for pork barrel spending (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). When the Multi-Product Pan was devised, it concerned agricultural economists such as Isoda, Takatake, and Murata (2006) and Kotaki (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Because of agricultural structure, the plan could not attract enough applicants to be successful. Before the plan, eligible farmers cultivated only

²¹ Tōhoku Nōsē Kyoku (Tōhoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office). E-mail message to author, March 27, 2008.

twenty percent of rice paddies in prefectures except Hokkaido (Tashiro 2006). It also seemed hard for Cooperative Farming to follow the plan's standards.

MAFF promoted the Multi-Product Plan as “the great transformation of postwar agricultural policies.”²² The implementation of the plan for the first year was regarded as success.²³ The number of plan's participants was more than MAFF expected because core farmers and Cooperative Farming rapidly increased (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007; Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2007). This success should be attributed to the strong leadership of MAFF and the active information exchange with related agents (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). Although the Multi-Product Plan gathered enough participants, it was not very popular. It became the reason for LDP's defeat in the Diet's Upper House election in July 2007 (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007). After the LDP was defeated in the Lower House election in August 2009, the Multi-Product Plan ceased to be a major agricultural policy to support farmers' income (Mainichi jp 2010).

Cooperative Farming within the Multi-Product Plan was controversial because of the plan's selective nature. Agricultural economists such as Tashiro (2003) criticized the promotion of Cooperative Farming for the plan because it selected farmers for consolidating farms in a community. The local authorities must have felt the same criticism while they promoted the plan and Cooperative Farming. Local governments and JAs promoted Cooperative Farming because they could support many small farmers (Kusumoto 2006). To promote the plan and Cooperative Farming, MAFF showed strong leadership from national to local levels (Hattori 2010; Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Although the plan tried to develop Cooperative Farming to be a stable core farmer,

²² Tōhoku Nōsē Kyoku (Tōhoku Regional Agricultural Administration Office). E-mail message to author, March 27, 2008.

²³ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

Cooperative Farming could be more varied than the plan's intention (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007; Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). The plan could provide other pork-barrel money (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). Many were able to join the plan just to receive the subsidies. At the same time, money could be well spent in developing Cooperative Farming beyond the policy's intention (Kusumoto 2006). JAs also played an important role to promote Cooperative Farming in the plan. They supported establishing and developing Cooperative Farming. In addition, other related organization like prefectural extension services participated in the promotion of Cooperative Farming.

The Multi-Product Plan tried to increase Cooperative Farming and promote its incorporation (Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai 2008a). On the contrary, according to Kusumoto (2006) and Tashiro (2006), cooperative farming primarily tried to sustain each community's agriculture and keep "the condition to live in a village" (Tashiro 2006, p. 34). If the policies ignored various ideas for cooperative farming, the Multi-Product Plan would just increase farmers' and communities' dependence on the government. Local ideas for agricultural development would likely be underestimated (Tashiro 2006). Because this could underestimate the idea for developing a community as a whole, fewer farmers and corporations would take over Japanese agriculture (George-Mulgan 1993). This could further erode the conditions to live in a village.

The next chapter will survey the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming at the prefectural level in the Tōhoku region. MAFF's prefectural offices, prefectural governments and JAs at the prefectural level, and other agents like the prefectural agricultural committee were engaged in the promotion of the plan and

Cooperative Farming. The chapter will also describe opinions and views of these attempts.

Chapter 6: The Promotion of the Multi-Product Plan in Tōhoku Prefectures

6.1. Introduction

This chapter tries to show the impact of the Multi-Product Plan at the meso-scale of the region. Can selective state incentives encourage restructuring? While the types of region's agriculture and community explained the effectiveness of the policy, the sense of crisis in globalizing agriculture and rural decline drove restructuring under the policy. Here in the region, we see the state heavily involved in efforts to enlarge scale, develop market-oriented production, and inculcate profit-orientation into producer groups. Rice farming is a dominant characteristic of agriculture in the Tōhoku region while diversified agriculture is increasing its importance (Karan 2005). Generally, rather large part-time farmers continue rice farming (Table 7). This characteristic stands out compared with the regions in western Japan such as the Kinki and Chūgoku regions. Dependence on rice in agricultural production is higher in the region compared with the national average, with rice accounting for 35% of farm income. While the farm size is larger than other regions except Hokkaidō, part-time farmers continued to be dominant in the region. The Tōhoku region had both large farmers and Cooperative Farming bodies as candidates to join the Multi-Product Plan. Tōhoku's participation in the Multi-Product Plan was generally high. In 2008, 22,178 designated farmers and 1,690 Cooperative Farming groups joined the Multi-Product Plan (Miyagi Prefectural Government 2009). The Multi-Product Plan covered 37.1% of fields growing staple rice in the Tōhoku region (The Team Leader to Promote the Management and Income Stabilization Plan for Rice Paddies, the Headquarter to Promote the Management and Income Stabilization Plan and So On (MAFF Team Leader) 2008, p. 4). Tōhoku's dependency on rice explains the high

Table 7. Japan's Rice Dependency and Farm Structure

		Japan	Tōhoku	Kantō	Hokuriku	Tōkai	Kinki	Chūgoku	Shikoku	Kyūshū	Okinawa	
Rice dependency on production (%)	Year	2007	21	35	18	61	15	27	30	14	21	1
Average farm size (ha)	Year	2007	2.5	2.2	2.1	2.1	1.6	1.5	1.5	1.4	2.1	2.6
Part-time farm households (%)	Year	1985	85	90.5	84.9	94.8	87.3	89.1	86.8	80.9	76.5	73.3
		2005	77.4	84.8	78.6	87.8	80.2	80.5	76.4	69.6	66.9	54.4
Difference between 1985-2005			-7.6	-5.7	-6.3	-7	-7.1	-8.6	-10.4	-11.3	-9.6	-18.9

Sources: MAFF 2008a; 2010; 2011a; 2013.

Notes: a. National averages include the numbers in Hokkaidō and Okinawa

b. Rice dependency is against agricultural production.

participation in the Multi-Product Plan as the plan was going to be the only policy to supplement the income loss from rice production (Takizawa et al. 2003). While Cooperative Farming dramatically increased in the region, its further development was in question. The sections in this chapter show my findings from mid-level interviews across the Tōhoku Prefectures. I was concerned about the features of each prefecture in the region and the role of prefectural officials in introducing the market-oriented innovations called for by this policy change. While I interviewed one person in two positions owing to his transfer, I interviewed 28 staffs of agents and organizations at Tōhoku and prefectural levels and summarized my interviews in these sections.

This chapter describes the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan and community by agents at a prefectural level in the Tōhoku region of Japan. First, the chapter shows variations in the general reactions toward the Multi-Product Plan in each of the six prefectures. This section shows the number of Cooperative Farming as well as the coverage of farmland under the plan. Also, this section explains the differing characteristics of Cooperative Farming in each prefecture. The next section, Section 6.3,

describes the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming by agents at the prefectural level. Once the central government decided the plan, all related agents participated in public relations for the plan, and most agents at the prefectural level supported the establishment of Cooperative Farming. The last section describes how staff of prefecture-level agents viewed the promotion of the plan and establishment and development of Cooperative Farming. This section mainly discusses factors that would advance or slow the establishment and development of Cooperative Farming.

The Tōhoku region of Japan is in the northernmost part of the Japan's main island, Honshu. Tōhoku has six prefectures: Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, and Fukushima Prefectures (Figures 4 to 9). The size of the region is 66,880 square km. Its size is a little larger than Sri Lanka 64,651 sq km) or West Virginia (62,758 sq km). The region's population was 9,335,000 in 2010; down from 9,752,000 in 1991. The region's gross domestic product (GDP) was 31.365 trillion yen while Japan's GDP was 483.216 trillion yen in 2010. In dollar terms, US\$28,120 was the region's GDP per capita.

Karan (2005) explained that rice farming was a dominant characteristic of agriculture in the Tōhoku region while diversified agriculture was increasing its importance. The population in farm households decreased from 2,546,820 in 1991 to 1,611,000 in 2006 (MAFF 2008a). The population over age sixty-five years increased from 27.4% to 31.0 %. Agricultural income of the region was 138.710 billion yen in 2006. Income from rice was 37%, livestock 28%, vegetables 17%, and fruit 13%. Thus, as this chapter explores the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan and development of Cooperative Farming in Japan's major rice production region, I analyze my interviews

with related agent staff to show the progress and limitations of policy promotion to make Japanese rice farming larger and more efficient.

6.2. The Reactions to the Multi-Product Plan in the Tōhoku Region and its Prefectures

6.2.1. Tōhoku

In 2008, 22,178 designated farmers and 1,690 Cooperative Farming joined the Multi-Product Plan (Miyagi Prefectural Government 2009). The Multi-Product Plan was applied to 37.1% of the fields growing staple rice in the Tōhoku region (MAFF Team Leader 2008). Yamagata Prefecture had 54.4%, the largest coverage of rice, while Fukushima at 13.6% had the least. Iwate, Akita, and Yamagata Prefectures were above 40%. These were above the national average, 29.6%. Also, the plan covered most soybean and wheat production in the Tōhoku region: 89.5% of soybean and 94.9% of wheat were covered.

Some numbers explained the high level of Tōhoku region's participation in the Multi-Product Plan. Table 8 explains the variables to explain the participation in the Multi-Product Plan. In the area of rice production under the plan, Akita, Yamagata, and Miyagi Prefectures were respectively the third, fourth, and fifth largest in the nation (Miyagi Prefectural Government 2009). In soybean production, Miyagi and Akita Prefectures were respectively the second and third in the nation. Akita and Miyagi Prefectures respectively had the first and third largest numbers of Cooperative Farming pools under the Multi-Product Plan.

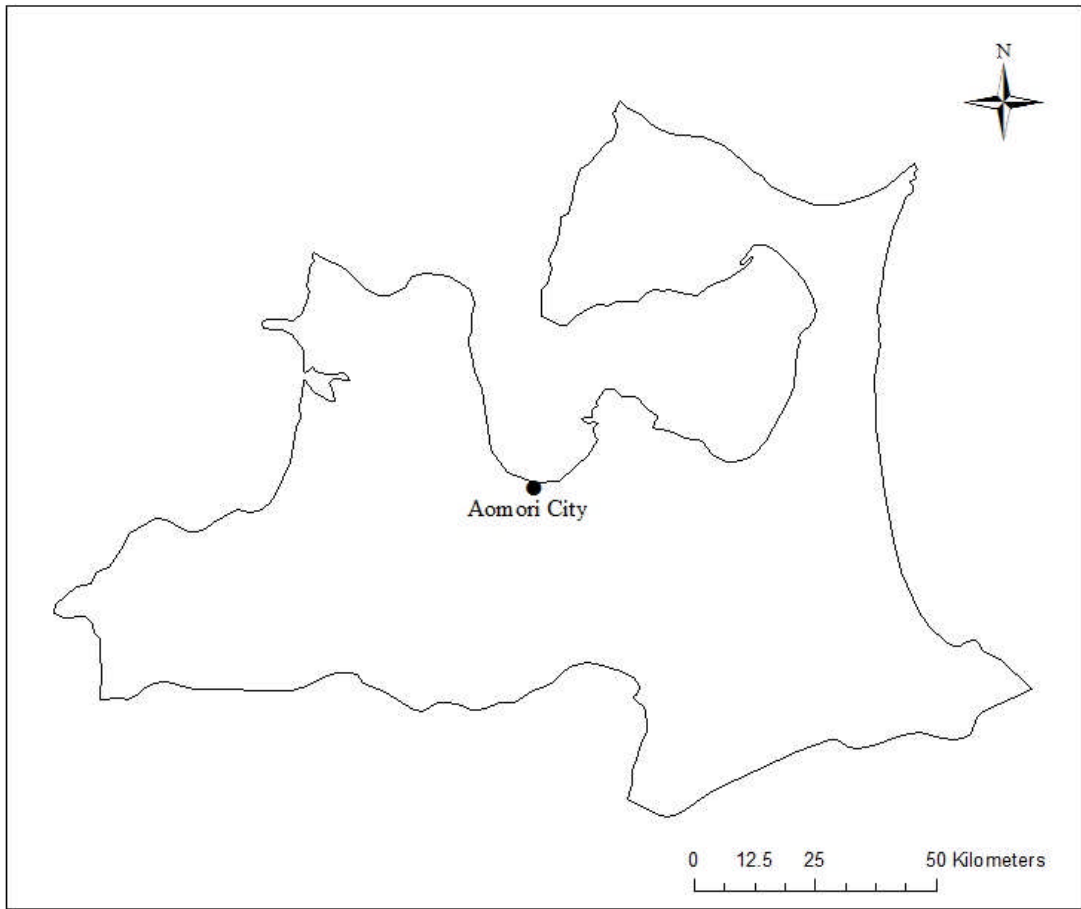


Figure 4. Aomori Prefecture.
Source: Natural Earth.

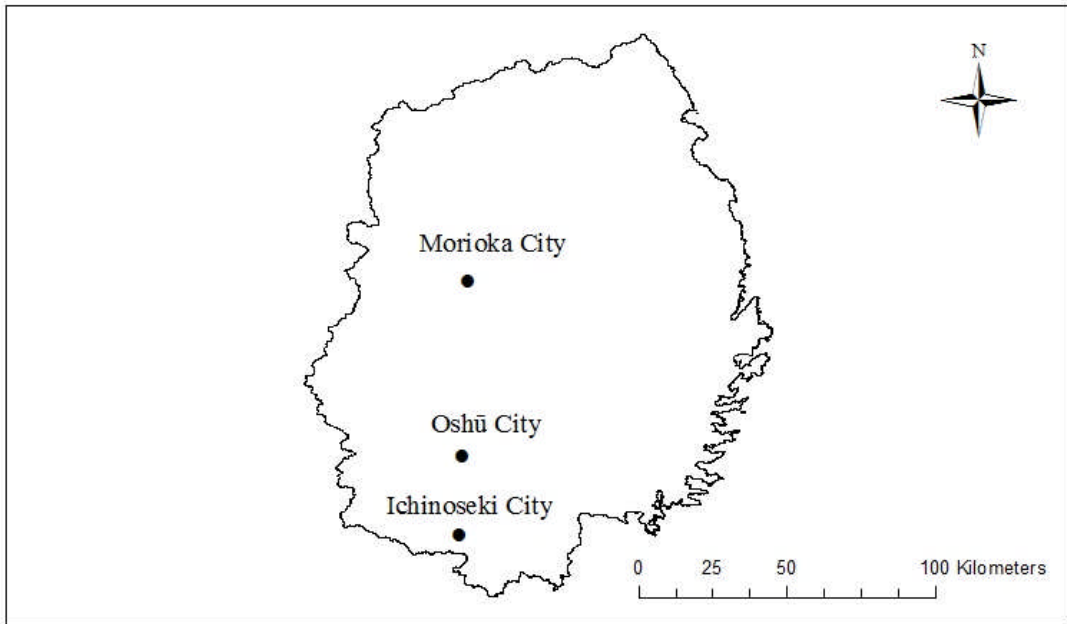


Figure 5. Iwate Prefecture.

Source: National Land Information Division, National and Regional Policy Bureau 2011.

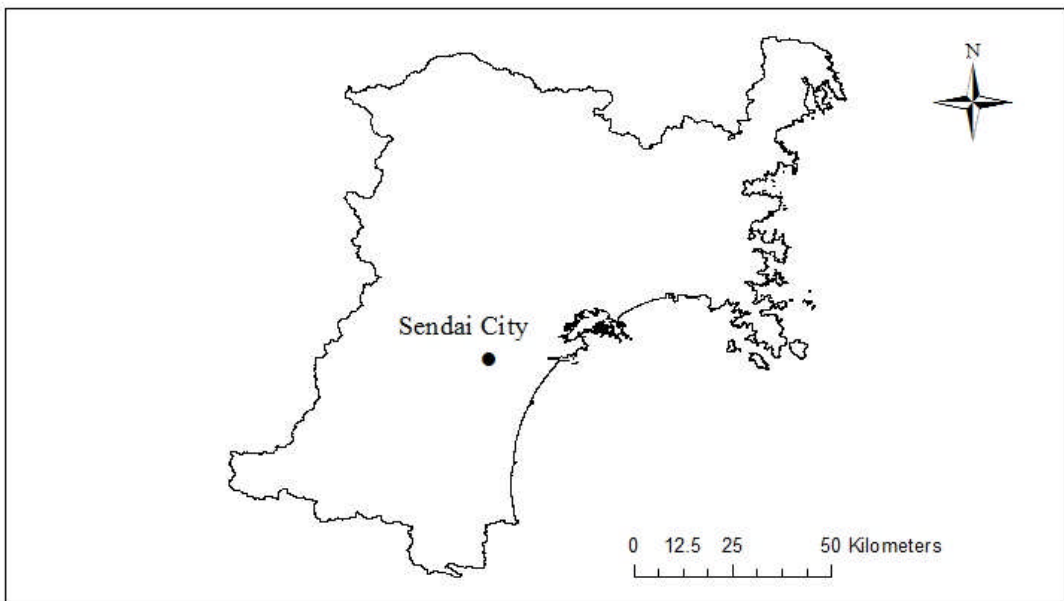


Figure 6. Miyagi Prefecture.

Source: National Land Information Division, National and Regional Policy Bureau 2011.

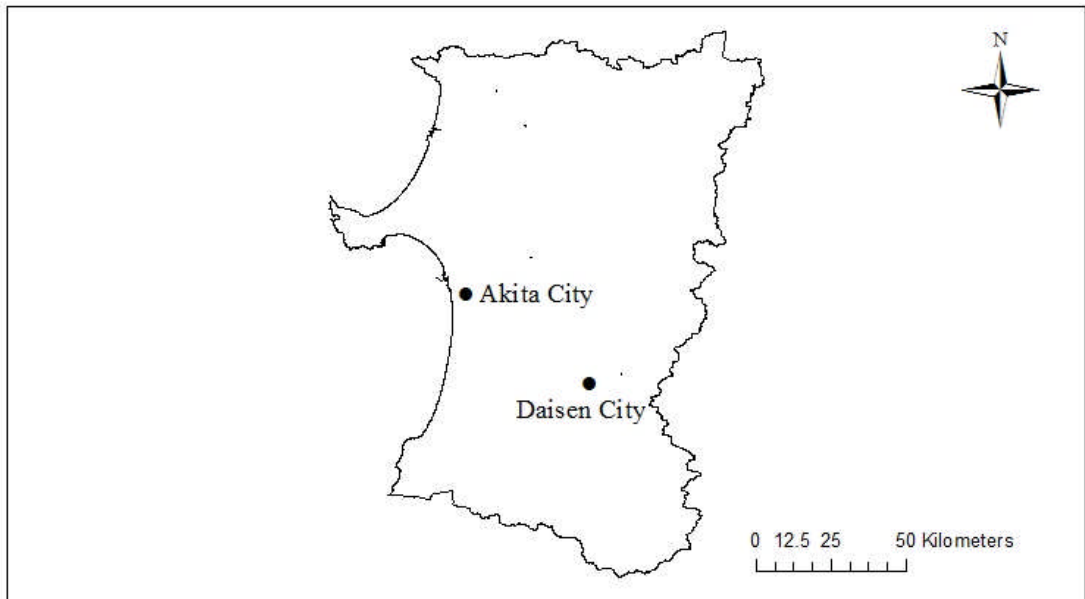


Figure 7. Akita Prefecture.

Source: National Land Information Division, National and Regional Policy Bureau 2011.

