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Under the Free Trade movement, Japanese farmers have been faced with the pressures of price competition from import farm products.

As a result, consumers and farmers have joined forces to protect local products.

The main stream of this movement are farmer's shops, a strong network between farmers and consumers living in urban areas, and school lunches using local products.

Recently, area authorities have supported school lunches with local products.

In spite of these attempts, there are many barriers to overcome even in the case of being in an agricultural prefecture.

I will describe the real purposes and effects of school lunches using local products, and how to better use community supported products for education.

A number of relevant questions came up such as, how do school lunches with community supported agricultural products influence people's lives in local areas? And what are their limitations?

At the same time, I tried to introduce what we can gain from this system economically or non-economically with practical case studies.

As a result, I will describe the economical effects not only in rural areas, but also in urbanized settings.

In addition, it is important to see other reactions that are not able to be measured by economics alone.

Furthermore, local authorities insist on using local agricultural products for school lunches, but at the same time they tried to privatize them out to companies. Unfortunately, it is impossible to adapt this system fully.

Agriculture is not appropriate to Market Fundamentalism, and the school lunch system also follows suit.

Introduction

Under the pressure of the Free Trade Movement and growth of imported agricultural products from China, the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries started a "local product consumption" movement.

One of their goals is to protect farmers by using local products in school lunches at elementary and junior high schools.

"The local products for school lunch" system was established not only to protect local farming, but also to give educational influence to school children and future consumers.

It also has possibilities to recreate communities. Recently, the local authorities began to include promoting "Local products for school lunch" system in their policy.

Certainly, their posture to "Supply safe, stable food" which a lot of people are demanding especially for the school children is worth serious evaluation.

Only few attempts however have so far been made at whether this can play such a severe role to activate domestic agriculture.

This obstructs the expansion of "Local products for school lunch" system and the question of what is the barrier for using this system in school lunch.

I will try to identify the effectiveness of "Local products for school lunch" in various ways and focus on key issues for introducing this to schools.

1. Movement to improve quality of school lunch and expansion of "Local products for school lunch"

To begin with, the school lunch system started with surplus agricultural products in the United States during post-war 1947.

The purpose was to keep children from starving, and we can say with fair certainty that the nourishment of children were greatly improved through this system.

Eating habits, however, have been changed afterwards by this "wheat based school lunch" in Japan that traditionally was a rice based culture.

When the GARIOA (Government and Relief in Occupied Area) from the United States was discontinued in 1951, Japanese citizens demanded continuation of school lunches and as a result, "the School lunch act" was enacted in 1954. This act insisted that "School lunch is a part of education" rather than the improvement of nourishment.

As a result, movements to improve the quality of the school lunches have been continued under this act. For example, parents, licensed cooks and dietitians demand milk for the children through "Campaign against Powdered skimmed milk in the school lunches" in 1963 (At that time, Skimmed milk was one of the surplus products in the USA and the Japanese Government kept using skimmed milk which was originally for stock feed in school lunches).

These kinds of movements partly succeeded to push back another purpose of the U.S. government at that time.

Following World War II, the school lunch system developed two targets. Peripherally, it rescued children from starving, but another and more important purpose was for the Japanese to become dependent on American eating habits and also American agriculture.

The parents and school staff revealed this "other" purpose behind of school lunch system and struggled to get back the Japanese eating habits for school children, future's consumers.

The reason for expansion of "local products for school lunches" and positive attitudes to adopt this system among communities is a direct result of this.

2. Effectiveness of "local products for school lunches" and education on food.

I am using the word "effectiveness" not only in the sense of economical terms but also in the universal sense of measureless worth.

The meanings of "effectiveness" is rather emphasizing worth which can not be calculated by money and effects of education cannot become clear over a short term.

"Food education" (education relating to food) is also a part of education, so as a result, this could not appear only after few years. Children's tastes, however, are very sensitive because they do not smoke nor drink alcohol. It is sensitive more than the average adult thinks, and the effects of imprinting are quite high.

Moreover, "Food education" influences not only children, but also the parents.

The following is a good example:

Takashi Shiraiishi is supplying vegetables to some schools including Oizumi 1st Elementary School in Nerima Ward, Tokyo.

When he started to supply vegetables, children took their parents to his own farmer's shop.

Parents also asked dietitians how to get safe and fresh vegetables which children had in their school lunches.

The revolutionary change of the adult can be possible especially through their children.

The effects of "Food education" must have appeared and spread quickly.

3. The necessary condition to adapt "local products to school lunch" successfully.

It is necessary to relate production, circulation, and consumption organically for successful introduction of that.

Local authorities, the agricultural cooperative association, and the farmers who provide agricultural products should commit with the school staff on how to cook and better educate students. Both of them should struggle for close cooperation with each other.

We shall now look more carefully into the relationship in successful cases.

1) Relationship between dietitian and cooks in the school

In the first place, dietitian and cook's continuous relationship is vital, necessary and indispensable.

As we consider the following successful cases, this system has worked properly where the relationship between dietitians and cooks through continuous exchange with farmers.

A better school lunch can be offered by voluntarily experiencing how hard farmers produce their goods.

