

Kohbai's Dream

The title encapsulates our support for Kohbai Yume Farm's vision of community revitalization through agriculture.

Towards Revitalization with New Agriculture

The agricultural corporation "Kohbai Yume Farm" in Odaka Ward, Minamisoma City, aims to revive local agriculture that was interrupted by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the nuclear accident at TEPCO's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station. The farm produces "Ten-no-tsubu," an original rice variety of the prefecture, as well as Koshihikari rice, soybeans, and more. To address the workforce shortage in agriculture, they are actively introducing smart farming that utilizes advanced technology and focusing on training young farmers. Their mission is to "preserve the hometown's farmland and scenery." With a team of 11 employees, primarily consisting of young professionals, they work with joy and a sense of fulfillment, leading the region in the next generation of agriculture.

Overcoming the Disaster, Resuming Agricultural Activities

Due to the earthquake and nuclear disaster, approximately 13,000 residents of Odaka Ward were forced to evacuate, which lasted for 5 years and 7 months. According to the President of the corporation, Ryoichi Sato (69), there were almost no remaining farmers among the approximately 3,200 households back then, exacerbating the shortage of agricultural workforce.

Determined not to be defeated by the disaster, President Sato, who has been engaged in agriculture in Odaka Ward for many years, repeatedly

returned home from the evacuation site with the sole purpose of not wanting to let local agriculture perish. From 2012 onward, he actively participated in experimental and demonstrative cultivation of rice and soybeans.

In January 2017, the year following the lifting of the evacuation order, President Sato and others established the agricultural corporation within seven farming organizations in the district. To dispel lingering rumors and concerns, they rigorously implemented production management



Overcoming adversity, the farm now cultivates 166 hectares of land, producing safe and reliable agricultural products.

for agricultural products. All rice is subjected to radiation testing, examining every batch and every bag.

The agricultural land, which initially started at around 28 hectares, has expanded to approximately 166 hectares. The rice produced has obtained certifications such as the Fukushima Prefecture Good Agricultural Practices (FGAP) and the Japan Good Agricultural Practices (JGAP). This ensures the delivery of reliable, safe, and high-quality agricultural products to consumers.

Enhancing Efficiency through Smart Farming Reducing Burden through the Introduction of Machinery



Robot tractors with advanced technology integration

The agricultural corporation has introduced over 10 types of agricultural machinery, including small unmanned aerial vehicles (drones) for aerial monitoring of crop growth, robot tractors, and a rice center equipped with machinery capable of handling 200 hectares. By leveraging these machines, cultivation processes are meticulously monitored throughout the day, allowing for efficient and streamlined operations.

Furthermore, smart farming has become a catalyst for attracting interest in agriculture among the younger generation. The agricultural corporation actively recruits young individuals, including high school students and college graduates, on an annual basis. The average age of all employees is 27, with some having no prior experience in agriculture. The digitalization of tasks in smart farming not only reduces the workload but also helps compensate for the lack of experience among young employees.



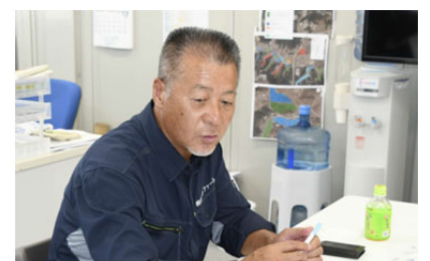
The rice center introduced last fall

Engaging in Information Dissemination through Social Media Attracting the Attention of the Youths

They also engage in information dissemination through Instagram and their official website. Young employees share information from the "youth perspective," aiming to convey that agriculture is a fulfilling industry. Students from various parts of the country visit for observation, and words of encouragement also reach them. Employee Ms. Fumika Suzuki (23) expresses, "We want people to see us and think that agriculture is cool." President Sato plans to continue actively hiring young individuals, stating, "We hope people with an interest in agriculture and a passion for communication will join the company."

Kohbai Yume Farm President Ryoichi Sato

Transforming Odaka into a Vibrant Community



President Sato expresses his passion for agricultural revitalization

"I want to restore Odaka that was once disrupted by the disaster." Through the challenges of the earthquake and nuclear disaster, President Sato tirelessly works towards the revival of agriculture in Odaka Ward. A 9th-generation full-time farmer, President Sato was born and raised in Odaka Ward. His driving force is the desire to revitalize his hometown and return it to its original vitality.

In the future, there is a vision to further expand the consumption of agricultural products, creating opportunities for interaction between producers and consumers. Additionally, efforts are underway not only in the cultivation of agricultural products but also in the development of new "AFFrinnovation (sixth-industry)" goods. While the lingering reputational damage to locally-produced rice is gradually being understood, consumer reluctance has decreased. The current initiatives will be continued, with the goal of expanding the cultivated area to approximately 355 hectares in the coming years.

With an increase in newcomers to the community after the disaster, efforts are being made to revitalize Odaka through agriculture. There is a strong determination to collaborate with various companies and work together to restore Odaka to a lively and thriving community.

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