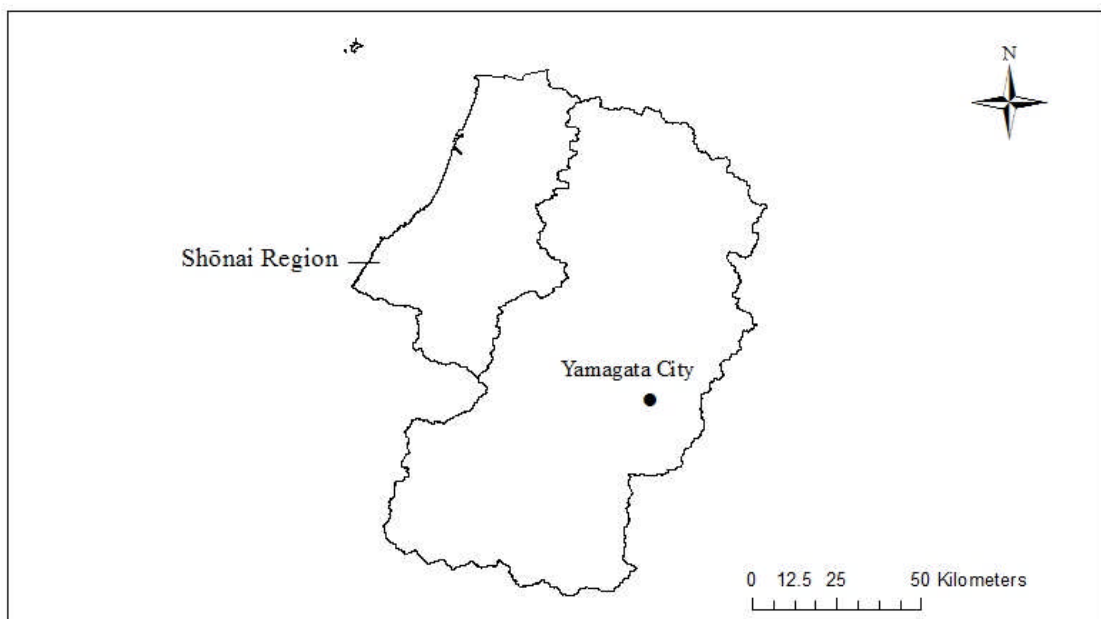


Figure 8. Yamagata Prefecture.

Source: National Land Information Division, National and Regional Policy Bureau 2011.

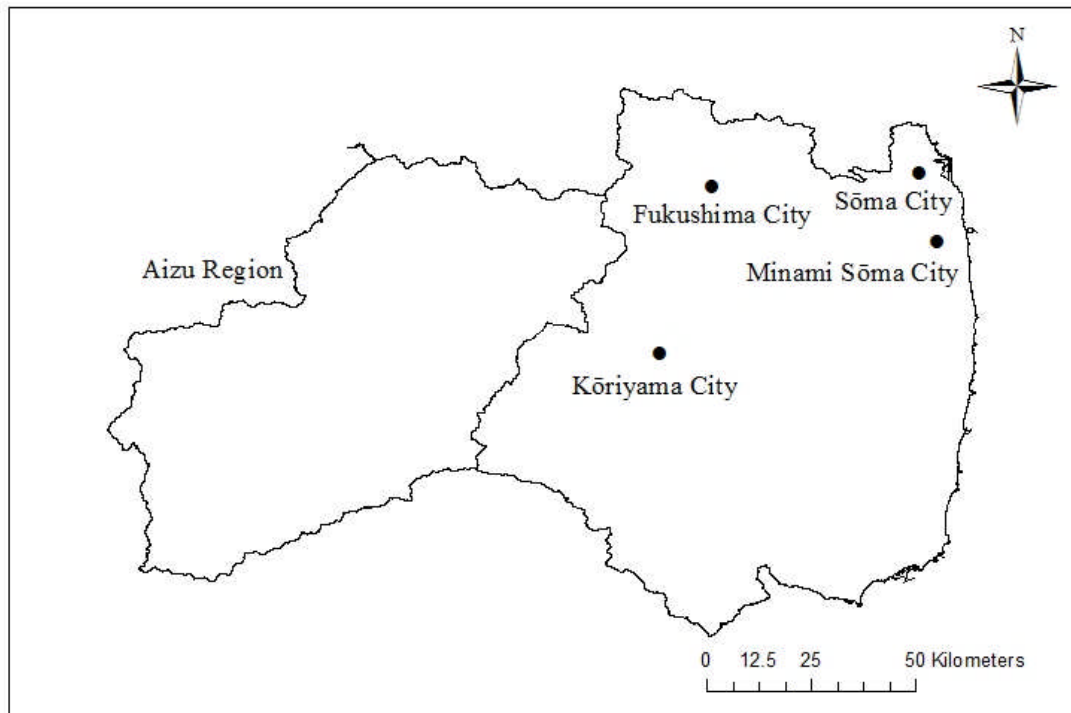


Figure 9. Fukushima Prefecture.

Source: National Land Information Division, National and Regional Policy Bureau 2011.

Therefore, Tōhoku’s participation in the Multi-Product Plan was generally high. According to Tōhoku MAFF Staff (2008), the higher number in some prefectures was due to high rice production and efforts of related agents. On the other hand, he also said that the degree of improved management in Cooperative Farming was low. In 2008, Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan just started.

6.2.2. Aomori Prefecture

In 2008, the Multi-Product Plan was applied to 31.3% of fields growing staple rice in Aomori Prefecture (MAFF Team Leader 2008). The prefecture had 127 Cooperative Farming bodies including 16 incorporated Cooperative Farmings

Table 8. Variables in Participation in the Multi-Product Plan

Positive effect	JA guidance, areas with strong rice production, subsidy, land improvement project, past cooperative farming
Negative effect	areas with small farmers, urban areas, hilly and mountainous areas

(Conference of Comprehensive Support to Nourish Core Farmers in Aomori Prefecture 2009). Aomori Prefecture Staff1 (2009) explained that past subsidies would not be available in order to promote the Multi-Product Plan at first. The initial goal and intention were to keep Cooperative Farming subsidized.

Prefectural staff explained a shared goal among related agents (Aomori Prefecture Staff1 2009). The goal of Aomori Prefecture was to have 10,000 designated farmers and 130 Cooperative Farming. As 127 Cooperative Farming bodies were formed, the goal of Cooperative Farming was almost met. The prefectural staff was satisfied about this progress on the third year of five-year plan.

The prefectural MAFF staff discussed that there were three types of Cooperative Farming in Aomori Prefecture. Most Cooperative Farming started either as an organization to cultivate crops other than rice or an organization to conduct contract operations for the major activities of rice farming. The third type just consolidated rice farmers following the requirements of the Multi-Product Plan. The Multi-Product Plan subsidizes the production of soybean and wheat in rice fields. Aomori Prefectural Staff1 (2009) explained that soybean covers more than wheat for the plan there. Beside these, buckwheat and forage grass are planted.

Aomori Prefecture Staff1 (2009) reported that Cooperative Farming had mainly complemented individual farming in the prefecture in general. Because individual farming was not so large as to surpass the combination of community and individual

farming, farmers as community farming joined the Multi-Product Plan. At the same time, the prefectural staff explained that regions with large-scale individual farming did not have Cooperative Farming because many core farmers existed. These regions did not have an issue of farmland abandonment.

Also, according to Aomori Prefecture Staff1 (2009), other regions with small-scale farming had difficulty in forming Cooperative Farming. He claimed that some Cooperative Farming was necessary in these regions. He explained:

Even if a town and a community with small farming form Cooperative Farming, for example, the Cooperative Farming land pool will not reach 20 ha nor have favorable conditions for managing itself. These disable organizing. In the near future, these communities should have certain types of cooperative farming. These communities need Cooperative Farming organizing of the entire community, one with a wider sense. These have neither a past organization nor a base.

Regions with small-scale farming were regarded to develop and sustain its agriculture.

Cooperative Farming was a way.

6.2.3. Iwate Prefecture

In 2008, the Multi-Product Plan was applied to 41.8% of fields growing staple rice in Iwate Prefecture (MAFF Team Leader 2008). Iwate MAFF Staff (2009) mentioned that the Multi-Product Plan covered 100% of wheat production in the prefecture. The prefecture had 326 Cooperative Farming bodies in 2007 and 353 in 2008. These and designated farmers cultivated land under the Multi-Product Plan.

Even though many Cooperative Farming joined the Multi-Product Plan, Iwate Prefecture Staff (2009) claimed, “The promotion (of the Multi-Product Plan) does not deny individual management.” In the prefecture, Cooperative Farming and individual

farming conducted almost the same amount of rice production under the Multi-Product Plan. In 2008, individual farmers managed 10,377 ha of rice production for the Multi-Product Plan; Cooperative Farming conducted 10,798 ha (Iwate Prefectural Government 2008). The prefecture staff explained that Cooperative Farming was likely to form when community's agriculture was dominantly rice farming. This was the case in the city of Ichinoseki. On the other hand, Oshū City could not find so much Cooperative Farming for the Multi-Product Plan. Because livestock agriculture was a major agricultural type, farmers there had little incentive to form Cooperative Farming for the Multi-Product Plan.

6.2.4. Miyagi Prefecture

In 2008, the Multi-Product Plan was applied to 35.8% of fields growing staple rice in Miyagi Prefecture (MAFF Team Leader 2008). In 2008, 480 Cooperative Farming bodies joined the Multi-Product Plan. According to Miyagi Central JA Staff1 (2009), the number of Cooperative Farming pools qualified for the plan rapidly increased. Before the beginning of the plan, two Cooperative Farming bodies could qualify. In 2006, the number increased to 343.

In Miyagi Prefecture, both Miyagi Central JA Staff1 (2009) and Miyagi Prefecture Staff (2009) explained that Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan was based on organizations to cultivate crops besides rice. The prefecture staff explained that the Multi-Product Plan covered the second greatest area for soybean production after Hokkaidō. The JA staff explained that the organizations joined the Multi-Product Plan and produced soybean and wheat in order to keep subsidized. He added that some organizations included rice production. This type of organization increased the size of

operation and the number of member farmers. Thus, most organizations produced wheat or soybean. Fifteen percent of organizations produced only rice (Miyagi Prefectural Government 2007). Speaking of past organizations, Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff (2009) felt that the solidarity contributed to the high number of Cooperative Farming groups. He said, “While the policies have guided cooperative farming for many years, such community solidarity exists. Without it, many people cannot agree.” Past community attempts in farming contributed to community’s decision making.

In Miyagi Prefecture, the largest cohort of Cooperative Farming land pools by size was from twenty to forty ha (Miyagi Prefectural Government 2008). One hundred sixty nine (169) Cooperative Farming bodies under the Multi-Product Plan, or 36.7%, belonged to this cohort. At the same time, thirty nine Cooperative Farming, or 8.5% under the Multi-Product Plan, managed more than 100 ha. These were regarded as large Cooperative Farming. Miyagi Prefecture Staff (2009) evaluated that the largest cohort was probably the same as the national trend. Miyagi Central JA Staff1 (2009) explained that these cooperative farming had the same size as the nation’s most advanced cases. Large Cooperative Farming was regarded as a *gurumi* type in Miyagi Prefecture. In this type, farmers could manage their own farmland. Such large Cooperative Farming could not be observed in western Japan (Miyagi Prefecture Staff).

Communities in Miyagi Prefecture have core farmers and leader farmers to join the Multi-Product Plan (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). They were not so marginalized with few core farmers as to regard the formation of Cooperative Farming as an immediate issue to sustain community’s agriculture. They also followed the policy of production reduction. Miyagi Prefecture Staff said that the prefecture did not need so much change

to adopt the Multi-Product Plan; for example, many communities had the organizational base to join the plan. In other words, according to Miyagi Central JA Staff1 (2009), old boundaries and organizations were respected. Government and JA staffs could follow these to adopt the Multi-Product Plan. This caused the concern about developing Cooperative Farming. Miyagi Prefecture Staff said, “Many farmers relatively think that they can continue the same way like selling to an agricultural cooperative. As observed so far, because they first formed Cooperative Farming to get subsidized, they were in the situation to think about future.” Thus, farmers did not feel urgency to develop Cooperative Farming.

This lack of immediacy in Cooperative Farming could prevent further improvement of management in Cooperative Farming, as long as the government subsidizes Cooperative Farming. In Miyagi Prefecture, Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan started because member farmers could continue past agricultural practice. Cooperative Farming in the prefecture joined the Multi-Production Plan with an organizational experience to produce soybean and wheat on lands taken out of rice production. The formation did not require so much change (Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009; Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). According to Miyagi Prefecture Staff, as Cooperative Farming joined the Multi-Product Plan for the moment, the motivation for improving the management was low. This concerned Miyagi Central JA Staff1 and Miyagi Prefecture Staff claimed, “[I]t [would] not contribute to income increase without any action based on the characteristics of Cooperative Farming” while it kept subsidized. Dependence on soybean production would not provide a positive prospect. Cooperative

Farming would only decrease its income as the subsidies for soybean production decreased.

Secondly, many Cooperative Farming in Miyagi Prefecture produced rice with *edaban kanri*, management by member number (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). The Cooperative Farming body let individual producers put their rice into the pool and paid them exactly according to the amount of rice they contributed. Perhaps 80% of Miyagi's Cooperative Farming conducted this practice (Miyagi Prefecture Staff). To further develop this type of decentralized organization is a problem. Miyagi Prefecture Staff said, "It goes without saying that no change is good. As a direction, the merit (of unified organization) is going to be recognized." Incorporation would be difficult as is (Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009). Miyagi Central JA Staff1 (2009) explained that the rationalization of machines would reorganize labor in Cooperative Farming in order to improve management.

Many leaders of Cooperative Farming were part-time farmers (Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009). Many of leaders became older and older because many leaders were in their fifty's and sixty's (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). Part-time farmers were still important for developing Cooperative Farming. This caused the prefectural government to consider supporting part-time farmers (Miyagi Central JA Staff1).

6.2.5. Akita Prefecture

In 2008, the Multi-Product Plan covered about half of fields growing rice in Akita Prefecture, or 48.5% of the rice area (MAFF Team Leader 2008). In 2007, 541 Cooperative Farming joined the Multi-Product Plan; 575 did so in 2008 (Akita

Prefectural Government 2008a; 2008b). Sixty-nine were corporate while 506 were not. Among all prefectures, Akita had the largest number of cooperative farming bodies participating in the plan in 2007 (Akita Prefectural Government 2008b). According to Akita Prefecture Staff (2008), the increase was phenomenal. At first there was few cooperative farming qualified for the plan. In the same year, the third largest number of designated farmers, 5,298, participated in the plan in Akita Prefecture (Akita Prefectural Government 2008b). Akita Agricultural Committee Staff (2009) said, “The Multi-Product Plan was the best tool to increase the number (of core farmers). No one can participate in the plan without becoming a core farmer.” The Multi-Product Plan was effective in increasing core farmers.

According to Akita Prefectural Government, most cooperative farming in Akita Prefecture did not try to enhance the level of management (Akita Prefectural Government 2008b). They mainly attempted to maintain the current style of agriculture. They neither immediately increased the size of management nor introduced profitable crops.

Areas with large-scale individual farmers were less likely to have cooperative farming (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008). Also, he explained that many did not participate in the Multi-Product Plan in urban areas and their vicinity and hilly and mountainous areas. In urban areas, many part-time farmers spent their income from non-farm work in farming. In the region, part-time farming was still the way of farming. According to Akita Prefecture Staff, this continued until machines got broken down, a trend observed from the 1980s. Jussaume (1991) claimed that the income of nonfarm work and government subsidies could sustain part-time farming in Japan. Furthermore, farmers engaged in diversified agriculture were less likely to join the plan because the Multi-

Product Plan targeted rice and staple crops such as soybeans (Akita Prefecture Staff). Diversified agriculture was the key to increase economic efficiency at the time of rice price decline.

The initiative of JAs contributed to the number of cooperative farming bodies regardless of farming type (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008). Owing to the initiative of local JA, areas with diversified agriculture could increase cooperative farming. In addition, Akita Prefecture Staff explained that the collaboration among agents worked either way to increase the number of Cooperative Farming. Some smoothly collaborated to have many Cooperative Farming and corporate agriculture. Some did not. When local JAs and governments were consolidated in the past two decades, they transferred staff to other areas in new jurisdictions. This transfer of long-term local staff could slow the promotion of Cooperative Farming.

A special measure increased the participants in the Multi-Product Plan (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008). According to the prefectural staff, 1,200 participants used the special measure. By the special measure, with municipalities' acceptance, farmers could join the Multi-Product Plan regardless of their farm size (Hattori 2010). This "tokunin" measure was a national revision. Akita MAFF Staff¹ agreed that this contributed to the increase of participants in the plan in 2008 in addition to the income supplementation for rice production.

One difficulty to promote and maintain Cooperative Farming was consolidated bookkeeping (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008). While the management by member number was devised to ease the level of consolidated management and bookkeeping, each explanation had to be repeated to make it understood by all farmers. Another rule relaxed

for Cooperative Farming was incorporation in five years (Akita Prefecture Staff). This was not forced any more. The initial political and economic intention of the Multi Product Plan, to subsidize only larger and centrally managed land pools, weakened in practice in the first years of the plan's implementation.

6.2.6. Yamagata Prefecture

Yamagata Prefecture Staff said that the level of Yamagata's participation in the Multi-Product Plan was high compared with the national level. In 2008, the Multi-Product Plan was applied to 54.4% of fields growing staple rice in Yamagata Prefecture (MAFF Team Leader 2008, p. 4). In addition, the plan was applied to 83.1% of soybean production and 94.7% of wheat production. In 2008, the number of participants was 5,565 (Yamagata Prefectural Government 2009b). Of those, 5,366 were designated farmers; 199 were Cooperative Farming. According to a staff at the Yamagata Center to Support Agriculture, most Cooperative Farming started at the prompting of the Multi-Product Plan (Yamagata Center Staff 2009).

While Yamagata Prefecture was divided into the four regions, the Shōnai region had 2,858 participants, almost half of the prefecture's participants in the plan (Yamagata Prefectural Government 2009a) (Figure 8). Yamagata Prefecture Staff (2009) said that the high production of soybean in the region affected the large number of participants.

Like other prefectures in the Tōhoku region, Yamagata Prefecture had different dominant agricultural types by region. This seemed to affect the number of Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan; however, according to Yamagata Prefecture Staff,

the initiative of JAs was rather strong. Each area in all the prefecture's regions could promote Cooperative Farming with JA's initiative.

6.2.7. Fukushima Prefecture

In 2008, the Multi-Product Plan was applied to 13.6% of field to grow staple rice in Fukushima Prefecture, and 99.7% of wheat production and 90.1% of soybean production joined the plan (Fukushima Central JA 2008; MAFF Team Leader 2008). In total, 2,216 designated farmers and 61 Cooperative Farming participated in the plan (Fukushima Central JA). The ratio of rice production and the number of designated farmers was low in the prefecture. The number of Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan was very low compared with other prefectures in the Tōhoku region (Fukushima Central JA Staff 2009). Also, according to a prefectural staff, cooperative farming in the prefecture was basically small and based on one agricultural community as most farming settlements ranged from ten to twenty hectares in size.