Where cooks have had such experiences, they try to sympathize with farmers.

This is the key factor in creating a relationship and bond between cooks and dietitians-users of products and farmers-suppliers and go forward together to reach the same target which is for children based on this human exchange.

In Hino-shi, Tokyo where they provide ideally school lunches, the cook and the dietitian voluntarily borrow farmland from neighbors and grow soybeans to better understand a farmer's work.

In Hino-shi, cooks and dietitians are all public servants and they have worked with each other for a long time in stable conditions.

Such stable conditions in working places is very important because they can create a closer relationship and can break through any problem, for example, time-consuming work to use organic distorted shaped vegetables.

In any region and schools, "local products for school lunches" can not work without stable working conditions in the school kitchen.

2) Information exchange of cooking site and farmers- continuous relationship between school staff and community around school

In the second place, it is important that information exchange between farmers in the community and school staff continues.

This means that school staff members should have such information such as what is the best season for vegetables.

Usually dietitians make menus of school lunches. It is necessary to adjust a menu to a farm's activity.

To achieve that, it is necessary and indispensable that meetings with farmers, people related to the schools, dietitians and also agricultural cooperatives are held once or twice a year.

Otherwise dietitians cannot always grasp information clearly.

Prior consultation for menu making gives dietitians the chance to learn local farmer's current conditions and tell them what a dietitian and children's needs are.

Moreover, the farmer can obtain better motivation to increase different kinds of vegetables for school lunches.

3) Installation of the appropriate number of men on a school lunch site

Thirdly, the dietitian should be placed at each school. It is necessary to have enough members at the cooking site continuously.

As I mentioned before, cooks and dietitians should be in stable working condition to create a collaborative relationship. Moreover, it is necessary to avoid cooking large quantities, for example, several thousand lunches at a time. (In the worst case of O-157 in Japan, 9,523 cases of infection and 3 deaths occurred in 1996, most of victims related to school lunches. At that time, only one central kitchen cooked 13,000 meals for 16 schools. The capacity of workers and centers were not enough to take care of such huge amounts.)

It is necessary for kitchen staff to maintain mental composure and also have time to spare.

These conditions give time for cooking sites and so that the farmer's intentions can reflect on the staff at school to use products in the best ways.

As I mentioned at the outset, recently, local authorities direct the staff in charge of the school lunch to take the "local products for school lunch" system.

In reality, however local authorities often introduce Market Fundamentalism, and they replace full-time cook as public workers with part-time and temporary workers from private companies. It means that local authorities promote privatization of school lunches.

For instance, in the annual report 2004 of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 13.4%, 4,134 schools of elementary and junior high schools in Japan based on privatized school lunches. It means that over 1 million 473 thousand school children eat privatized school lunches.

Moreover, full-time cooks decreased from 55,961 in 2000 to 52,790 in 2002, and the proportion of the part-time in the whole school cook is 28.9%¹.

Actually the proportion of part-time workers in general industries is 23.0%, compared with part-time workers in school lunches, it has increased rapidly.

¹ Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology "Reports on School Lunch Program 2004"

The recent trend is to hire the dietitian as a regular civil servant and cooks come from private company. In one hand, the cook belongs to a private company following the Japanese law, the dietitian cannot ask or order the cook directly, or distribute an instruction sheet cooking to members. In these cases, dietitians work with cooks in the kitchen.

This inconvenience leads school lunches out from farmer's intention.

4) Role of Nokyo-agricultural cooperative association: As the sender and the receiver of information

This system needs a coordinator who always reports farmer's information of the region to the school staff. Because dietitians need to know where there is a cooperator to provide local products and how to get information.

It is Nokyo that offers items and farmer's information in the region, and can play a vital role to mediate cooperation with the farmers and school staff. For example, local organic products have many worm-holes.

When cook find a worm-hole or worm itself, they call the staff of Nokyo immediately and confirm safety. In another case, because of whether or any other reason, if quantity of products cannot be provided, Nokyo can use their network and correct substitute products.

This is the aim of Nokyo and usually they support school lunches through voluntary work.

However, Nokyo is now facing severe problems. They have concentrated on financial business for a long time and forgot their *raison d'être*. After the collapse of the "Bubble Economy" in 1992, their problems gradually became bigger and bigger. So they needed to merge and dissolve branches of Nokyo in order to cut down expenses.

Nowadays, Nokyo's headquarters need to put their staff in charge of a wide area. Most of the staff cannot recognize where there can provide products or they cannot organize new networks for school lunches.

They also introduced market fundamentalism and failed to protect farmers.

4. The influence of "local products for school lunches"- a part of "local product consumption"

The main purpose of "local product consumption" is to regenerate domestic family-run farming.

Moreover, local farming is reproduced as part of a social circulation, sustainable and it does not destroy the environment.

The quantities of products for school lunches are small portions for each farmer. In addition, if dietitians and local governments wish to use local products, farmers need to grow various kinds of products. This is different from big market circulation.

In reality, they try to expand the cultivation for the school lunches.

They say that working for school lunches gives them a greater sense of satisfaction because they are members of community and school children are also members as well.

