

Life and Agriculture after Tohoku Earthquake and Fukushima Nuclear Disaster

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Q1. What are the problems?

One problem is their living place. People living near the nuclear power plant needed to evacuate from their hometown and not easily come back to their home. Although some cities are no more evacuation area, some people do not want to go back to their home town because they are afraid of Cesium whose influence is still unknown. Therefore, some people are living in temporary houses. Addition to that, family is separated by the accident because interest of each member is not always the same among family. The elder tend to put the value on living in their hometown, but the younger, especially parents having young children, tend to stay away from Fukushima in consideration of children's health. Livestock living in an evacuation area are also deprived of their living place. Although Japanese government wants farmers to kill all of them, thinking of their right to live, some farmers are trying to keep them without official help. Another problem is agricultural production. With inspecting agricultural production by themselves, farmers in Fukushima are trying to market only their safe production and recover people's trust in their production. However, Japanese are afraid of influence of Cesium and they believe that agricultural production of Fukushima is so highly contaminated by it. Consequently people hesitate to buy them, which leads their prices are still lower than products produced in other places.

Q2. What are the hopes?

Companies and universities are helping to cope with decontamination and some facts were revealed. For example, there was no the proportional relation between the amount of Cesium in soil and that of Cesium in agricultural product. Therefore, there are some possibilities for farmers to continue to produce products in their own farmland. Addition to that, the accident made people rethink the value of their hometown. Now some people are working hard to revitalize their loving hometown.

Q3. What are the lessons for you?

Anything, maybe especially artificial things, has danger. Therefore, we should be careful to make a decision to use something. We should have knowledge to think about the worst case and the influence in the long term, and then if it turns out that it might cause a catastrophe, we should refuse it with courage. To judge whether what is happening around us needs changing or not, we may have to pay more attention to happenings around us and listen to people's voice carefully.

Q4. What can you (or do you want to) do?

By knowing correct information I do not want to be disturbed by rumor. In this field trip, I could learn how they were trying hard to recover people's trust in their products. What happened in Fukushima is happening around Japan as well. Whether large or small, we ignore something unconsciously which actually needs changing. Therefore, I want to consider a value around me again.