While cooperative farming under the Multi-Product Plan was low in the prefecture, 327 agricultural communities had an organization to improve agricultural land use (Fukushima Central JA 2008). These organizations were formed as Nōyōchi riyō kaizen dantai, an organization to improve agricultural land use, 農用地利用改善団体. This was the second largest number in the nation and the largest number in the Tōhoku region. The organization must consist of two thirds of landowners and tenants in an area such as an agricultural settlement or a village consolidated in the Meiji Period (Kyūshū Regional Agricultural Administration Office 2011). The Land Improvement District discussed agricultural land use and work to improve the efficiency of organization's

agriculture. Fukushima Prefecture Staff1 (2009) explained that the discussion would lead to managing consecutive tracts of farmland. A farmer could have previously managed unconnected tracts.

According to Fukushima Prefecture Staff1 (2009), there is not so much regional difference in cooperative farming. When a community had had enough discussion in each prefecture's region, it joined the Multi-Product Plan; however, the plan did not increase Cooperative Farming under the plan. Also, consolidated bookkeeping was one reason for current cooperative farming to avoid the plan (Fukushima MAFF Staff 2009; Fukushima Prefecture Staff1). Furthermore, current cooperative farming did not want to develop toward the Multi-Product Plan but had a different objective of development such as diversified agriculture (Fukushima Prefecture Staff1). Fukushima MAFF Staff and Fukushima Prefecture Staff1 observed this tendency. Fukushima MAFF Staff said, "While it is better to join the Multi-Product Plan, the plan does not force a farmer. Participation in the plan depends on farmer's will." He also said, "This prefecture does not absolutely emphasize Cooperative Farming. (Cooperative Farming) is just based on individual opinions. It is fine to increase core farmers and the rate of food supply." In Fukushima Prefecture, the Multi-Product Plan did not match the local way of developing farming.

Production control could affect the participation in the Multi-Product Plan because it was a requirement of the plan. A high producer price for good rice enables farmers to avoid both production control and the Multi-Production Plan. High participation in production control led to high participation in the plan, and vice versa in Fukushima Prefecture (Fukushima Central JA Staff 2009; Fukushima Prefecture Staff1

2009). The areas around Aizu, Sōma, and Minami Sōma Cities had higher participation in product control than the area around Kōriyama (Figure 9). Because the latter area was known for tasty rice, many farmers could sell rice to private companies at a high price. This also lowered the interest in Cooperative Farming among farmers, JAs, and local governments and decreased the number compared with other Tōhoku prefectures.

6.3. The Promotion by Agents in the Tōhoku Region

6.3.1. Past Promotion of Cooperative Farming

For a few decades, a goal of Cooperative Farming has included sharing large agricultural machines (Akita Agricultural Committee Staff 2009). Sharing could surely lower the financial burden on individual farmers. Cooperative farming with this objective can be observed in most prefectures in Tōhoku (Fukushima Prefecture Staff1 2009). Also, the introduction of agricultural machines decreased labor demand for rice production (Akita Central JA Staff1 2009). In a more formal way, land readjustment led to the formation of an organization to improve agricultural land use, and it resulted in sharing agricultural machines (Akita Agricultural Committee Staff). In an organization to improve agricultural land use, farmers can decide which paddy fields in a community are assigned for ownership and lease (Fukushima Prefecture Staff1).

Diversified agriculture was the objective of cooperative farming. It was promoted there around 1975 (Akita Agricultural Committee Staff 2009; Akita Central JA Staff1 2009). Diversified agriculture could have decreased dependency on rice farming (Akita Central JA Staff1). Under direction from the prefectural government, a community gained machines for rice production. This would reduce labor demand for rice production,

and farmers could individually spend time in diversified agriculture.

An organization to improve agricultural land use was emphasized as cooperative farming when I interviewed Fukushima Central JA Staff (2009) and Fukushima Prefecture Staff1 (2009). They based cooperative farming on two-storied cooperative farming and regarded an organization to improve agricultural land use as the first floor (Fukushima Prefecture Staff1). The organization grouped farmland owners to decide land use and assign land and work to core farmers. To establish the organization, more than two thirds of farmland owners in a community are required to join it (Fukushima Prefecture Staff2 2009). They are also required to decide “how to use farmland in an efficient way, who will be the community’s core farmers, and how much farmland or work is assigned to each core farmer” (Fukushima Prefecture Staff2). As a result, the second floor consists of core farmers or an organization to conduct farm work in the community. To follow the decision from the first floor, their operation should be more efficient than before. The prefecture’s public corporation to promote agriculture facilitates the rationalization of farmland management in a community (Fukushima Central JA Staff). By law, the public corporation as a corporation to rationalize farmland ownership is allowed to borrow farmland plots, group the plots together, and lend the grouped ones to the community’s core farmers. The corporation is also allowed to buy and sell farmland for rationalization.

Rationalization of community’s agriculture has been a policy target. Different policies exist to decide core farmers and efficient farmland use (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009). These include the vision of rice paddy-field agriculture. The Iwate Prefectural Government started this about 2003. Also, the Miyagi Prefectural Government and JAs

started the promotion of cooperative farming in 1989 (Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009). Miyagi Central JA staff1 stated to me that cooperative farming was the only way to increase income. For this purpose, the discussion at a community level was promoted to rationalize labor and land use.

6.3.2. Goal for Recruitment into the Multi-Product Plan

Several agents in each prefecture set a goal of the number of participants to be recruited into the Multi-Product Plan. Most goal setting was not totally top-down. It reflected the data from prefectures' regions and municipalities as well as the goals of other policies and past attempts of cooperative farming. This contributed to making sure how many Cooperative Farming bodies could join the plan. At a prefecture level, the most ambitious way to set a goal was to have Cooperative Farming at all communities (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). To make the goal more real, agents at a prefecture level could collect the information from lower levels. This process let agents at lower levels have their own goals (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008; Miyagi Prefecture Staff). Miyagi Prefecture Staff explained that the prefecture took both approaches to set a goal.

The prefectural JA at first said that the goal was to make 600 cooperative farming organizations. This was because the JA said that all communities would be made Cooperative Farming. Later, (the prefectural government and other agents) took account of interview data and various situations, and then we could say that we would make 400. We attempted to make more than 400 in the prefecture (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009).

Agents at the prefectural level found a more realistic goal.

Also, past attempts of cooperative farming became the base of goals for Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan. Aomori Prefectural Government

considered that past cooperative farming would be changed to join the Multi-Product Plan. This let the prefecture decide the goal.

While the goal could be shared among related agents to promote the Multi-Product Plan, some agents hesitated to show me the numerical goal of its prefecture (Akita MAFF Staff1 2008; Aomori Prefecture Staff1 2009). This was because the aggressive promotion of the Multi-Product Plan might well be met with anger (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007).

6.3.3. Education about the Multi-Product Plan

Once the Multi-Product Plan was decided in 2005, the promotion tried to teach farmers about the plan. MAFF held explanation meetings at national, subnational, and prefectural levels (Akita MAFF Staff1 2008). At a prefectural level, staff from the MAFF headquarter in Tokyo and Tōhoku MAFF came to explain about the plan to staff of related offices such as prefectural and municipal governments and JAs. Prefectural MAFF staffs went to community centers and explained the plan (Fukushima MAFF Staff 2009). In 2008, prefectural MAFF staff could go to explain the plan when they were asked. The Multi-Product Plan should have been known to all farmers.

Secondly, explanation meetings at a municipal level were held. Information pamphlets were also spread (Akita MAFF Staff2 2008). In addition to a prefectural office of MAFF, municipal and prefectural governments and local and prefectural JAs cooperated to hold the meetings. Information meetings at the local level took place thoroughly. Akita Prefecture Staff (2008) said that most communities were involved in an information meeting at least once. For this purpose, the Akita Prefectural Government

assigned three staff in each local office for the first two years of promotion (Akita MAFF Staff1 2008). They tried to increase the participants in the plan. The prefectural government coordinated the promotion of local offices (Akita Prefecture Staff). Prefectural government staff went to a meeting at a local level in order to talk about some detail of the Multi-Product Plan such as the inheritance of land as a member of Cooperative Farming. While general explanation meetings targeted all farmers in communities, the Conference for Core Farmers at the local level held information meetings for core farmers (Akita MAFF Staff1).

To increase the number of participants in the Multi-Product Plan, staff of MAFF's prefectural offices and prefectures tried to increase core farmers (Akita MAFF Staff1 2008; Aomori MAFF Staff 2009). At the beginning of promotion, the Akita prefectural government asked if designated farmers planned to join the Multi-Product Plan (Akita MAFF Staff1). This became the base of promotion. Prefectural offices at a local level, JAs, local agricultural committees, and municipalities first identified core farmers. They cooperated to promote the Multi-Product Plan at a local level (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008). Akita Agricultural Committee Staff (2009) said that farmers were guided to manage more than four hectares, the size qualified for the Multi-Product Plan, and to be core farmers in order to participate in the plan.

To add Cooperative Farming, local staff of prefecture, JAs, and municipal governments told communities about the Multi-Product Plan (Akita MAFF Staff1 2008). They were also involved in discussion and process to form Cooperative Farming. Each community discussed to whether it would form Cooperative Farming; if not, designated farmers would play a major role of the plan at the community level (Miyagi Prefecture

Staff 2009). In the case of Akita Prefecture, the related agents, especially the prefectural JA and the Prefectural Conference for Core Farmers, told communities about stipulated rules and tax law for Cooperative Farming (Akita MAFF Staff1).

To add participants in the Multi-Product Plan, Yamagata Prefecture started the support project for a buckwheat (*soba*) production region (Yamagata Prefecture Staff 2009). The prefecture paid farmers for producing buckwheat. The farmers could also be paid for product's quality. The project could further the consolidation of farmland in a community. The project tried to consolidate farmland of Cooperative Farming with buckwheat production as it required Cooperative Farming to manage half of all farmland other than rice paddy fields.

6.3.4. The Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmers

The Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer is a national policy to develop core farmers including Cooperative Farming as well as help Cooperative Farming to start (MAFF n.d. a). The policy funded various trials for this purpose and was intertwined with the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan. The plan could fund the activities of core farmers and Cooperative Farming. This could tell them of rules and other support policies, provide services to improve the management, send professionals such as a marketing specialist and accountant for consulting, and help farmers to go to meetings for the improvement of management and visit advanced farmers. The policy appointed the conference for core farmers to conduct the trials under this policy.

6.3.5. Management Improvement

As the Multi-Product Plan had a Cooperative Farming target to incorporate in five years, related agents such as Tōhoku MAFF carried out policies to develop Cooperative Farming (Fukushima MAFF Staff 2009). Cooperative Farming might not only develop for itself. Aomori Prefecture Staff1 (2009) explained that Cooperative Farming could increase employment in a local area. It could play a more important role in local economic development than individual agricultural management. To promote incorporation, prefectural government and prefectural JAs conducted information meetings and a series of lectures in corporate accounting and laws involving incorporation (Aomori Prefecture Staff1; Miyagi Agricultural Committee staff 2009). Professional accountants were invited to teach accounting (Aomori Prefecture Staff1). Also, farmers got a subsidy from prefectural JAs and the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer and went to see some good cases of corporate Cooperative Farming (Fukushima Prefecture Staff1 2009; Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff). More subsidies could be provided for incorporation (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008).

To develop Cooperative Farming, prefectural governments and local JAs surveyed the management of Cooperative Farming (Fukushima Central JA Staff 2009; Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009). This was conducted as part of the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer (Fukushima MAFF Staff 2009). To conduct the survey, the Miyagi Prefectural Government sent staff of the local extension service to selected communities (Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff). JAs in Fukushima Prefecture tried to visit Cooperative Farming to analyze management (Fukushima Central

JA Staff). The creation of a management plan was also supported. Prefectures' local extension staff could help this activity (Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff).

Developing Cooperative Farming should involve the redistribution of labor as well as the decision about crops to grow. This required the agreement among members. Municipal governments and local JAs assisted this process (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). To assist the process, the Iwate Prefectural Government sent a designated specialist to a community while the agricultural committee of Akita Prefecture asked managers of corporate farms in the same area to assist Cooperative Farming in reaching the agreement (Akita Agricultural Committee Staff 2009; Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009).

Prefectural governments and prefecture's agricultural corporations became involved in farmland problems: increasing the size of Cooperative Farming and gathering farmland closely for each management body (Aomori Prefecture Staff1 2009; Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009). In Miyagi Prefecture, the agricultural corporation assisted some Cooperative Farming groups in solving this farmland problem (Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009).

New crops and products were also a policy target to develop Cooperative Farming. Cooperative Farming could get funds for experimental plots of new crops (Yamagata Prefecture Staff 2009). As well, the same fund was applied to make a sample of a new product and explore sales and branding (Fukushima MAFF Staff 2009; Yamagata Prefecture Staff). Popular new products included *tofu* and rice powder (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008). These were part of the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer (Fukushima MAFF Staff). In Miyagi Prefecture, the prefecture's local extension services were responsible for these attempts while the prefectural JA was also involved in Iwate

(Iwate MAFF Staff 2009; Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009). Soybean and wheat production was also promoted. Miyagi Prefecture subsidized farmers who could produce soybeans and wheat of good quality (Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff). Aomori Prefecture also tried to increase the production of these crops (Aomori MAFF Staff 2009). It also worked with selected farmers to increase the productivity of soybeans (Aomori Prefecture Staff1 2009).

6.3.6. Teaching Bookkeeping

The Multi-Product Plan required Cooperative Farming to keep accounts by consolidating the sale of all members of rice, soybeans, and wheat (MAFF 2011b). This demanded related agents to teach leaders of Cooperative Farming to teach bookkeeping. The guidance flowed from prefecture to local levels. The Yamagata Center to Support Agriculture asked a professional accountant to provide leaders of Cooperative Farming with twelve lectures on bookkeeping (Yamagata Center Staff 2009). In Iwate Prefecture, a professional accountant could be sent to communities by request (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009). In addition to the information meeting on bookkeeping to farmers, the prefectural JA in Miyagi Prefecture gave the lecture to staffs of local JAs (Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009). While the Yamagata Center to Support Agriculture could help individual Cooperative Farming to do bookkeeping, agents at a local level would help individual Cooperative Farming in bookkeeping (Akita Central JA Staff2 2009).

Akita's Central JA created software to allow Cooperative Farming to produce and sell products through *edaban kanri*, the management by member number (Akita Central JA Staff2 2009). Because Cooperative Farming did not do *edaban kanri* for all products,

not all types of Cooperative Farming could use the software as it was. This caused some local JA to make a more flexible spreadsheet for Cooperative Farming.

6.3.7. Sharing Data and Information

Data and information to develop Cooperative Farming were made among leaders of Cooperative Farming and related agents. The lecture and meetings at a prefectural level invited designated farmers and leaders of Cooperative Farming (Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009; Yamagata Center Staff 2009). The conferences of core farmers in Iwate and Akita Prefectures appointed dependable leaders of Cooperative Farming as a peer advisor or brother and sent them to requesting Cooperative Farming (Akita Agricultural Committee Staff 2009; Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009). Peer advisors could provide suggestions and solutions to concerns of Cooperative Farming. These advisors gathered to suggest a problem of Cooperative Farming to agents at a prefecture level (Iwate Prefecture Staff).

Related agents gathered the data and information to understand and develop Cooperative Farming. MAFF's prefectural offices received the application for the Multi-Product Plan every year (Iwate MAFF Staff 2009). This included the information about agricultural production and attempts for incorporation. As part of the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer, agents at a prefectural level conducted interviews or questionnaires among leaders of Cooperative Farming (Iwate MAFF Staff; Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009; Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009). Conferences of core farmers, prefectural governments, prefectural agricultural committees, and prefecture's agricultural corporation led these surveys. They tried to analyze the situation of

Cooperative Farming toward incorporation. In addition, the Iwate Prefectural Government gathered the annual report of all Cooperative Farming (Iwate Prefecture Staff).

Because prefectural conference of core farmers included major agents to promote Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan, it became the base of information exchange among the agents (Aomori Prefecture Staff1 2009; Iwate Central JA Staff 2009). While they certainly shared the information about advanced cases, they shared the information to add participants to the Multi-Product Plan and to develop Cooperative Farming (Aomori Prefecture Staff1). According to Aomori Prefecture Staff1, each agent had different kinds of information based on agent's nature; for example, a JA was more familiar with sale of Cooperative Farming products. In the same way, because agents came up with different problems of Cooperative Farming, they shared them to consider the theme of meetings and lecture. They also started to have more meetings to include all related agents. "In the past, a prefectural government tended to have exclusive meetings for prefecture staffs" (Aomori Prefecture Staff1). To promote the plan and Cooperative Farming, related agents complemented each other.

6.3.8. Agents' Roles

Following the guidance of MAFF, a prefectural conference of core farmers was formed (Aomori Prefecture Staff2 2009). A representative of a prefectural government, an agricultural committee, and a prefectural JA were required to join the conference while it included other related agents such as a federation of land improvement associations (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). The objective of conference was to increase

Cooperative Farming and core farmers. In other words, it tried to increase participants in the Multi-Product Plan (Akita Agricultural Committee Staff 2009). The conferences conducted the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer (MAFF n.d. a). By the conferences, participating agents could share the information to promote the Multi-Product Plan and to develop Cooperative Farming and core farmers (Aomori Prefecture Staff1 2009).

To promote the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming, agents at a prefectural level shared and divided roles. Iwate Prefecture Staff (2009) explained that they discussed and decided the division of roles. Each role was assigned to a suitable agent. Also, past roles in agricultural development affected current roles of each agent. MAFF's prefectural offices initially publicized the Multi-Product Plan with other related agents and explained how to fill out the plan's application to municipal governments and JAs (Akita MAFF Staff2 2008). Once the plan started, the MAFF offices mainly checked the applications. The prefectures had also been involved in agricultural development. They maintained and added roles in the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan. While some prefectural governments promoted cooperative farming in the past, they recently followed the direction of national policies and tried to increase designated farmers or core farmers (Akita Central JA Staff1 2009; Akita MAFF Staff1 2008; Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009; Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). While the prefectures kept this recent direction, as part of the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan, they became involved in the promotion of Cooperative Farming again (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008; Miyagi Prefecture Staff). JAs played a major role to develop Cooperative Farming. According to a prefectural MAFF staff in Akita Prefecture, JAs included Cooperative Farming in the

Multi-Product Plan (Akita MAFF Staff2 2008). They could not give up the promotion and leave farmers behind.

6.4. The Evaluation by Agents Promoting the Plan in the Tōhoku Region

6.4.1. The Multi-Product Plan

Staff of prefectural agents mentioned several points as concerns about the Multi-Product Plan. In addition, they gave their views on the development of Cooperative Farming. About the supplement of income, Iwate Prefecture Staff (2009) demanded MAFF devise a measure for the time of dramatic decrease of rice price. In that situation, the supplement would not be enough. He also said that more measures were also demanded to increase the production of rice in a permanent way because the Multi-Product Plan cared about national food security (Iwate Prefecture Staff). About the relaxation of the Multi-Product Plan's requirement for incorporation of Cooperative Farming in five years, a staff of the Miyagi Prefectural Government said that the prefecture's goal on the Multi-Product Plan was not very clear any more (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009).

The Support Project for a Buckwheat Production Region in Yamagata Prefecture was not integrated in a national policy such as the Multi-Product Plan (Yamagata Prefecture Staff 2009). Yamagata Prefecture Staff explained that buckwheat's calorie was so low that it did not match MAFF's attitudes to maintain national food security; moreover, MAFF could not answer the demand of each prefecture to add locally important crops to the crops to support.