It also means that variety of farm products produced in the region is naturally influenced by school lunches. Farmers learn safer ways to produce vegetables and crops, and increase the different kinds of products.

Sometimes, local governments show the one problem to adapt this system is the shortage of products outside the market.

I can say with my field research, however, there is a possibility to expand items for school lunches when it gets on the right track.

In addition, it is possible to solve this problem by cooperation with neighboring cities, towns, and villages, if there is a shortage of items.

As Shigeo Oshima suggested it in his book 'Plan of a social self-support: countermeasure to "New Basic Law of Agriculture"', if each community cannot produce specific products, they can solve this problem by cooperation with the nearby municipality. Or, if it is not possible to procure these from their neighbors, they can create a network nationwide.²

It is important that the means of the self-support also establish a "Social self-support" system. Making "Face to Face relationship" in the network is possible by cooperation each other even if that is out of their communities.

This is important for "Social self-support" he mentioned so we can create communities outside of today's Market System.

² Shigeo Oshima " *Food-A Plan to the social self-support*" Ootsuki-shoten, 1999

5. Effectiveness of "local products for school lunch" from the purpose of "Local revitalization" in economic value

In this report, as I mentioned above, I do not use the term "Effectiveness" not only as economical meanings. Rather, I use this in a broader sense.

For farmers, however, are anxious how to maintain the family run farm under the pressure of free trade, the economical effect is also very important.

As for local governments, recognizing the economical effects of "Local products for school lunch" system gives them a strong motivation to promote this system.

Next, I will clarify the influence of "local products for school lunches" system to agricultural regions from a cost related viewpoint. I use a detailed analysis of Niigata prefecture, the most famous agricultural region.

As space is limited, I cannot introduce the whole figure which I investigated and statistics in detail here. This analysis is, however, based on field research in 111 cities, towns, and villages in Niigata Prefecture, a typical agricultural region, and the top rice producing area of Japan.

Local authorities pay labour costs such as the cooking members and all the expenses for the fuel and kitchen maintenance in Japan.

Parents' expense is only for materials, vegetables, meat, fruits, rice or other products.

So, if a school lunch system procures all ingredients from the region that can be introduced, the amount of money that parents independently pay for school lunches will become the farmer's income.

As for the number of school children, if the population scale of the municipality is large, the total amount of school lunch expense will also increase.

On the other hand, such municipalities with a large population should be urbanized, and at the same time, there are still many farmers and their output is huge.

If the whole expense of school lunches flows to farmers, a huge amount of money will be available for each individual to maintain farming.

Moreover, for the depopulated municipality, most of farms cannot get into mega market, and most of them will grow products for the niche market.

Farmers cannot find motivation to maintain their business and feel isolated without a young generation.

So the overall amount of output of farming is quite small.

The amount of expense for school lunches is bigger compared with the budget of such a small village.

To take another example, Niigata-City is center of Niigata Prefecture and has 52,000 people; the amount of school lunch is 1.4 billion yen a year. It is equivalent to 8% of output of agricultural products in this area. This is a considerable ratio.

Moreover, Oomi-cho where the population decreases up to about 10,000 and suffer depopulation, the agricultural output has remained at 69 million yen. If all the school lunch expense amounts to 25 million yen is turned into the school lunches, it become a big market. Actually 36% of the amount of agricultural products of the Omi-cho get to the market continuously.

Of course if the phenomenon of the declining birth rate is higher or the outflow of people is accelerated, the expense of school lunches could decline. Such economical effect does not appear clearly as of yet.

There is one answer for that.

Takayanagi-machi, in Niigata also suffers from depopulation because there is no high school, it means all children should go out of this village after graduation from junior high school. So they decided to introduce "local products for school lunch" and all farmers create network for that immediately. Their target is to give children chances to taste traditional dishes and memorize these even if they live a great distance away from their communities. Now school lunches in this village have become famous and they established a green tour system there. They just expanded this system from school lunches to farmer's shops and farm houses.

Conclusion

There are various reasons to push forward "local product consumption" on each side of the local government, consumers and farmers.

The Japanese Government shows a positive attitude to protect domestic agriculture, but on the other hand, they are following free trade and they consistently protect cars, precision machines, and the household electrical appliance industries.

Domestic agriculture has been sacrificed for trade negotiations.

The Japanese car industry gave money to the lobbyists of the U.S. Congress when there was conference to demand Japan to open their rice market.

Presently, FTA negotiations with Mexico, the Japanese government admit no taxation for agricultural products from Mexico and demand no tax for cars or machines from Japan to Mexico as well.

I should say coping with the "local product consumption" policy in our local government is limited. It does not contradict the policy of free trade.

Our free trade policy is based on Market Fundamentalism.

As long as local governments adhere this policy, they will adapt privatization of school lunches as I mentioned before.

It is a big obstacle to push "local products for school lunches" forward.

This is the limitation of "local product consumption" and "local products for school lunches" held by local governments.

I can say that this system has the possibility to break through a part of the limit of our Free trade system and Market Fundamentalism.

Can I say, however, this system also has a possibility to recreate the community as one of the pillars of "Endogenous Development?"

I would like to analyze this possibility next time.