Also, *edabankanri* could slow down incorporation. The Multi-Product Plan allowed *edabankanri*, the management by member number. In this type of management, farmers could use their own machines and manage their own farmland (Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009). As farmers continued individual farming, this could slow down incorporation. According to a staff of agricultural committee in Miyagi Prefecture, eighty percent of Cooperative Farming in the prefecture adopted this type of management. There were 464 organizations of Cooperative Farming there.

In addition, the continuity of the Multi-Product Plan concerned related agents and farmers (Iwate Central JA Staff 2009; Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009). They wanted a policy to last at least for five years, possibly for ten years. MAFF considered the change of the plan three years after the beginning. Farmers could not know how the plan could contribute to development of their farms in such a short time (Iwate Prefecture Staff). Iwate Prefecture Staff said, “The national government can draw the vision five years after a policy begins. (Five year was a cycle to make a new policy vision.) We and farmers have difficulty in doing it” (Iwate Prefecture Staff). As policy changes required learning and organizing, this could be more difficult for older farmers (Iwate Central JA Staff).

6.4.2. The Formation of Cooperative Farming

The Multi-Product Plan increased the number of qualified farmers and organizations: designated farmers and Cooperative Farming. Cooperative Farming increased in the Tōhoku region (Tōhoku MAFF Staff 2008). Miyagi Prefecture Staff (2009) said that the prefecture thanked the Multi-Product Plan for creating more designated farmers. Also, the prefecture had more farmland under core farmers. Some

agent staff was not satisfied with the current status of Cooperative Farming. In 2009, two years after the Multi-Product began, Miyagi Prefecture involved 12,000 farmers with 460 Cooperative Farming. Because the prefecture had 70,000 farm households, Miyagi Central JA Staff1 (2009) thought that the prefecture could have more organizations. Most Cooperative Farming did not show solid management improvement (Tōhoku MAFF Staff 2008).

One critical factor to form Cooperative Farming was leadership. While it was not articulated well, a passionate and trusted leader could lead a community well (Iwate Central JA Staff 2009; Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009). It was also hard to train a leader (Iwate Prefecture Staff). While a leader was important, a few people should support the leader.

Older farmers and landowners sometimes became too powerful to atrophy young core farmers. Fukushima Central JA Staff (2009) said that this could prevent development of cooperative farming. In a two-storied cooperative farming, a group of landowners assigned land and work to core farmers (Fukushima Prefecture Staff1 2009). Older farmers as landowners got too powerful to atrophy young core farmers (Fukushima Central JA Staff). Fukushima Central JA Staff also said that this type of cooperative farming sometimes did not work well when a person became a leader of both landowners and core farmers. The conflict of interest could exist between the groups. High rent could benefit landowners while it did not benefit core farmers.

To avoid the conflict among farmers, a part of community's farmers could organize Cooperative Farming (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). While this did not involve the entire community, they could meet the requirement of the Multi-Product Plan and

receive the subsidies. If they were profitable, they did not form Cooperative Farming but formed a corporate farm from the beginning.

Because Central JA in Akita Prefecture thought that the most trouble was bookkeeping to promote cooperative farming, it produced the software for bookkeeping of Cooperative Farming (Akita Central JA Staff2 2009). The central JA positively evaluated the software. Cooperative Farming was supposed to rent land from members, and members cooperatively produce and sell products. At the end of the fiscal year, Cooperative Farming finished the distribution of profit, only to keep the capital. Members should receive rent, wages, and divided profit. When Cooperative Farming adopted *edabankanri*, management by member number, member farmers received the sale of their own products from their own plots. Cooperative Farming must appear to pay member farmers rent and wages. The bookkeeping software helped Cooperative Farming to do this calculation.

Akita Central JA Staff2 (2009) said that they made the software as a general model to deal with management by member farmers; however, Cooperative Farming did more complex things. To buy a machine, all people did not necessarily use a new machine nor pay the same. The software of the central JA did not cover arrears.

While Cooperative Farming was adopted in the Multi-Product Plan to include smaller individual farmers, some areas with smaller farmers did not adopt it. When smaller farmers could manage as a part-time farmer or had other ideas, they did not form Cooperative Farming (Akita MAFF Staff1 2008; Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). This happened in the area around Akita City and Kurokawa and Kesen'numa areas of Miyagi Prefecture. On the other hand, Cooperative Farming tended to form in flat areas with

strong rice production (Miyagi Prefecture Staff). Cooperative Farming in these areas regarded the income supplement of rice as the benefit to join the Multi-Product Plan (Akita MAFF Staff1).

Iwate Prefecture Staff (2009) and Miyagi Prefecture Staff (2009) acknowledged that past attempts and discussion of cooperative farming could rather help the promotion of Cooperative Farming. The past attempts included cooperative use of machines and a place to discuss a rotation of crops beside rice (Miyagi Prefecture Staff).

When a local JA pushed the promotion of Cooperative Farming, Cooperative Farming was significantly observed (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). The JA could see the benefit in promoting Cooperative Farming. Because Cooperative Farming kept involving farmers in farming, the JA could sustain its members.

The relaxation of farm size for the Multi-Product Plan from 2008 added the participants in the plan. Akita Prefecture Staff (2008) said that the relaxation actively added the participants in addition to 9,000 yen of income supplement per ten ares. In Akita Prefecture, about 1,200 participants used the relaxation. In the same year, Miyagi Prefecture had the fifty percent increase of land in the plan use the relaxation (Tōhoku MAFF Staff 2008).

6.4.3. Further Development of Cooperative Farming

a. Slow development of Cooperative Farming

Further development of Cooperative Farming was slow in 2009, two years after the Multi-Product Plan began (Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009). Iwate Prefecture Staff (2009) explained that sixty percent of Cooperative Farming bodies let members work on

their own farmland. Twenty percent gradually rationalized machines. The other twenty percent had basically consolidated management of farmland. In Miyagi Prefecture, eighty two percent of Cooperative Farming did not carry out an action for incorporation (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). Two percent of Cooperative Farming tried to incorporate; 15% positively explored the possibility. At the time of interviews, Cooperative Farming still had two to three years to attain incorporation as a goal (Miyagi Prefecture Staff). We could have seen more change in later years.

Thus, most Cooperative Farming in the Tōhoku region let members manage their own plots (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). Few rationalized management. According to Aomori Prefecture Staff1 (2009), while Cooperative Farming must have a plan to improve management, efforts to follow it were in question. Miyagi Prefecture Staff explained that all members did not agree to Cooperative Farming and its development. They might join Cooperative Farming just to get subsidized. This was why the surveys on Cooperative Farming were conducted as part of the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer (Aomori Prefecture Staff1).

As a result of promotion, some Cooperative Farming was formed to be very large while many were large enough to be qualified to the Multi-Product Plan (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). Miyagi Prefecture Staff explained that the tendency for many agricultural organizations was the same as the national trend. They were from twenty to forty hectares. At the same time, Miyagi Prefecture had very large Cooperative Farming. Miyagi Prefecture Staff considered that they were too large to continue. They could be restructured to be smaller.

According to Miyagi Central JA Staff1 (2009), most Cooperative Farming assigned certain crops to neighboring plots. This could increase the efficiency of farming. Because it also required the agreement among members of Cooperative Farming, a staff of the Miyagi Prefectural Government said that the advancement of the new assignments was not so dramatic (Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009).

Miyagi Prefecture Staff (2009) said that Cooperative Farming needed to find a merit (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). Without it, Cooperative Farming would neither continue nor develop. This did not seem to be discussed well among members of Cooperative Farming. He said, “In the third year of the Multi-Product Plan, Cooperative Farming must find some merit such as a new arrangement of land use. I think that it must do something.” Without evident merit, Cooperative Farming had difficulty in organizing for further development.

Another low number in Cooperative Farming was the participation of elderly and female members. Miyagi Prefecture Staff (2009) said that eleven percent of prefecture’s Cooperative Farming had these people working. He explained, “Cooperative Farming could add surplus labor. While rationalization will really require the places of women and older people to work, this cannot quite happen.” As well as development of Cooperative Farming in Japan, whether it can involve the variety of people in community with rationalization will also be a question.

Thus, when I interviewed related agents at a prefectural level in 2008 and 2009, the agents had conducted surveys showing that development of Cooperative Farming was slow (Aomori Prefecture Staff1 2009). The agents tried to understand how hard cooperative farming tried to attain the plan of management improvement. Agents tried to

develop Cooperative Farming as it was required to have a plan to incorporate in five years (MAFF 2011b). Aomori Prefecture Staff1 (2009) said that it had difficulty in finding cooperative farming that got interested in a policy to develop. To develop Cooperative Farming, Aomori Prefecture Staff1 and Miyagi Prefecture Staff (2009) claimed that they suggested gathering farmland together for each farmer and Cooperative Farming and giving up the individual renewal of machines. In short, they assisted the rationalization of management to decrease production cost and the trials to add income (Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009).

b. Visions for development of Cooperative Farming

When agent staff regarded development of Cooperative Farming as positive, they felt it could increase the efficiency of land and water management, decrease other production cost, and revitalize its community (Tōhoku MAFF Staff 2008). Hopes for rationalization were not just from those in Tokyo, but also from those in the region. Agriculture in a community could be more cooperative than individualistic. It could be profitable enough to sustain agriculture (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009). According to Tōhoku MAFF Staff, as Cooperative Farming gathered plots for efficient land use, it could accomplish efficient labor and machine use. Then, Cooperative Farming could absorb surplus labor and introduce new crops (Iwate Prefecture Staff; Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009). Also, according to Iwate Prefecture Staff, double-entry bookkeeping and accounting must be introduced to strengthen Cooperative Farming as an organization.

Tōhoku MAFF Staff (2008) explained that Cooperative Farming nationally wanted to rationalize agricultural machines, do direct marketing, and process product.

However, as mentioned above, development of Cooperative Farming was slow (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009; Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009).

Policies existed to increase the income of Cooperative Farming. Gathering land together for each core farmer and introducing profitable crops were included as ways to increase the income (Fukushima Central JA Staff 2009; Miyagi Central JA Staff2 2009). Finding a concrete way to guide Cooperative Farming was a problem for Iwate Prefecture Staff (2009) while it could suggest best policies for each stage of developing Cooperative Farming. Gathering land together could be done through a corporation to rationalize farmland ownership such as a public corporation to promote agriculture (Fukushima Central JA Staff). While it could provide subsidies to rationalize land tenure, Fukushima Central JA Staff said that “(the prefectural corporation) respected local opinions very much” in conducting each project. Projects for land consolidation had to wait for landowners’ decisions based on the condition of farming.

A general model did not work to develop Cooperative Farming owing to local difference (Akita MAFF Staff2 2008; Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff 2009). Akita MAFF Staff2 said, “There are so many reasons (to increase agricultural income). It would be much better if we can do a little of analysis over each reason in detail to increase income.” According to him, all governments needed to be involved. Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff said, “The attempts must be based on local resources and members’ enthusiasm.” He said that the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer was useful to send farmers to advanced Cooperative Farming and raise their morale. According to Yamagata Center Staff (2009), Cooperative Farming wanted to know profitable corporations the most. Also, sending peer advisors and specialists was

successful as part of the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer was (Iwate Central JA Staff 2009; Yamagata Center Staff). They could visit a community more than once and consult about an issue of Cooperative Farming at a local level.

Cooperative Farming concerned related agents when it only produced subsidized crops such as rice, soybean, and wheat to enlarge its size. As the Multi-Product Plan demanded, Cooperative Farming could incorporate to keep subsidized. Most Cooperative Farming produced only subsidized crops (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). This concerned staff of the Akita and Miyagi Prefectural Governments (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008; Miyagi Prefecture Staff). Without the stabilization of rice price, size enlargement of rice production could not ease the management of Cooperative Farming (Akita Prefecture Staff). Without subsidies, soybean and wheat would not be profitable (Miyagi Prefecture Staff). Without any further attempt, Cooperative Farming would not increase the income (Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009).

Akita Prefecture Staff (2008) said, “Incorporation is not the objective but rather development of a highly profitable organization.” Cooperative Farming must be profitable enough to sustain a community and its agriculture with incoming farmers. The Akita Prefectural Government simultaneously attempted to raise the income of Cooperative Farming and incorporation of it. While diversified agriculture with vegetable production was promoted, it was very difficult (Akita MAFF Staff2 2008). It demanded labor and a place to sell.

To incorporate Cooperative Farming, further discussion was necessary beyond the formation of Cooperative Farming (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008). Akita Prefecture Staff said, “Directly forming Cooperative Farming was probably better.” The type of

incorporation needed to be discussed (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009). To avoid the agreement among all farmers in a community, a part of farmers could incorporate. As they were normally capable of operating machines and farming efficiently, this type of Cooperative Farming was called *opegata (operator type)*. Because it only had five or six farmers, it was quick to form (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). Yamagata Center Staff (2009) cautioned that incorporation was likely to fail without the motivation from inside even when *opegata* Cooperative Farming incorporated. He said, “Village societies don’t normally like too many outside forces.” To incorporate, farmers don’t only need policy support but also need to keep motivating themselves.

To lead Cooperative Farming into incorporation, many agent staffs mentioned the importance of leadership (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009; Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009; Yamagata Center Staff 2009). They tried to support and empower leaders (Miyagi Prefecture Staff). A good leader could clearly understand how to develop Cooperative Farming and persuade member farmers to development and incorporate (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009; Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). No farmer but a leader seemed to take a responsibility for incorporation while the work of leader was almost paid nothing (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009; Yamagata Center Staff 2009). Because this easily made a leader tired, it required more than a person to lead the discussion (Yamagata Center Staff). Additionally, a sales person would be necessary in Cooperative Farming in order to increase income. Akita Central JA Staff1 (2009) discussed that a leader could not play all roles: leading all members, bookkeeping, and selling products. He said that it was very hard to advise Cooperative Farming about sale.

Aging farming population is another reason for leader shortage (Tōhoku MAFF Staff 2008). In the Tōhoku region, more than fifty percent of farmers were more than sixty five years old. Cooperative Farming would be a way to sustain agriculture and a rural community in the future.

In the second year of the Multi-Product Plan, most Cooperative Farming had difficulty in bookkeeping (Akita Prefecture Staff 2008). Another concern about finance of Cooperative Farming was future renewal of machines. Akita Central JA Staff1 (2009) said that many attempts of cooperative farming did not save money for the renewal. Cooperative farming had bought a machine with specific government support and finished without saving to renew a machine.

6.4.4. Agency Functions and Cooperation

In the last two sections, I described agents' promotion of the Multi-Product Plan, the reasons of their actions, and their evaluation of the promotion. In each prefecture, I could see the interest positions of many agents. JAs promoted Cooperative Farming because Cooperative Farming kept farmers as members of Cooperative Farming (Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). According to Miyagi Prefecture Staff, as long as JAs took care of management and bookkeeping of Cooperative Farming, members of Cooperative Farming continued to be farmers and JA members. This could not happen if large individual farmers became the sole target of subsidies.

The Yamagata Center to Promote Agriculture was regarded as a good case to conduct policies to develop core farmers (Yamagata Center Staff 2009). Because it was corporate, it was relatively independent of governments. It tried to provide general

support based on the needs. Staff explained that it could not direct prefecture's agriculture nor municipalities' like the prefectural government nor provide specialized services. When I interviewed staff of the center, it covered various types of specialists to visit Cooperative Farming and core farmers.

6.5. Conclusion

Prefectural governments and JAs have promoted Cooperative Farming in the Tōhoku region for the last three decades. They promoted the sharing of farm machines, efficient land use, and diversified agriculture. The goal of participants in the Multi-Product Plan at the prefectural level was not completely top-down while this was a national policy. It took account of data from local prefectural offices and municipalities as well as the results of other policy attempts. To promote the Multi-Product Plan, all related agents from national to local levels were aligned to teach all farmers and agricultural communities about the plan. In addition, the government decided the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer and tried to start and improve Cooperative Farming. This facilitated the increase of Cooperative Farming under the plan. To improve the management of Cooperative Farming, the Policy to Support the Action of Core Farmer promoted the various attempts; for example, the farmers were subsidized to visit better cases. Specialists in marketing and accounting were sent to advise. Agent staff such as Fukushima Central JA Staff (2009) and Miyagi Agricultural Committee Staff (2009) explained that prefectural governments and local JAs surveyed the development of Cooperative Farming as required. The related agents shared and analyzed the data toward incorporation of Cooperative Farming. In each prefecture, the agents discussed their roles

to promote Cooperative Farming. They were mostly based on their past roles in agricultural development.

The Multi-Product Plan caused several concerns. It did not support the rice price or farmers' income at a time of dramatic rice price decline, and further development of Cooperative Farming and its incorporation were concerns. The promotion of the plan was successful when local JA strongly supported it. Because the plan's income supplement targeted rice production, Cooperative Farming was favorable to form in a flat area with strong rice production (Akita MAFF Staff1 2008; Miyagi Prefecture Staff 2009). The relaxation of farm size certainly added the participants in the plan. Further development was slow, let alone development toward a profitable corporation. It seemed hard to find the best combination of policies, available resources, and morale of Cooperative Farming members. Leadership could hardly match up with the seeming combination, either. In spite of this slowness, related agents carried out policies to strengthen an organization of Cooperative Farming and to increase income of Cooperative Farming by efficient land use and making profitable crops.

As explained in this chapter, once related agents informed farmers of the Multi-Product Plan, they tried to subscribe designated farmers and Cooperative Farming into the plan and develop them. This surely came down to a local level. The next chapter describes the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan and development of Cooperative Farming at the local level and the views and reactions from local agents and farmers. The next chapter describes these in Daisen City in Akita Prefecture. The city was strong in rice production and successful in establishing Cooperative Farming under the plan.

Chapter 7: The Promotion of the Multi-Product Plan in Daisen City

7.1. Introduction

What were the views and reactions of Japanese rice farmers to the Multi-Product Management Stabilization Plan (Multi-Product Plan) from 2006 and to the ensuing policy promotion and implementation? I wished to understand the patterns of farmers' views and reactions toward the advancement of restructuring agricultural policies such as the Multi-Product Plan. For this purpose, I interviewed farmers in Daisen City, Akita Prefecture as well as government staff and agricultural cooperative staff from local to national levels. As farmers' reactions are based on the current physical and social realities of their communities, their stories in regard to the Multi-Product Plan showed that farmers were currently facing social and spatial difficulties in adopting restructuring agricultural policies, especially the policy objective of restructuring rice farming in Japan.

This chapter describes the ways local government and JA staff promoted the Multi-Product Plan, and tried to induce the market orientations and business-like reforms into the pattern of smallholding rice cultivation. Officials talked to community members about the plan and guided the participation in it. Once a community followed the plan to form a Cooperative Farming organization, these agents provided guidance and information to maintain and develop the organization. The chapter next describes the reactions and evaluation toward the plan and the fit of the plan at the local level. To gather the data for this section, I interviewed government and JA staff at the local level and the leaders of Cooperative Farming organizations. I conducted these interviews in the Senboku region of Akita Prefecture, especially in Daisen City (Figure 2).



Figure 10. Rice Field in Daisen City.



Figure 11. Ōmagari, the Center of Daisen City.



Figure 12. The Ōmagari National Fireworks Competition Held Every August.

Daisen City is an inland area of Akita Prefecture on the northern part of the Honshū Island (Figures 10; 11; 12). The city is 355 miles northwest of Tokyo; it is thirty-five miles southeast of Akita City, the prefectural capital. Daisen City is a 2005 amalgamation of several towns centered on the former city of Ōmagari. Daisen City is located in, but is only one part of, the Senboku Region. While it takes seven hours to drive from Tokyo to Daisen City, the Akita Shinkansen, a bullet train, arrives in less than four hours. The city's population was about 90,000 in 2006, and 54,479 were more than sixty-five years old (Daisen City 2011). The population has decreased from 103,564 in 1991. At that time, 67,986 were more than sixty-five years old. The population in farm households decreased from 58,405 in 1991 to 37,790 in 2006 (Daisen City 2008). The proportion of farm residents over sixty-five years old increased from 17 to 39 percent. According to Daisen City (2008), agricultural production of the city had “a distorted structure” (p. 3). About seventy percent of farm income came from rice. Akita Prefecture Staff (2008) said that the sale of rice from the Senboku region was the greatest among JAs in the nation. At the same time, about seventy Cooperative Farming organizations were formed to join the Multi-Product Plan. This was one of the highest among towns in the prefecture. Thus, Daisen City became a good place to study Cooperative Farming resulting from the Multi-Product Plan.

7.2. The Policy Promotion by Local Governments and JA

According to the City of Daisen, the number of farmers under the Multi-Product Plan was one of the largest in the nation (Daisen Shi Shūroku Einō Hōjinka Shien Sentā (Daisen Center) 2009a, p. 1). The City of Daisen decided its own goal for participants in

the plan: by 2009, the city wanted 10,000 ha, about half of the city's farmland, under the plan. The city wanted 1,000 designated farmers, thirty corporations, and twenty Cooperative Farming organizations as their goal by farmer type. In July, 2008, the goal by farmer type was accomplished: 1,089 designated farmers, thirty four corporations, and seventy one Cooperative Farming organizations joined the plan. As thirty eight percent of the city's farmland joined the plan, seventy-five percent of the goal was accomplished. While the number of participants in the Senboku region was remarkable, Local JA Staff2 (2008) thought the number of participants only a modest success. Local JA Staff1 (2008) explained that forty eight percent of the region's farmland was under the Multi-Product Plan in June 2008. In future, the goal showed farmland increasing to eighty percent. Local JA Staff2 said, "The number of Cooperative Farming organization is certainly large; however, we think that this is not satisfying. While we have 960 communities to advise, 132 out of 960 joined the plan." Despite the successful large number, more than half the farmland did not join the Multi-Product Plan.

7.2.1. The Practice of Local Agents

All related organizations in Daisen City and the Senboku region were involved in the establishment of Cooperative Farming organizations for the Multi-Product Plan. To increase the number of designated farmers and Cooperative Farming organizations under the plan, the City of Daisen established the Daisen City Center to Assist Cooperative Farming and its Incorporation, Daisen Shi Shūroku Einō Hōjinka Shien Sentā, in April 2006 (Daisen Center n.d.). These organizations tried to develop Cooperative Farming

through the survey of Cooperative Farming, the rationalization of farm machines, and guidance on bookkeeping, necessary documents, and incorporation.

The city, the local JA, and the center first went to the meetings at communities and talked about the advantages and disadvantages of the plan (Daisen Center Staff1 2009). These related agents were willing to answer the demands of potential leaders in a community. The leaders asked the agent staff to provide community members with a persuasive explanation about Cooperative Farming such as reasons for its formation (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). According to Local JA Staff1 (2008), in each community meeting, he talked about the Multi-Product Plan and the possibility of Cooperative Farming. Farmers were asked to consider Cooperative Farming because the Multi-Product Plan replaced past subsidies. To start Cooperative Farming, it was essential to solve the problems of excessive machinery and decentralized non-intensive land use in many areas. This way, in each meeting, the local JA official asked farmers to talk about Cooperative Farming, machinery, and land use. At the same time, he explained about the subsidy to promote the improvement of rice farming structure. This could substitute for the Multi-Product Plan when farmers were not qualified for the Multi-Product Plan. If the income from rice farming did not decrease, the Multi-Product Plan would not pay anything. On the other hand, whether rice price increased or not, farmers could receive about 3,700 yen per ten ares with the subsidy to promote the improvement of rice farming structure. The meetings were held during days and nights (Daisen Center n.d.). After the explanation about the plan, Daisen City Staff (2008) explained what and how to discuss the establishment of Cooperative Farming organizations. The city and the center asked the community to continue the discussion for the establishment. They paid attention to

small differences among communities (Daisen Center Staff2 2009). Some communities could simply use their existing organizations and join the plan (Local JA Staff1 2008). For further development, some communities invited other related agents. The prefecture's regional office became involved when incorporation was concerned (Daisen Center Staff1 2009). Especially when a community tried to have an agricultural corporation with a profitable diversification, the prefecture's regional office and Daisen Center provided simulations and guidance for profitable diversification (Daisen Center Staff1). A land improvement district became involved when a community was concerned about a land improvement project.

Along with the Multi-Product Plan, staff of both the Daisen Center and the local JA explained what subsidies and loans would be available once a community decided to have a Cooperative Farming organization or to incorporate part of agriculture in a community (Daisen Center Staff1 2009). To increase designated farmers and Cooperative Farming organizations for the Multi-Product Plan and to help their development, the City of Daisen organized a committee to assist core farmers at the local level (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). The committee involved major local agents such as the local JA and the local Agricultural Committee. This committee needed to be a leading agent to conduct various local and national projects to enhance the soft side of management.

Daisen City established Daisen Center in April 2006 (Daisen Center n.d.). The city appointed the center staff, who used to work for an agricultural insurance association, a local agricultural cooperative, and so on. As the city established the center, the city tried to increase the number of designated farmers and Cooperative Farming organizations for

the Multi-Product Plan (Daisen City Staff 2008). The center cooperated with other agents in order to increase participating farmers and Cooperative Farming organization in the Multi-Product Plan.

In the third year of the center, according to Daisen City Staff (2008), the center mainly assisted the incorporation of Cooperative Farming organizations. The center worked with other local agents in this regard (Daisen Center Staff1 2009). The center advised the organizations about the consolidation of farm machines, the diversification, and the beneficial policy measures (Daisen City Staff). First, where there were excess machines, Cooperative Farming could decide to restrict members' purchase. This was mentioned as one of the city's goals in 2008. Next, the center suggests crops other than rice to Cooperative Farming. As the rice price declines, it is a viable option for Cooperative Farming to produce more profitable crops and become corporate. While the center did not provide technical advice, they suggested diversification of crops alongside rice. Daisen Center Staff1 mentioned that they suggested the policy measures and loan programs that would benefit Cooperative Farming organizations at the time of incorporation in the community meetings.

Moreover, Daisen Center helped Cooperative Farming organizations to do bookkeeping and organize documents for government audits and surveys (Daisen Center Staff1 2009). The center helped the bookkeeping of organizations while the center staff understood that the local JA played a major role in this aspect. The center maintained a copy of documents and suggested corrections to Cooperative Farming organizations. The center tried to correct the documents so that all Cooperative Farming organizations could pass possible audits.

As a way to talk to each Cooperative Farming organization, the center invited each organization and heard the organization's situation every year (Daisen Center Staff1 2009). Staff from other agents joined this interview. This was also the task of prefecture's regional office. By this survey, the prefecture's staff tried to understand the direction, future, and problems of organization (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). This clarified the future tasks among agents.

Local JA Staff2 (2008) explained that the local JA mainly conducted clerical support for Cooperative Farming organizations and provided advice on accounting. Staff in branch offices of the local JA understood the organizations in their areas very well because the staff were in charge of the organizations from their beginning. In addition, the local JA had a team for core farmers. There were four staff in the team (Local JA Staff1 2008). In the headquarters of the local JA, the team was familiar with the situation and management of Cooperative Farming organizations. The team's main goal was to increase the application for the Multi-Product Plan among core farmers including Cooperative Farming organizations within the district of the local JA. The team directly worked in communities while it helped branch offices by clarifying and possibly solving the problems from the communities (Local JA Staff2). At the same time, the team gave training sessions to farmers and communities (Local JA Staff1). Upon request, the team went to a branch office and discussed the issues with the leaders of Cooperative Farming.

Because farmers had difficulty in filling out application materials for the Multi-Product Plan, the JA provided clerical support for them. The Multi-Product Plan required that interested entities such as farmers and Cooperative Farming organizations apply for the plan by themselves (Local JA Staff1 2008). Most farmers had trouble with

completing some application documents. This was the reason the local JA provided clerical support. As a rule, a judicial scrivener could fill out application documents as proxy. JAs and other rice collectors could provide the service for the applicants of this plan. The local JA thought that it wanted to assist all Cooperative Farming organizations with clerical support once established. The local JA staff explained that clerical support was accepted nearly when the plan began. It was possible that not all qualified people would apply for the plan when they had to apply in person. In addition, the JA supported the plan and qualified farmers because the JA served as a bank. The subsidies under this plan were not deposited in a JA unless the farmers designated their JA accounts (Local JA Staff1). Local JA Staff1 said, “Some subsidies are not received without a JA account. It is better that the JA could help all qualified people to join the plan.” The JA could support farmers and expect farmers’ continuing deposits.

While the local JA provided clerical support for application documents, it was not completely familiar with application (Local JA Staff1 2008). JA staff continued to receive new information from the MAFF prefectural office. This difficulty made JA clerical support indispensable in applications for the Multi-Product Plan. According to Local JA Staff2 (2008), before the Multi-Product Plan began, the local JA received the rigorous instruction from the prefectural MAFF. Once the plan started, the prefectural MAFF played a role in judging applications. It did not directly communicate with individual applicants. Instead, the prefectural MAFF gave JAs the suggestions on writing applications. Through clerical support to complete applications, the local JA was “closely” consulted by farmers (Local JA Staff1).

In terms of advising on accounting, there were training sessions three times a year at the branch level of the local JA (Local JA Staff1 2008). The staff from the local JA headquarters joined these sessions. The local JA did not provide accounting service for its members including Cooperative Farming organizations. In order to advise on accounting, the local JA followed the direction of the prefectural JA. The local JA used accounting software that the prefectural JA developed. Local JA Staff1 said, "Every time software changes, we also need to change our advice." Both the Local JA and Cooperative Farming had to follow the update of software, and it confused them. The local JA also provided a corporation with a training session about accounting (Local JA Staff1). Local JA Staff1 explained that it was hard to be knowledgeable about a corporation's accounting. They at least exchanged related information with a certified tax accountant.

To enhance the management of core farmers and Cooperative Farming organizations, the local JA gathered the representatives of these entities. The JA and the representatives could exchange information. One formal meeting was named the conference of core farmers and Cooperative Farming organizations (Local JA Staff1 2008). Local JA Staff1 explained that leaders of Cooperative Farming organizations wanted to know the benefits and difficulties to be a corporation and what to do for incorporation.

In the introduction of crops to diversify agricultural management, advisors and staff at fourteen JA branches were involved (Local JA Staff1 2008). Local JA Staff1 also mentioned the prefecture's project, the project to form a production complex in each community. The prefecture worked hard for diversification, too. One year after their establishment, some organizations wanted to introduce crops for diversified agriculture

(Local JA Staff2 2008). To incorporate in five years, the organizations wanted to quit rice monoculture, their dominant management style, and tried diversified agriculture (Local JA Staff3 2008). By diversification, every member in a community could do farm work. This would absorb labor and increase the profit of the organizations (Local JA Staff1). The choice of crops depended on the number of community members and available machines (Local JA Staff3). It could be different by community. There were so many kinds of crops to choose in the Senboku region. Some kinds of crops such as spinach, *edamame*, and asparagus were most commonly produced. If Cooperative Farming organizations could try these crops, their choice could contribute to more focused production of diversified crops in the region. The local JA could brand these crops as produce from the Ōmagari Senboku region. As a result of past production, the production of spinach, *edamame*, and asparagus respectively got from two to three billion yen in annual sales.

Akita Prefecture's regional office had multiple policy measures to promote Cooperative Farming organizations. I interviewed staff in the team for the management of core farmers (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). This team was established in 2006 in each regional office of the Prefectural government. In 2008, there were five officials in the team. As the general direction to promote core farmers, the official explained the two major types of farmers to help. The first were more individualistic forms of farm managements: designated farmers and corporations. The other kind was Cooperative Farming organizations. In terms of Cooperative Farming, prefectural officials thought they would support any decision of communities to core farmers including Cooperative Farming organizations. They let each community think for itself. Communities could

decide whether farms were consolidated under designated farmers or Cooperative Farming organizations. As well, some communities decided to entrust their farming to other communities. Even in this case, prefectural officials could cooperate with the city and the local JA to support the communities.

To develop a corporation, staff in the team for the management of core farmers went with municipality staff to the communities interested in incorporation (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). They gave the communities guidance about incorporation and held explanatory and study meetings. The team leader explained that each community clarified its direction for development through the meetings (Local Prefecture Staff). As a major topic, farmers in a community discussed what to produce in order to increase the sale of the organization toward incorporation. The team brought a computer to the meeting sites to show what crop was good to produce and the necessary size of land to attain a certain amount of sale. The team tried to show what crops could be beneficial for incorporation.

As a policy measure, staff first mentioned *Yume* (Dream) plan as a measure to promote Cooperative Farming (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). The team was responsible for the plan. With the plan, the team advised about the management of core farmers including Cooperative Farming organizations and provided financial support to purchase farm machinery and facilities. These included the machinery for rice and soybean production and the machinery for diversified agriculture such as vegetable production. Most machines for rice and soybean production were targeted to organizations under the Multi-Product Plan (Akita Ken Senboku Chi'iki Shinkō Kyoku n.d. a).

In addition, the prefecture's regional office had a division for extension and guidance. They gave guidance for diversification of crops (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). The division was responsible for the project to form a production complex in each community (Akita Ken Senboku Chi'iki Shinkō Kyoku n.d. a). Under this project, the division promoted the diversification of production. The diversification of production was expected to absorb more labor and increase profit (Local JA Staff1 2008).

In sum, in terms of policy measures and practice, the prefecture's regional office mainly handled the diversification of management and steps for incorporation (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). According to the local prefecture staff, they tended to be consulted about these issues while the municipalities and the local JA dealt with general matters such as accounting and organizing. The prefectural official said that the municipalities and the local JA were closer to communities. Unlike staff of the municipalities and the local JA, the prefectural staff could not go to all communities nor understand the ways of communities and organizing. Thus, the prefecture's regional office was more responsible for the incorporation while the local JA and the Daisen City were guiding Cooperative Farming organizations. The prefecture's regional office was consulted about corporations' bookkeeping while the local JA dealt with bookkeeping of Cooperative Farming organizations (Local JA Staff4 2008). According to Local JA Staff4, this "rough" division of roles was naturally decided owing to the past roles of each agent. He explained that this division contributed to the formation of Cooperative Farming organizations in the wider Senboku region. He said, "These three agents cooperated well to form the large number of Cooperative Farming organizations even at the prefecture level" (Local JA Staff4). Rather than giving the information only one way, sharing the

information was one method of cooperation among these three agents. For this purpose, they took part in a monthly meeting.

The Liaison and Coordination Meetings to Promote Core Farmers in the Senboku region were established in 2006 as the formal form of information exchange and sharing (Akita Ken Senboku Chi'iki Shinkō Kyoku n.d. b, p. 1). The meetings dealt with various topics for the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan. They mainly talked about the ways to inform farmers about the Multi-Product Plan and other policy measures in community meetings and ways to identify potential individual and community applicants. They also talked about the concrete ways to guide the potential applicants and the support to enhance the managements of core farmers. This involved MAFF's branch office in Akita Prefecture and the Senboku region, the regional office of the prefecture, the local and prefectural JAs, and the region's municipalities.

As mentioned above as a role of the City of Daisen, the Committee to Assist Core Farmers at the local level was a more permanent form than the Liaison and Coordination Meetings to Promote Core Farmers in the Senboku region (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). The committee involved major local agents such as the local JA and the local Agricultural Committee. It became a leading agent to conduct various local and national projects to enhance the soft side of management.

7.3. The Reactions to the Local Promotion

7.3.1. Well and Weakly Developed Cooperative Farming

To understand the factors to develop Cooperative Farming and to adapt to current agricultural policies, Cooperative Farming A and B can serve as cases of well and weakly

developed Cooperative Farming to show differences in adoption. Well developed Cooperative Farming adopted various factors including the ones I observed to be hard to implement (Table 9). Cooperative Farming A was well developed and incorporated (Figure 13; Figure 14 shows another Cooperative Farming corporation.). Its size was much larger than the Multi-Product Plan required, and it had major operators and conducted diversification. For this objective, labor and land were rationalized. It gathered about 400 hectares within its initial boundary through a land improvement project (Tanekko n.d.). Rice paddy fields were 286 hectares, and dry fields were 110 hectares. It contracted to work on about 200 hectares of rice paddy fields and also produced soybeans and seed rice. As diversified agriculture, Cooperative Farming produced soybeans, broccoli, cabbage, and fresh flowers. It also had dryers for rice and soybeans (Figure 13). This corporation started with a land improvement project and encompassed five communities (Cooperative Farming Leader1 2009; Tanekko). The leader was a city council member. He explained diversification other than soybeans became slightly profitable. He intended to process some products to capture value-added. Core farmers became major operators. Now, it tried to hire two sons of community members by paying a salary.

On the other hand, Cooperative Farming B was not developed much. It was a *gurumi* type to allow individual rice production and to gain the subsidies of the Multi-Product Plan. This Cooperative Farming gathered 24 hectares of rice in the community (Daisen Center 2009b). It did not rationalize machines. The leader explained that he and community members formed the Cooperative Farming to gain the subsidies of the Multi-Product Plan (Cooperative Farming Leader2 2009). All members in the community

Table 9. Cooperative Farming and Its Development Difficulties

Easy	consolidated bookkeeping, diversification with designated soybean and wheat, <i>gurumi</i> Cooperative Farming, outside-community contract, size enlargement
Hard	diversification, incorporation, labor rationalization, land use rationalization, machine rationalization
Harder	consolidating multiple Cooperative Farming, direct marketing, food processing

Produced by the author



Figure 13. The Barn to House Rice and Soybean Dryers in Cooperative Farming A.



Figure 14. The Barn of Cooperative Farming Corporation in Yuzawa City, Akita Prefecture

joined this organization except a separate corporation. The leader expressed the wish to increase the income through a high rice price. He did not specifically mention other ways to increase it. He was appointed by all members as he had led the community's discussion.

7.3.2. A Starting Point for Cooperative Farming

As explained early in this chapter, both the City of Daisen and the local JA set goals for the number of participants and participating farmland. Each worked to meet its goal (Daisen City Staff 2008; Local JA Staff2 2008). To increase Cooperative Farming organizations for the Multi-Product Plan, the local JA asked communities with some form of existing cooperative farming to join the Multi-Product Plan (Local JA Staff1

2008). The preexisting bodies included organizations to produce soybeans. As explained below, these were expected to have potential to include more types of farming and become more comprehensive (Local JA Staff5 2009).

7.3.3. Leadership

My interview data showed that the leaders of Cooperative Farming organizations were commonly designated farmers, leaders with past cooperative experience, and leaders in their community. Designated farmers were large famers in the community. Describing the leaders of Cooperative Farming organization, Local JA Staff6 (2009) roughly explained the path of the organizations' leaders from his experience,

People who had been a leader in the community became a leader in a Cooperative Farming organization. Many leaders were large farmers. They could join the Multi-Product Plan by themselves. They considered other farmers and held a meeting in their community. As they made efforts in the meetings, they became a leader. (Local JA Staff6)

Cooperative Farming essentially needed qualified leaders, who were then tasked with organizing their community.

While large farmers seemed likely to be the leaders of organizations, Local Prefecture Staff (2008) explained that the majority of leaders were not full-time farmers.

At the same time, many large farmers did not join Cooperative Farming organizations. The same JA staff explained the areas with many large farms,

The farm size in some areas is above average. Many farmers are large to a certain extent. They do not necessarily like Cooperative Farming nor a group. They don't see it as necessary. They are well equipped. They don't feel like cooperating to do something" (Local Prefecture Staff 2008).

Large farmers did not need Cooperative Farming to join the Multi-Product Plan (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008).

A leader of Cooperative Farming organization explained the pressure of his role and difficulty in finding a leader and successor:

Each household has different economy. The payment time to the insurance association was different by premium. To gather everyone for cooperation is not easy. The leaders feel pressured and tired. The leaders are called many times. We have not had a successor. It does not seem attractive, and successors decrease. Governments don't raise a leader. (Cooperative Farming Leader3 2009)

A leader of Cooperative Farming was pressured to manage more than his own household and continued to see the decrease of successors.

In addition, people in charge of bookkeeping were likely to have had experience it from their work (Daisen Center Staff1 2009). The interview data showed that five bookkeepers were current or retired JA staff. The data also showed that age mattered to choose a bookkeeper. They were chosen because they were "young," meaning their age ranged from their 30s to 60s. Daisen Center Staff1 said, "Current and retired JA staff and retired town staff were asked to be a bookkeeper. Some bookkeepers had nothing to do with bookkeeping. ...Some had not known how to use a computer before." As this could be an exceptional example, bookkeepers had some qualification such being as a former JA staff.

Farmers declined to be a leader of the organizations because they would bear a heavy burden (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). On that point, small farmers felt relieved with the formation of Cooperative Farming as they could depend on the organization for management. This made farmers hesitate even more to be a leader (Local Prefecture Staff).

The existence of more than one leader could relieve this concern (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). At the same time, too many leaders might not form an organization well as they started to be more deferential and less opinionated (Daisen

Center Staff² 2009). Daisen Center Staff² said, “No less than four people could start to refrain from expressing their minds.” A leader was essential in Cooperative Farming; on the contrary, too many leaders did not work.

To define strong leaders, Local Prefecture Staff (2008) explained that they studied so well that they could provide constructive opinions. These leaders could make efforts while they expressed demands to agent staff; for example, these leaders were concerned about the first few years after incorporation. They wanted some policy measures to assist the corporation’s minimum sustenance. Without steady leaders, farmers in a community could not provide constructive opinions, and the agent staff were not able to respond to them. To illustrate the communities without stable leaders, Local Prefecture Staff said, “I heard that farmers could not do anything as long as the rice price decreases. I could not do anything about it, either.” It was easy for even capable people to lose self-confidence within the trend of rice price decrease.

7.3.4. Discussion in a Community

While Local Prefecture Staff (2008) did not know if all communities held meetings about the Multi-Product Plan and Cooperative Farming, many meetings were held for these issues. Farmers in the community seemed to talk about the topics very well. The tone of meeting ranged from idealistic development of Cooperative Farming to realistic application of policies. To explain the content of meetings and the evaluation of them, Local JA Staff⁴ (2008) said,

I can only say this. I positively think that people form an organization and start to talk about various topics. This time, I feel sorry [for the past efforts to guide the community]. The topics include machines and what crops to introduce for the

increase of profit. While an organization cannot carry them out right away, it talks a lot about them. (Local JA Staff4 2008)

Thus, to promote Cooperative Farming, successful discussion about various topics in community's farming was observed.

Local Prefecture Staff (2008) explained that the main topic of meetings should be the application of policies including the Multi-Product Plan. The formation of Cooperative Farming progressed in spite of the cost and work to develop an organization. Farmers within the organization should have assumed confidently that the profit would increase owing to the increasing scale of farm management.

7.3.5. Non-Participants

Although a community formed a Cooperative Farming organization for the Multi-Product Plan, the community had some farmers choosing not to join the organization. In my interviews, the leaders of forty-two organizations explained about the nonparticipants. One of them briefly explained, "Two thirds of farmers join our organization. (Nonparticipants are) those who farm individually, decline to join a land-improvement project, or contract with other farmers or organizations" (Cooperative Farming Leader4 2009). Both small and large farmers could be a non-participant. Large farmers could choose to join a Cooperative Farming organization as they could individually apply for the Multi-Product Plan as a designated farmer. Many leaders mentioned that small farmers did not join the organization. They either kept equipped enough to maintain their individual operation or contracted with someone other than an organization inside their community. Some small farmers might be waiting to see which organizations or designated farmers to contract with in future.

7.3.6. Past-Cooperation

While not necessarily determining participation, fifty-two communities with Cooperative Farming organizations had past experience of cooperation. Past cooperation activities included the co-management of machines, income generation other than agriculture, and village rituals. The co-management of machines was a popular response. The machines were normally for rice or soybean production. In addition, the experience of past organizations facilitated the selection of leaders. Eleven organizations selected the leaders of past organizations as their presidents.

7.3.7. Gurumi Type

Many Cooperative Farming organizations were regarded as a *gurumi* type (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). In this type, farmers continued to manage their own farmland while they seemed to pool land and labor under Cooperative Farming. This was good enough for them to join the Multi-Product Plan. They sold rice and belonged to multiple policy schemes under the name of the umbrella organization. According to Local Prefecture Staff, many Cooperative Farming organizations became a *gurumi* type because they primarily wanted to join the Multi-Product Plan. Compared with corporations, this type was slow to increase farm efficiency.

7.3.8. Land Improvement

Beside the Multi-Product Plan, land improvement projects affected the formation of Cooperative Farming organizations in Daisen City. In my interviews, thirteen organizations mentioned that they organized Cooperative Farming owing to land

improvement projects. Local JA Staff2 (2008) explained that Akita Prefecture depended on rice farming and continued land improvement projects. Farmland drainage was so poor that it was not appropriate for anything except rice farming. Land improvement projects could improve the land for diversification. A land improvement project resulting in larger fields could also improve labor efficiency. This could respond to the decrease of small farmers as many farmers became too old to farm. To earn the subsidy for the land project, related farmers were required to consolidate farm management under core farmers including Cooperative Farming organizations (Local JA Staff6 2009). At most, the central government and the prefectural government paid 95% of the land improvement cost. As the rice price decreased, larger subsidies became essential for land improvement projects (Local JA Staff2). To win subsidies, farmers formed Cooperative Farming organizations. As the land improvement projects ended, farmers needed to consider what to do with the expanded plots. The leaders of three Cooperative Farming organizations mentioned that this would be an issue to consider in near future.

7.3.9. Profitability

The incorporation of Cooperative Farming organizations was related to prospects for their profitability. The leaders of nine Cooperative Farming organizations wondered about incorporation and the increase of profit. Local JA Staff1 said, “When a Cooperative Farming organization turns into a corporation, is it in the black or red?” He emphasized that turning into a corporation would not guarantee being in the black. Moreover, farmers needed to pay additional fees for incorporation. Farmers must pay a registration fee at the time of incorporation. They must continuously pay prefectural and municipal taxes as a

corporation. Local JA Staff1 explained that these local taxes should cost seventy to eighty thousand yen (roughly \$700 to \$800). Without enough profit to pay off these fees, a Cooperative Farming organization would not have any incentive but to push off the horizon for incorporation a further five or ten years in the future.

7.3.10. Profitability of Rice Farming

As explained in the last section, governments and the local JA promoted the rationalization of machines and diversified agriculture to increase the profit of Cooperative Farming. While the leaders of many organizations mentioned these measures for the profit increase, few mentioned the increase of rice sale as a measure. Cooperative Farming Leader5 (2009) considered the situation of his organization and mentioned that the increase of rice sale was better than diversifying agriculture. He said, “The introduction of new plants is difficult in terms of profitability. While we are sorry for our JA, we want to think of selling rice by ourselves. We have so many part-time farmers (that diversification is too difficult)” (Cooperative Farming Leader5). Despite rice overproduction, this individual saw producing and marketing Akita rice as the best hope. While the increase of rice sales through private channels was a way to increase profit, more groups talked about diversification and machines.

7.3.11. Machine Rationalization

The rationalization of machinery was the most likely way to reduce farming costs (Daisen City Staff 2008). For this purpose, in the interviews, seventeen leaders of Cooperative Farming organizations mentioned that they wanted to rationalize machines.

Also, Daisen City Staff explained, “The rationalization of machinery was the way to manifest the merits of organizing Cooperative Farming.” When a rural organization rationalized machines and purchased large machines, they were more likely to incorporate (Local JA Staff5 2009). New machines would make it easy to contract with farmers outside the community and increase the profitability of the organization. Unless Cooperative Farming incorporated, the organization could not contract with outside farmers and earn a profit. Thus, the rationalization of machines “expedites incorporation and increases work outside its community” (Local JA Staff5). However, Local JA Staff5 explained that the reduction of machinery was not easy because it depended on the number of rather large farmers in a community. When there were few large farmers in a community, they might be reluctant to rationalize machinery. Within the group, large farmers had to pay most for new machinery because members’ payments were proportional to the size of their own farmland. As long as a community could not rationalize machinery, farmers continued to use their own machines. To increase the efficiency, Local JA Staff1 (2008) asked a Cooperative Farming organization to make a contract with farmers. Land owners would not farm their own land but would also assent to organizations’ request to work their fields. This could organize the labor of farming and increase the efficiency. This way, the organization let farmers use their own machines. Until farmers of Cooperative Farming organization decided, Cooperative Farming Leader6 (2009) could say, “We will use current machines as long as they work. Then, we will buy big ones.” However, the subsidy was not large enough to advance the rationalization of machinery. Cooperative Farming Leader7 (2009) said, “Although machines get old, we could not buy a new one. The policies’ terms are bad.” While the

renewal of machinery was a major way to develop Cooperative Farming, farmers could not find enough merit to agree to the purchase.

7.3.12. Diversification

To advance diversification, Cooperative Farming organizations cooperated with public agents such as the prefecture's regional office (Daisen Center Staff1 2009; Local JA Staff1 2008). In 2008, one year after the establishment of most organizations, a local JA staff started to hear more about diversification (Local JA Staff2 2008). Daisen City Staff (2008) explained that he had not observed the dramatic increase of profit with diversification, but he observed the gradual attempt toward it. In my interviews, the leaders of nineteen Cooperative Farming organizations were interested in diversification to increase profit. While the Senboku region had tried many kinds of crops for diversification, Cooperative Farming organizations took account of their own labor and machines and spent its first few years in trying diversification. According to Local JA Staff1 (2008), Cooperative Farming organizations tried many kinds of crops; however, the organizations tended to choose land-intensive crops over labor-intensive crops for diversification. The organizations tried crops such as gentian, *edamame*, broad beans, and cabbage while they were less likely to choose cucumber and tomatoes. This could be because a community had difficulty keeping and organizing enough labor for labor-intensive crops. When older or part-time farmers were dominant as labor, Cooperative Farming had fewer choices in diversification (Cooperative Farming Leader5 2009; Cooperative Farming Leader8 2009). While some farmers had already tried diversification in a community, Cooperative Farming organizations had difficulty in

integrating individual's diversification with the organizations' management. Local JA Staff6 explained that it was not probable because the profit of diversifying crops largely depended on individual efforts. Farmers did not want to work with other farmers in their profitable diversification. Another difficulty to diversity the management of Cooperative Farming organizations was the issue of accounting. While the sale of rice happened once a year, the sale of diversified crops continued throughout a year. If the organizations diversified their management with diversification, this could multiply the burden of bookkeepers. Local JA Staff6 said, "Because Akita is snowy, the production of flower and vegetables continue from spring to fall. Twenty to thirty thousand yen of accounting fees would not be enough to ask a person for bookkeeping." Local JA Staff7 (2009) explained that the progress of diversification would necessitate the incorporation of Cooperative Farming organizations. This might not necessarily mean enough profit from diversification to justify incorporation. Successful diversification could increase marketing channels. This would require the credibility of organizations and necessitate incorporation.

7.3.13. Soybeans

Some Cooperative Farming organizations owed their establishment to the contract with farmers for soybean production. As part of the set-aside program to decrease rice acreage, soybean production was promoted with subsidies. A group of farmers purchased a set of equipment together to lower the cost (Local JA Staff5 2009). The Multi-Production Plan exceptionally accepted an organization managing a certain size of soybean production as well as wheat (MAFF 2011b). Daisen City accepted the

organization with more than eight hectares. Local JA Staff5 (2009) wondered if this type of organization could include the rice production of member farmers. The organizations could develop as they increased the efficiency of machine use for rice and soybean production. Because soybean production depended on a subsidy, the decreasing subsidy would not attract farmers to Cooperative Farming (Daisen Center Staff1 2009). To sustain an organization and its profit, diversification would be important.

7.3.14. Bookkeeping

Cooperative Farming struggled with bookkeeping for the Multi-Product Plan. The leaders of sixteen organizations mentioned the difficulty in bookkeeping. One of the main concerns about forming a Cooperative Farming organization was metaphorically expressed as farmers not wanting to use the kitchen range (*kamado*) together. The kitchen range meant the balance sheet of the farm household. Local Prefecture Staff (2008) briefly acknowledged this as a concern among farmers. The balance sheet could tell all payments and income of farming. One leader of Cooperative Farming organizations mentioned that some farmers used to pay for fertilizer by installments (Cooperative Farming Leader9 2009). They did not like paying once a year like other farmers in the same organization.

As explained above, the local JA faced several issues to provide Cooperative Farming organizations with guidance in bookkeeping (Local JA Staff1 2008). The local JA used bookkeeping software developed by the prefectural JA. The local JA had some difficulty in keeping up with the updates of software. It also had difficulty in bookkeeping of corporations. It could only share the information with tax accountants.

For the local JA, after the dramatic emergence of Cooperative Farming organizations in 2007, guidance on bookkeeping became more serious than organizing Cooperative Farming (Local JA Staff1 2008). Focusing on the guidance in bookkeeping could help the organizations to maintain their course.

a. Financial reporting

While the local JA provided bookkeeping software, not all documents and reports were standardized among Cooperative Farming organizations (Local JA Staff1 2008). According to Local JA Staff1 (2008), while each organization kept enough records for income tax reports, there was no clear standardized way to report each organization's agricultural management. The local JA staff explained that he did not exactly know the number of active members and the expected rice sale. The organization's annual report might not contain the area of rice fields. The local JA staff said, "Perhaps, all members have not gathered even once, though the organization distributes 130 copies of its annual report" (Local JA Staff1). He feel that possibly even the main office of the local JA did not know enough to guide each organization and to understand the entire picture of Cooperative Farming organizations in the region. To tackle this situation, the local JA provided the template of an organization's annual report. In 2009, Daisen Center asked the leaders of organizations to use this template.

b. Reserve and advances

To apply for the Multi-Product Plan and to continue Cooperative Farming organizations, farmers must pay reserves and advances to the programs. According to local JA staffs, this confused farmers (Local JA Staff1 2008; Local JA Staff5 2009). The Multi-Product Plan returned the fund to farmers at the time of rice price decrease (MAFF

2011b). At the beginning of year, Cooperative Farming organizations collected the advances to pay the organization's costs. According to a local JA staff, farmers wondered why they needed to pay the plan's reserve in order to receive the subsidy (Local JA Staff1 2008). When farmers were not persuaded about this reserve, they would prefer another route to a short-term subsidy to promote the improvement of rice farming structure. Farmers could receive this subsidy without paying in advance. To start the production each year, some Cooperative Farming organizations collected the advances. This could allow the organizations to pay costs such as the wages to the farmers. Some farmers used to receive the wages without paying the advances. They had directly received wages to work the farmland of other community members. Now, they had to formally ask their organization to manage their farmland and then work for the organization. They would receive wages from the organization later. This circuitous flow of money confused the farmers (Local JA Staff5 2009).

c. Late payment

Accounting of Cooperative Farming organization became the most confusing when it transferred the payment to each farmer (Local JA Staff1 2008). The leaders of six Cooperative Farming organizations mentioned this issue. As explained above, in Cooperative Farming of *gurumi* type, each farmer paid the reserve for policies and the advances for operation to his/her organization. The organization gathered these reserve and advances, and the organization paid these to the local JA, government, related agents, and merchants. Once the organization received payments for crop sales and subsidies, it needed to distribute them to each farmer as soon as possible. Normally, this took a few days to transfer the payment from the organization to each farmer. As the payment

detoured around the organization, each farmer received the payment and subsidies a few days later than before.

7.3.15. No Complaints

Certainly, some leaders were more confident in managing Cooperative Farming organizations. So far, I noted the problems and concerns of Cooperative Farming organizations. I also heard from the leaders of nine Cooperative Farming organizations that they were not really dissatisfied. They sounded as though they had no problem. This could indicate that certain leaders and communities were very capable of maintaining a Cooperative Farming organization.

7.3.16. Frictions Slowing Development

When the leaders of Cooperative Farming organizations found that they could not reach the agreement to develop the organizations, they slowed the organizations' development. In this chapter, I mainly described the situation of policy and communities for the promotion of Cooperative Farming organizations. To motivate further development of organizations, enough policy incentive and community agreement were necessary; otherwise, the organizations slowed their development. As incorporation demanded more rationalization of farm management, the leaders waited for the agreeable situation. They thought that the retirement of older farmers would eventually demand the rationalization and incorporation.

7.3.17. Community without Cooperative Farming

Many communities did not form Cooperative Farming organizations. Many communities had designated farmers, and the Multi-Product Plan benefitted them without forming an organization (Local JA Staff5 2009). To implement the Multi-Product Plan, these designated farmers could not find enough incentive to form joint organizations. They could apply for the plan with their own farm size. Also, they were so equipped that they did not need to cooperate with surrounding farmers (Local JA Staff5). According to Local JA Staff5, the area around the town of Ōmagari formed fewer organizations because the scale of farmers in the area was relatively large. At the same time, there were concerns about the communities short of farmers and organizations to take over farming. A city staff raised the problem and said, “These communities do not have enough leadership [to develop the organization]” (Daisen City Staff 2008). The city covered half the farmland with the Multi-Product Plan. The city staff considered that developing Cooperative Farming organizations into corporations would protect the other half. Once a Cooperative Farming organization became a corporation, it could manage farmland outside its own community. The city staff expected that a corporate group could take over the land in a community without successors in the future.

7.3.18. JA’s Future Involvement

If corporations succeeded in becoming independent agri-businesses, would they need their old cooperatives in the future? This concerned the JA. According to a local JA staff, the JA needed to provide more specialized and advanced knowledge for Cooperative Farming organizations (Local JA Staff1 2008). This could preserve the

connection between the local JA and Cooperative Farming organizations. He found a JA in Miyagi Prefecture to be a good example (Local JA Staff1). The JA in Miyagi Prefecture advised organizations' bookkeeping while the JA in the Senboku region provided clerical support for paperwork. The JA staff thought that the JA needed to provide more specialized and advanced knowledge for the organizations and corporations; otherwise, the main office of the local JA might lose the connection once Cooperative Farming organizations became incorporated. He imagined that local JAs would gradually merge into only one JA in Akita Prefecture (Local JA Staff1 2008). Then, the corporation at the community level would be like the JA at the old village level. According to the local JA staff, the JA needed to guide Cooperative Farming organizations in this direction (Local JA Staff1). The JA needed to provide the specialized and advanced knowledge for Cooperative Farming organizations to function like a JA at the old village level. Without this service, the JA might not be relevant to future corporations. This strategy could also be applied to designated farmers because they could also become a corporation and take over farming in their communities. When only a few farmers conducted farming across one or more hamlets, and did so on a business basis, what role would the JA play in its old functions of joint purchasing, joint marketing, banking, and production advice?

7.3.19. Agents' Feeling of Responsibility

Agency staff felt responsible for the development of Cooperative Farming organizations. As they implemented the policies and guided farmers, they felt responsible for the people. Compared with other municipalities, a large number of organizations were

formed. The agency staff did not want this attainment to end up failing. The result would affect the implementation of policies at the local level. As Daisen City and the Senboku region became a successful example of increased Cooperative Farming organizations, the city and the region became one of the places to test the development of Cooperative Farming organizations and policy implementation. A JA official said, “Probably, nationwide, Akita Prefecture was said to have many Cooperative Farming organizations. It was good to form so many Cooperative Farming organizations. Because we are noticed, we cannot easily fail. We need to continue to maintain (our Cooperative Farming organizations)” (Local JA Staff1 2008). Although the Multi Product Plan had many problems in that not every farm could or would meet its terms, the program did stimulate Cooperative Farming formation, and local stakeholders were eager to see the groups succeed.

7.3.20. Expanded Municipalities and Jurisdiction

While the prefectural official said that municipalities and the local JA were closer to communities, the main offices of the local JA and municipalities were not satisfied with their knowledge of participating communities (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). A local JA staff explained that he could not know the detailed concerns and prospects of the communities (Local JA Staff1 2008). As the local JA provided clerical support, its main office could know the areal extent of planted crops and the kinds of training sessions for incorporation. The main office could not know the sale of each crop and the results of daily attempts to increase the sale. Local Prefecture Staff (2008) guessed that Daisen City was so large that the main office might not know the daily situation of each Cooperative

Farming organization. City branch offices at the level of old municipalities might better function to implement agricultural policies. This was also true of the local JA. As mentioned above, staff at a branch office knew Cooperative Farming organizations very well from their formation (Local JA Staff2 2008). The annual interview survey by Daisen Center should have been a formal way to know Cooperative Farming organizations better (Daisen Center Staff1 2009).

7.3.21. Farmers' Resistance to the Multi-Product Plan

Contrary to the agents' guidance, most Cooperative Farming did not immediately rationalize management. This slow adaptation seemed resistance of farmers while they both minimized the adaptation of the policy idea and kept subsidized. Through what Scott (1985) described as "everyday forms of peasant resistance" against further rationalization in agriculture, farmers in Japan avoided the direct adoption of restructuring agricultural policies. Even when the Multi-Product Plan formed many Cooperative Farming organizations in municipalities in the Tōhoku region such as Daisen City, most Cooperative Farming did not follow the ideal path of formation and development. Rather, farmers minimally adapted to the plan and received the subsidies. Most Cooperative Farming was regarded as a *gurumi* type as member farmers kept farming their own land. They did neither rationalize labor use nor land use. Consolidated bookkeeping did not show actual consolidation but let farmers individually sell rice and receive subsidies. Moreover, owing to this minimal adaptation of the plan, most Cooperative Farming was slow to develop for incorporation. As Cooperative Farming continued to be a *gurumi* type,

farmers did not give up individual rice production (Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009).

Farmers resisted corporatizing under Cooperative Farming for profit.

The lack of agreement among community members strongly explained the slowness to develop Cooperative Farming. As long as this was respected, farmers could continuously practice the resistance against the consolidation and rationalization of community's farming. Farmers could not help but have different opinions because the degree of development among farmers was different. Also, personal characteristics such as age could be regarded as justifiable difference. These characteristics of farmers and the accompanying resistance historically developed in each community. Farmers' political power supplemented this resistance.

7.4. Conclusion

The Senboku region and Daisen City in Akita Prefecture deserved attention for their high participation in the Multi-Product Plan. By 2008, as many as 1,089 designated farmers, and seventy one Cooperative Farming organizations joined the plan. To promote the policy, agents including the city, the local JA, and the regional office of prefecture went to the community meetings and explained the plan and other subsidies. To develop Cooperative Farming, farmers were asked to talk about machinery and land use. While all related agents were involved in the formation and development of Cooperative Farming organizations, each agent has its own branches and policies. As a local government, along with the promotion to form Cooperative Farming organizations, the City of Daisen promoted the Multi-Product Plan and facilitated the implementation of available support and subsidies. The city also established Daisen Center. The center checked the annual

report and accounting of Cooperative Farming organizations and assisted each organization with advice on agricultural management including rationalization of machinery and diversification of crops. While the local JA could take broad measures to develop Cooperative Farming, it mainly provided clerical and accounting support for Cooperative Farming organizations under the plan. The local JA made each branch staff responsible for Cooperative Farming organizations and made headquarter staff organize the work to maintain and develop the organizations. In clerical support, the JA helped farmers to fill out the application for the plan. To develop Cooperative Farming for incorporation, the local JA provided the place to gather designated farmers and the leaders of Cooperative Farming organizations for information exchange. Also, the local JA at a branch level provided technical support to diversify crops in Cooperative Farming. The regional office of the prefecture was more focused on the development of Cooperative Farming organization into a corporation. The prefecture had its own policy to subsidize the purchase of machinery and facilities as these could help an organization to change agricultural management and increase the profit. At the same time, the prefecture assisted the diversification of production. For the promotion and development of Cooperative Farming organizations, the work of each agent was not completely independent. From the policy introduction to today, the agents functioned as a liaison for information exchange and observed when other agents communicated with Cooperative Farming organizations.

I was investigating how state institutions and cooperatives tried to shift farming onto a business footing and enlarge scale, so I did not necessarily look for outright resistance or the non-joiners. But I could clearly see at the local level a use of the

program with a very minimal level of compliance to the legislative aims. This slowness can be regarded as “everyday forms of peasant resistance” (Scott 1985). Many Cooperative Farming organizations were the *gurumi* type. This allowed farmers to order input materials like fertilizer by themselves and to count their own sale. As this type did not consolidate farm management, this type seemed to be slow at increasing efficiency (Local Prefecture Staff 2008). For the maintenance of Cooperative Farming organizations, paperwork was essential, and this concerned many Cooperative Farming organizations. They regarded bookkeeping as a major concern. They were not proficient in the business side of agri-business. As governments and JAs tried to provide the standardized method and software, the leaders of organizations were asked to keep up with them. They also needed to satisfy other farmers in the organizations with timely payment.

Based on the Multi-Product Plan, Cooperative Farming was supposed to be profitable and corporate (MAFF 2011b). In theory, it would become an independent and rational entity to adapt to globalizing agriculture. However, I observed differences in the promotion of the Multi-Product Plan in Daisen City. First, the JA nationally had insisted that smaller farmers should be included in the plan in Cooperative Farming bodies, and I saw the local JA providing essential support in Cooperative Farming formation. The JA embraced the Plan and helped its members to reinforce JA’s longstanding dominance in farming and good relations with producers large and small. So far, new bodies that were supposed to evolve on profit-minded business models became part of Japan’s agricultural cooperatives.

To follow the Multi-Product Plan and to become corporate, Cooperative Farming needed to refine management methods. Some of these can be difficult even if farmers

were rational. As mentioned above, bookkeeping and paperwork concerned leaders of Cooperative Farming. This necessitated the support from the local JA as well as governments at a local level.

Therefore, contrary to its neoliberal objective of establishing agriculture in the realm of the “market”, Cooperative Farming would continue to remain within the status quo, with government support and cooperative and communal structure. The requirements of the Multi-Product Plan necessitated the support of governments and JAs and pressured Cooperative Farming leaders into coordinating their organization and establishing profitable agriculture. Cooperative Farming required its leaders to coordinate economies and labor of each household. As long as this burdened the leaders, Cooperative Farming would not be independent nor profitably corporate.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1. Introduction

Neoliberal tendencies in agriculture have increased the global integration of many nations' staples, advanced trade liberalization, and widened markets in agricultural commodities through multilateral and bilateral negotiations (Peine and McMichael 2005). Agricultural policies toward neoliberalism within each nation reflect this tendency, abandoning price supports in domestic production, exposing producers to global competition, and reregulating to favor the most market-competitive producers. Understanding how these changes take place requires an approach both political and spatial at the scales of regions and situated producers. This study asked about agricultural policy among rural producers for the case of neoliberal Japan. We expect Japan to have an agricultural policy landscape that is institutionally thick, with strong groups and strong producer cooperatives (JA), yet which is continuously developmental. How could a neoliberal policy to move rural producers toward a more profitable business footing be conceived and carried out in Japan?

A particular innovation that began to apply to Japan's rice farmers in 2007 afforded an opportunity to investigate. This new policy was the Multi-Product Plan, born from an initial neoliberal policy vision of subsidizing only the largest farm operations, cutting off the small. Large operators, if given enough land, could double crop and find other ways to raise income. The vision became a bit more diffuse at the outset when JA cooperatives won the legal inclusion of small farmers who grouped into local land pools called Cooperative Farming. The Multi-Product Plan tried to enlarge the size of Japanese farm operations under these two forms. Future income protections in the form of

subsidies would flow only to core farmers or Cooperative Farming groups of a certain size (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). My study explored how institutions and farmers in Japan attempted to adapt to an agricultural policy to restructure Japanese agriculture and prepare for global competition, especially rice imports, under the WTO rule. I focused especially on the implementation of policy in the Tōhoku region. The region's agriculture was centered on Japan's dominant crop, rice, with relatively large farms compared to the nation, and with several prefectures enrolling a very high number of participants in the plan (Miyagi Prefectural Government 2009).

The preceding chapters analyzed the implementation and fit of the Multi-Product Plan. Through interviews at the national, prefectural, and town levels, I observed the intentions and roll-out of the policy among farm producers and communities. All related agents such as MAFF and JAs from national to local levels promoted the Multi-Product Plan and tried to increase and develop core farmers and Cooperative Farming. While the result satisfied MAFF, the majority of farmers did not participate in the plan (Local JA Staff2 2008; Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009).²⁴ Small rice farmers strengthened by the post-war land reform had persisted for more than half a century (McDonald 1997). While the land reform equalized farm size, farmers became individualistic in farming with mechanization. They mostly became part-time farmers and sustained by a high rice price while some contracted specific tasks to other farmers and cooperative farming. Thus, in the 2000s, farmers in Japan were incompatible with the Multi-Product Plan. Even if small farmers participated in the plan through Cooperative Farming, they had difficulty in further development of Cooperative Farming. This led to frustration among farmers toward the plan. The frustration led to the revision of the plan through re-regulation and

²⁴ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

to political dissatisfaction leading to the LDP's defeat in the 2007 and 2009 elections (Hattori 2010; Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007; LDP 2008a). While the LDP had maintained farmers' support and advanced selective farm policies in an incremental way, the Multi-Product pushed farmers too far to retain their support.

This conclusion summarizes the finding of this study and analyzes them. These findings showed the current progress and difficulty of policy implementation as a result of interaction between related agents and farmers. Furthermore, the analysis of findings demonstrated the current state of transformation in comparison with past studies (ex. Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). The analysis showed the current power structure of Japanese agricultural interests including farmers. Backlash complicated the state's transformation in agriculture and let Japanese farmers reflect the surroundings and affect policy-making and implementation from local to global scales. This might well tell us the power structures and possible policy changes of Japanese agriculture in the near future.

From the 1940s, small rice farming was a dominant type of Japanese agriculture though MAFF attempted to restructure it from the 1960s (McDonald 1997). MAFF reinforced the policy direction toward restructuring in the 1990s as it accepted the agreement at the Uruguay Round of GATT and started rice imports. From the New Basic Law in 2000, the government tried income support for large farmers while it tried to withdraw from supporting the rice price and benefitting all rice farmers (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). The Food Control System became relaxed after the Uruguay Round, and various private distributors participated in the rice market. Thus, according to the government, the rice price became a matter of the market while the government

supplemented the income of core farmers (Nōsei Jānarisuto no Kai 2006). The change of policy direction adjusted the roles of other agents. JA started to compete with other commercial collectors in the rice market while it kept representing the interest of farmers and claiming the essentiality of Japanese agriculture (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). Under this neoliberal policy direction, MAFF rolled out the Multi-Product Plan and tried to restructure Japanese agriculture, especially among rice farmers, directing benefits only to large designated farmers and large Cooperative Farming (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). The Multi-Product Plan was based on the direction of Japanese agricultural policies after 1992. As Yokoyama (2008) commented, the New Policy in 1992 tried to safeguard Japanese agriculture while it assumed more liberal international and domestic markets for agricultural products including rice. It also declared the concentration of policy support on larger and efficient managements. As all related agents intensively promoted the policy, qualified designated farmers and Cooperative Farming rapidly increased (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007). However, the Multi-Product Plan and subsequent development of Cooperative Farming frustrated both participant and non-participant farmers enough to mobilize political power of farmers in national elections and stall the neoliberal policy direction in Japanese agriculture for now. As for the Tōhoku region and Akita Prefecture, rice dependency and larger farm size were favored by the plan. Despite the efforts of related agents such as governments and JAs to establish profitable agriculture, most Cooperative Farming had a hard time to consolidate farm management and diversify crops. Because of this, Cooperative Farming could not help depending on the guidance, support, coordination, and observation of its own community, governments, and JAs, let alone overcoming this limitation or becoming

an independent profitable producer. Moreover, the plan's subsidy would not be enough support for farmers suffering from the dramatic decrease of rice price (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009). These led to the mobilization of farmers' power to reject the LDP in the 2007 Upper-House and 2009 Lower-House elections and end the Multi-Product Plan. The electoral backlash was outside the scope of my investigations, but it was partly responsible for ending the agricultural policy limiting subsidies to large-scale agriculture. This significantly boosted farmers' resistance at the local level against rationalization and incorporation of farming.

Chapters 2 and 4 of this thesis reviewed movements in agricultural policy over the past sixty years. Considerable opening of Japan's food markets have challenged small farm producers, who have taken refuge in rice and a few other government program crops. A perceived crisis in Japanese agriculture discussed at the beginning of Chapter 5 set the stage for the Multi Product Plan. My three research questions (page 10) organized the remainder of Chapter 5, 6 and 7. Here I recap the findings from each realm and scale of my study.

Research Question 1: How did the Multi-Product Management Stabilization Plan aim to contribute to land consolidation and change labor and material practices in agricultural production?

The Multi-Product Plan tried to consolidate management of Japanese agriculture, enlarge scale, and diversity products by qualifying larger designated farmers and Cooperative Farming for subsidies, and disqualifying small independent producers operating less than 4 hectares (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008, p. 3). In 2007, more than 70,000 applied for the plan (MAFF 2007). This included 5,386

Cooperative Farming organizations. As a result, the plan covered more than half of rice production in Japan. These satisfied the MAFF's initial goal.²⁵ Cooperative Farming bodies increased. The number of Cooperative Farming under the plan rose to 7,194 (Kei'eiseisaku Ka n.d. b). These would be assured government compensation for part of the anticipated losses from a declining rice price.

While the Multi-Product Plan increased Cooperative Farming, it did not cause dramatic change in Japanese agriculture. I found that many Cooperative Farming organizations operated as a *gurumi* type (Local Prefecture Staff 2008) in which farmers could continue managing their own farmland. While most Cooperative Farming did not develop further, some Cooperative Farming followed the plan and tried to be profitable and corporate. These tried to diversify production and rationalize machines (Iwate Prefecture Staff 2009; Local JA Staff2 2008).

While the Multi-Product Plan satisfied the MAFF's initial goal, this did not satisfy many farmers and communities.²⁶ This led to a modest effect. Even where a prefecture or region had a large number of participants in the plan, most farmers and communities did not participate (Local JA Staff2 2008; Miyagi Central JA Staff1 2009).

The Multi-Product Plan was a neoliberal attempt to impose stricter rules allowing exposure of producers to lower world prices arriving through more open international trade (Hattori 2010). The plan tried to increase and support core farmers who would continue rice production without relying on state intervention in the rice market (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006, p. 15). The plan encouraged a trend of differentiation and divergence of competing interests between large and small operators (McDonald 1997).

²⁵ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

²⁶ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

The plan tried to favor the large operators and force more land into their control. Even if my own study was prepared to see movement toward this, I found that small farmers continued their dominance as owners and operators of land in Japanese agriculture. With the operational difficulties of the plan, and with its political undoing under a change of dominant parties in power, small producers will continue their dominance in the near future. As many scholars since the 1990s have said, small producers will face more severe challenge than neoliberal policy change (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; Davis 2005; Jussaume 1991). Rapid aging of farmers will demand the replacement of farmers in order to keep farming in Japan.

Research Question 2: What difficulty did the Multi-Product Plan face to develop farmers and Cooperative Farming under the plan? This question about the link between imagination and material elements showed both specific and dominant processes limiting further agrarian transition to large scale farms under core farmers.

The Multi-Product Plan could not gain farmers' trust or persuade farmers to make larger and more competitive Japanese farms. Firstly, it included only a designated farmer or a member of Cooperative Farming (Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). This implied that small farmers with less than four hectares, meaning the majority of landholders, had been left out of the future vision of farming in Japan. The small would not qualify for the scheme for income protection in the event of declining prices. Also, large farmers wondered whether further policies would prioritize them over Cooperative Farming to dominate the process of land consolidation in each community (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006, p. 42).

Furthermore, while the plan intended to increase and support core farmers, and give small holders incentives to opt into Cooperative Farming bodies, Cooperative Farming had difficulty in finding a person to work as a full-time farmer (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). Owing to this, the formation of organizations to take over each community's agriculture appeared difficult. Many communities could have too few or too many operators (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). In the latter, a community would not easily consolidate managements to a few farmers or Cooperative Farming.

Developing centralized management within Cooperative Farming was another difficulty. Scale enlargement of Cooperative Farming, rationalization of farm machinery, and diversified agriculture became the measures to develop Cooperative Farming as a unitary enterprise (Local JA Staff1 2008; Local JA Staff3 2008; Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). The difficulty of development could be attributed not only to the physical geography of farming but also to agreement inside a community. This was a major topic both nationally and locally (Central JA Staff 2009). In Daisen City, many leaders of Cooperative Farming waited for a more favorable situation to push for further development. A favorable situation would come with enough policy incentive and community agreement.

In addition to organizing and developing Cooperative Farming, the Multi-Product Plan gave many leaders of Cooperative Farming very complex paperwork. Under the Multi-Product Plan, the leaders must prepare for documents to start and maintain Cooperative Farming. Most Cooperative Farming organizations in Daisen City depended on JA's clerical support (Local JA Staff1 2008). Many leaders of Cooperative Farming mentioned the difficulty in bookkeeping. Without governmental and organizational

support for a few years, Cooperative Farming would not keep up with the schedule to file necessary documents.

The Multi-Product Plan fomented a political issue as it became politically controversial in national elections, and farmers' concerns about the Multi-Product Plan affected national elections in 2007 and 2008. The plan's intention to restructure Japanese rice agriculture with larger management units frustrated the farmers (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007). Bureaucratic feedback revised the plan in 2007 and voter feedback ended the plan as a major agricultural policy (LDP 2008a).

Therefore, the Multi-Product Plan both addressed and caused various problems in consolidating farms in Japan. The problems involved not only each community's agricultural development but also the political process at a national scale. In regards to agricultural development, who will take over a community's agriculture was one of the major issues in the plan's implementation. At a local level, farmers were very sensitive to any problem in a community with the Multi-Product Plan. Any problem could be so severe as to cancel consolidation and development of farms in a community. Even the large farmers who would continue to qualify for subsidies under the Multi-Product Plan felt the plan asked too much of the farmers and gave insufficient compensation for losses ahead. Also, through the Multi-Product Plan, farmers once again recognized the importance of their political power to affect election results. The policy to reduce the support among small farmers certainly frustrated farmers, and farmers and regional citizens politically expressed their opposition against the neo-liberal reformism in the LDP. As a result, farmers recognized that they could continue playing a role in Japanese politics.

Research question 3. How did politicians, public officials, researchers, and related people evaluate the plan and the perceptions and will of farmers to reform Japanese agriculture? This question explored the capacity of farmers and the relation among agents and agency in Japanese agriculture to pursue their will.

The MAFF started the Multi-Product Plan to strengthen agricultural management, stabilize food supply, and adopt stricter trade rules toward free trade (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007).²⁷ This could carry forward the direction of agricultural policies like the Basic Plan in 2000 and the Reform of Rice Policy. Neo-liberal elements in the LDP and conservative economists thought government farm supports should support structural change, not the status quo. The Multi-Product Plan concentrated its support on core farmers. According to MAFF, “farm structure continued to be weakened because of the decrease of people engaged in farming and aging” (Kei’eikyoku 2008, p. 77). “An immediate job is to make up efficient and stable agricultural managements into most of the farm structure” (Kei’eikyoku, p. 77). The Plan’s concentration of support on core farmers would guide smaller or part-time farmers to core farmers including designated farmers and Cooperative Farming (Tō’ō Nippō 2007).

Scholars and journalists in agriculture criticized the Multi-Product Plan because it limited which farmers and crops would be supported (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007; Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006; Tashiro 2006). Also, it did not completely sustain the income of rice farmers. An Iwate Prefecture Government staff (2009) said that the plan would not ensure national food security. The JA group tried to lower the acreage requirement of the plan (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007). The requirement was too high for most Japanese farmers (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006; Tashiro). These concerns were so severe that they

²⁷ Kei’eiseisaku Ka, MAFF. E-mail message to author, June 1, 2009.

contributed to the defeat of the LDP in the Upper House election in 2007 (Kyōdō Tsūshin). The LDP politicians and MAFF decided to relax which farmers and which crops to support (LDP 2008a).

MAFF promoted Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan and tried to develop it in the hands of core farmers.²⁸ Cooperative Farming would develop and sustain agriculture in the future policy environment. The past government practice of supporting small farmers through commodity prices seemed to some like pork barrel jeopardizing the future food supply (Kajii and Taniguchi 2007; Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). Imai emphasized the policy intent of Cooperative Farming to avoid this concern. Furthermore, Daisen City Staff (2008) expected that Cooperative Farming could expand its scale to farm outside its community and play a role in sustaining the city's agriculture. Also, Cooperative Farming was expected to develop the community's agriculture as a whole and protect its environment (Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai; Tashiro 2003). While these were beyond the scope of Cooperative Farming under the Multi-Product Plan, MAFF Staff recognized this. A policy to develop these was a further issue to explore (MAFF Staff2 2009).

To attain the objective of Cooperative Farming, MAFF devised various policies to form and develop Cooperative Farming. The policies supported procedures to form Cooperative Farming as well as further development such as diversification and machine purchase (Kei'eikyoku 2008; Zenkoku Ninaite Ikusei Sōgō Shien Kyōgikai 2008a). MAFF regarded these as necessary to implement the Multi-Product Plan. A MAFF staff assumed that people would probably not follow the plan without various assistance and community-level arrangement (MAFF Staff2 2009). In spite of careful implementation,

²⁸ Kei'ei Seisaku Ka (Management Policy Department), MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 18, 2008.

scholars and agency staff at all levels recognized that most Cooperative Farming did not smoothly develop (Central JA Staff. 2009; MAFF Staff2; Tashiro 2006).

To increase Cooperative Farming and core farmers for the Multi-Product Plan, related agents made total efforts (Hattori 2010). This involved most related agencies of agricultural policy: MAFF's national to prefectural offices, prefectural and local governments, their extension, JAs, and other organizations (Hattori 2010; Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). In addition, MAFF and local governments formed new agencies and organizations to support the participants of the plan. MAFF formed a conference for core farmers from national to local scales.

MAFF changed the content and procedure of the Multi-Product Plan as it heard the opinions of farmers through JAs and prefectural and local governments. JAs won the initial addition of Cooperative Farming to the plan within the law (Central JA Staff 2009). They also reported common issues among prefectures to change the plan's procedures such as the timing to pay the subsidies (Central JA Staff 2009). MAFF and the LDP could not ignore the results of national elections in 2007 and 2008 (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007). Because the plan would cause further controversy and trouble, staff were sensitive in the plan's implementation even at a local level (Local JA Staff1 2008).

While MAFF regarded the Multi-Product Plan as the best policy to restructure Japanese agriculture with core farmers, scholars and journalists criticized it for the plan's limit on farmers and crops to support (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007; Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006; Tashiro 2006). In light of the stated objectives of the plan, the plan was neoliberal. As McDonald (1997) showed, the policies existed to encourage larger farm size from the 1960s. The Multi-Product Plan was more selective

(Misato Chō Suiden Nōgyō Suishin Kyōgikai 2008). It tried to increase core farmers and Cooperative Farming to move farming in an efficient direction, facing the prospect of lower prices under the WTO rule toward free trade.

Once the plan was decided, MAFF directed all related agents to increase core farmers and Cooperative Farming and to enlarge agricultural structure (Hattori 2010). It also provided various policies to increase and develop core farmers and Cooperative Farming. Thus, the Multi-Product Plan showed the continuation of the MAFF's leadership in Japanese agriculture. When we observed the plan from design to implementation, we could see the involvement of MAFF, JAs and the LDP (Central JA Staff 2009; Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2007).²⁹ This continued from the time of Food Control System (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). At least until 2008, reformers kept the power in the agricultural policy arena. They were heavily involved in drafting agricultural policy to decrease intervention in agricultural markets (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006). This was in parallel with the reductions in protectionism observed in Burmeister (2000) and George-Mulgan (2006). To implement the Multi-Product Plan, the government kept its power to intervene in agriculture, intending corporate outcomes. Politically, the LDP's loss in the Diet destabilized the policy arena and caused the abandonment of the neoliberal direction in agriculture for now.

After the 2007 election of the Diet's Upper House, agencies and politicians could not ignore the opposition of farmers, so relaxed the plan's limit on support after the election (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007). As a result, agencies could not strictly pursue the consolidation of farm management units. To keep the trust of farmers, agencies had to be sensitive to each community's situation (Local JA Staff1 2008). JAs and prefectural

²⁹ Kei'eiseisaku Ka, MAFF. E-mail message to author, August 27, 2007.

governments consistently informed MAFF of the situation in their jurisdictions (Central JA Staff 2009). In the implementation of the Multi-Product Plan, the opposition of farmers was dramatically channeled through the election results. While rural areas continued to decrease population, farmers still kept their power to affect the election outcomes (Sorensen 2004). Thus, elections were another route to hinder the progress of neoliberal policy in Japanese agriculture.

8.2. Final Analysis

This study questioned how the Multi-Product Plan as an agricultural policy attempted to transform Japanese agricultural structure. The plan's design and implementation found that the transformation would not be complete or easy. For now, the story of Japanese agriculture is not one of a simple transformation toward neoliberalism (Peck 2004). This study showed the MAFF's strong leadership for transformation, farmers' uneasy conformity to the plan, the defeat of the LDP in the elections, and the end of the Multi-Product Plan. Based on political power, farmers claimed the space and time to stay the same for now. Community by community or farmer by farmer, they can currently wait for more favorable physical, social, and economic situations to further agricultural development. At the same time, MAFF and JAs could occupy the space to implement various policies to assist economic development of agriculture. While they might have given up intervention in the rice market, they could design and implement various policies for developing Japanese agriculture. Thus, they could continue to be an "intervention maximizer" (George-Mulgan 2006), selectively attempting to intervene on the side of larger and corporate

farmers. Likewise, European agricultural policies were not completely decided (Potter 2006; Potter and Tilzey 2005). European policy-makers could not easily implement policies of multifunctional agriculture. Alongside the emerging interest of European agribusiness to advance neoliberalism, Potter (2006) and Potter and Tilzey (2005) discussed the applicability of multifunctionality among European countries and regions. They could find countries and regions resisting the WTO rule and policies to advance multifunctional agriculture like Japanese farming regions in this dissertation. At the same time, they did not describe nor explicate how farmers affect policies at country and EU levels. Thus, compared with this dissertation, from studies of European agriculture, it was harder to predict the policy direction as we did not know how the power of each stakeholder affected policy results.

This study shows the state-society relation in developing agriculture and rural communities in neoliberal Japan. The study observed the continuing intervention and control of MAFF in Japanese agriculture and rural communities while its policy direction focused on larger and more efficient farmers to adapt to trade liberalization. As far as this study was concerned, politicians in the Diet supported the policy stance of MAFF and followed the path to freer trade. Farmers could resist restructuring of agriculture through both elections and other means when they did not have the power to reverse the MAFF's policy stance. Once smaller farmers decrease, MAFF's attempts to restructure Japanese agriculture might progress more smoothly.

8.3. Prospect and Future Studies in Japanese Agriculture

8.3.1. Prospects for Japanese Agriculture

While this study explored the failure of agricultural policy in neoliberal Japan, the attempt toward neoliberal policy continues. This study explored the Multi-Product Plan from design to end. While the DPJ replaced the plan with the Law to Secure the Income of Individual Farmer in 2009, the government contemplated participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) (Mainichi Shimbun 2010). In the negotiation to join the TPP, further liberalization of Japanese agriculture will concern Japanese farmers. While the government seems indecisive, it mentions the possibility of joining the TPP and checks the opinions of related interests in Japan.

To study Japanese agriculture in the recent past, scholars like Boestel, Francks, and Kim (1999) and Jussaume (1991) claimed that small farmers would continue to dominate on the ground in the near future. This structure is socially and politically strong for now. My study showed that farmers kept so strong in politics as to affect policymaking and implementation (Kyōdō Tsūshin 2007). This way of resistance might not seem likely to continue so long with aging and decreasing farmers. However, because no party claims a solid majority in the Diet, the clout of farmers will be difficult to dismiss. On the other hand, when we consider the decreasing numbers of farmers, their political power will not be enough to protect today's agricultural structure. This social change has certainly challenged agricultural structure, but this study cannot see a clear-cut answer in the near future.

8.3.2. Ongoing Studies of Japanese Agriculture

Social and demographic change of farm villages will affect the political geography of Japanese agriculture. The decrease of the farm population may limit the clout of farmers and change the decision-making structure in agriculture. This study showed that an agricultural policy had to value the opinions of farmers and work with them in implementation and revision. Although the policy was neoliberal, staff of governments and cooperatives helped push the pace and encompassed the activities of development among communities. If social change should cause political change, who will decide agriculture in Japan at national and community levels? How will the stakeholders or participants be engaged in decision-making?

8.3.3. How Democratic and Equal will the Process Be?

Political, economic, and social change of Japanese agriculture has changed the views of farmers. The Multi-Product Plan showed farmers' lowering support for the LDP. Farmers supported the LDP and the Food Control System for decades (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; McDonald 1997). This allowed most of them to be small rice farmers with part-time work (Jussaume 1991; McDonald 1996). From the 1990s, agricultural policies emphasized market rule in the rice price and let the price decrease (Hattori 2010). This marginalized and alienated farmers. Because farmers could not accept the higher requirement of the Multi-Product Plan, their frustration contributed to the revision of the plan and to the LDP's loss of both houses in the Diet. The prospect of further trade liberalization remains alive with the TPP (Mainichi Shimbun 2012). Reacting to globalization, farmers politically changed their trust in the LDP and resisted the

consolidation of farms under the Multi-Product Plan. As farmers' attitudes about agricultural policies affect the government's decisions on globalization, their views on agriculture and communities will matter in the Japanese political economy.

The Japanese government had attempted scale enlargement of farms in order to increase the efficiency of the nation's agriculture (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999). The Multi-Product Plan tried this strategy to replace decreasing small farms with large-scale farms (Daisen City 2008). This past experience lets us expect that the government will keep envisioning Japanese agriculture with large-scale rice farming. Because the policy direction did not change the agricultural structure of Japan, future agriculture with decreasing farmers is in question (Boestel, Francks, and Kim; McDonald 1997). On the other hand, Burmeister (2000) suggested that agriculture with "post-productionist" or multifunctional characteristics is a possible policy direction (Wilson 2008). In this type of agriculture, farming should care about the environment, communities, and the welfare of farmers. By observing Japanese agriculture in coming years, we will know what type of agriculture follows and the process of change. This will contribute to agricultural geography in its attempts to identify the factors deciding the pattern of agriculture in an ensuing time.

8.3.4. Future Studies on Globalization and Development

The Multi-Product Plan, an agricultural policy to limit subsidy recipients to corporate farm bodies, failed because most farmers could not accept it. This was not a policy that could put them on a business footing to meet global imports. The government's process to find globally and locally acceptable policies will continue. To

understand the policy's consequence and potential change in globalizing agriculture, we need to keep evaluating agricultural policies, their concepts, and their impacts from local to global levels.

This study showed the importance of studying decision making at local and regional levels. We find answers to questions as to why farmers or governments do not do this or that. Farmers in Japan affected an agricultural policy from design to implementation as they considered the situation of their farmland and community. In the same way, their opinions affected how the Japanese government negotiated for trade liberalization (Boestel, Francks, and Kim 1999; Davis 2005). Based on his study of development in the Tōhoku region, anthropologist Keith Brown claimed that we could not understand national development without studying a region (Kincaid 2011). Stories from a region affect larger development issues. Without studying the situation of farmers and people's regional lives, we could not understand a nation's specific involvements with globalization. In the case of Japan, a developed country, agents at the regional level can certainly affect the pace of economic integration at a global level. While studies of coalitions of elites contribute to understanding drivers for neoliberal policy change and globalization, local agents can also be seen actively affecting the attempts of elites (Peck 2004). Even as we try to understand the degree of globalizing economies, studies at regional and local levels continue to be important.

This study explored how farmers reacted to a policy to restructure Japanese agriculture. As the policy failed, this study showed that farmers in Japan could not accept dramatic reduction of subsidies for small farmers in order to enlarge farm size under corporate structures. Farmers had difficulty in identifying and developing core farmers

for community's future agriculture (Isoda, Takatake, and Murata 2006; Nōsei Jānaristo no Kai 2006). While this policy direction was not acceptable, we did not see what was acceptable for farmers and regions. This study did not set out to investigate alternative stories of development visions from below. We need to continue to explore acceptable development and methods to achieve it.

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Appendix 1

Interview Questions

Questions to ask farmers:

1. How did you change the past practices to adopt Multi-Product Management Stabilization Plan? What are past practices? What are new practices? Why did you change the practices? Are new practices satisfying? Why are they? What works are difficult to start the practices? What do you want to do on your farmlands in future? What are limitations to your will?

Practices include kinds of products, acreage for each product (land use), labor use for each step of farm work, machine use, land rent, and land ownership.

2. What meetings were there to promote the plan? When were they? What did each person talk in the meetings? How did you value people's opinions and concerns? Was there any informal meeting? What did participants talk about in the meeting? Did you use the media to consider your decision? How did you value the opinions? Did you gain, lose, or compromise to make a decision? Are you comfortable with your decision? Why?

Questions to ask public officials, politicians, researchers, and related people:

1. What activities were you engaged in for Multi-Product Management Stabilization Plan? What opinion, appeal, and expectation did you express then? How did you form your opinions, appeal, and expectations? What was the result of your activities from local to national scales? Were your activities effective? What concerns did you encounter? How did you report and express the result and its reason to other people?

Appendix 2

Informed Consent

This is the informed consent form of the study conducted by Yoshitaka Miyake, a geography graduate student at the University of Hawaii, Manoa. This research is a component of dissertation to earn a Ph.D. degree. In this research, I will explore the impact of multi-product management stabilization plan on agriculture and rural communities in cities/counties in Tohoku region, Japan. For this purpose, I am trying to interview about 100 key informants in the region including public officials and farmers. Interview questions will include farmers' practice in the region, its reasons, the reasons' origins, and officials' policy promotion and evaluation.

The interview will last for thirty minutes and be electrically recorded. The provided information will be transcribed and analyzed. The participation in the interview is completely voluntary. Without any penalty, your right is always reserved to deny answering questions, to leave questions unanswered, and to stop answering the questions at any time.

I assume there is little or no risk during the interview. However, there might be some irritation to answer questions because the decisions of agricultural practices are involved with the livelihoods and simply because you take your valuable time to answer the questions. The interviews might not cause the direct benefit on you. However, I believe the study can give the better understanding of how farmers and officials think of the change in farm managements at the time of globalization.

The data from this survey will be completely confidential. There will be no way to connect your responses to your name in the result of the study. The collected information will be stored in a secured case. The recorded data will be destroyed after the transcription. You will be provided with the copy of the signed informed consent form for future reference.

If you have any question about this research project, please contact the researcher, Yoshitaka Miyake, Geography Department, the University of Hawaii, Manoa, College of Social Sciences, 445 Saunders Hall, 2424 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96822. The phone number is (808) 956-8465 (the US).

If you have any question about your rights as a research participant, please contact the UH Committee on Human Studies, 2540 Maile Way, Spalding Hall 253, Honolulu, HI 96822. The phone number is (808)539-3955 (the US).

Please sign your name below if you agree to this statement and become an interviewee of this study.

_____ Date: _____
(Signature)

聞き取り調査についての同意書

この文書は、ハワイ大学マノア校地理学科大学院生の三宅良尚が行っている聞き取り調査についての同意書です。この調査は、博士課程獲得のための博士論文の一部になります。この調査により、品目的経営安定化策が、東北地方の農業や農村集落に与える影響について明らかにする予定です。調査では、地域の農家、関連団体や行政の方を含めた100人程度の方に聞き取りを行うつもりでいます。農業経営の方法と、理由、関連団体、自治体の政策の促進と評価についての質問が聞き取りには含まれています。

聞き取りは、30分ほど続き、電子レコーダーで録音されます。得られたデータは、書き起こされて、分析されます。調査への参加は、完全に自発的であり、参加を完全に拒否する権利、いくつかの質問への回答を拒否する権利、いかなる時でも回答を中断する権利を回答者は有します。そして、それらの行動への罰則は一切ありません。

回答に危険性が伴うことはほとんどないものと考えております。しかしながら、家計に関係する農法の選択に関する質問が聞き取りには含まれ、貴重なお時間を取らせるものなので、回答中に不快感を覚えられるかもしれません。聞き取りにより、直接的な便益が発生しないかもしれませんが、この研究がグローバル化の中で農業が変化する理由に対する農家や行政の考え方についての理解を改善するものだと考えております。

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この研究について質問がございましたら、以下の連絡先より、研究者に連絡ください。

住所：Yoshitaka Miyake, Geography Department, the University of Hawaii, Manoa, 445 Saunders Hall, 2423 Maile Way, Honolulu, HI 96822. 電話番号：808-956-8465(米国)。

この研究の参加者としての権利について質問がございましたら、以下の連絡先より、the UH Committee on Human Studies へ連絡ください。

住所：the UH Committee on Human Studies, 2540 Maile Way, Spalding Hall 253, Honolulu, HI 96822. 電話番号：808-539-3955(米国)。

この同意書に同意され、この研究の回答者になることを了承されましたら、以下に署名お願いいたします。

_____ 日時：_____