

Media practitioners in Tokyo for productivity in agriculture mission

Innovations and productivity improvement are crucial in enabling countries in Asia to meet national food requirements amid challenges posed by declining arable land, climate change, competing nonfood uses for agricultural commodities, and increasing food demand by growing populations. In most developing countries in Asia, the agricultural landscape is dominated by small farms where productivity is low and farmers have meager income to improve their well-being.

While there have been substantial technological development and innovations in agriculture, much of these have not reached small farmers due to constraints in the flow of knowledge and information, among other factors. The mass media could be the missing link in efforts of governments to transfer knowledge and information more effectively to the multitude of small farmers scattered in rural areas. In some countries, the mass media have been involved in this endeavor through government sponsorships and private undertakings.

Responding to this challenge, 16 media representatives from across the Asia-Pacific participated in the multicountry observational study mission on Best Practices in Promoting Innovation and Productivity in Agriculture for Mass Media Practitioners, 9–14 September, to become familiar with modern technologies, innovations, and best practices in Japan to improve productivity in agriculture. Experts from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology; Kyoto University; Japan Agricultural and Journalists' Association; and Kobe Beef Marketing & Distribution Promotion Association introduced various models of advanced

farming technologies and innovative methods to raise farm productivity and the quality of agricultural products. Numerous site visits enabled participants to observe the interplay between agricultural technology and innovations.

This project encouraged partnerships among media practitioners and the APO, NPOs, and other relevant national organizations in the promotion of innovative ideas and techniques for improving productivity, particularly in agriculture. Participant from Bangladesh Mohammed Moinuddin commented, “The plant factory model can be one of the best solutions for the uninterrupted commercial production of leafy vegetables in urban areas in future. Integrating a technologically savvy young population with experienced aging farmers can boost sustainable agricultural production in Bangladesh. These are issues to share with our policymakers and influence their relevant policies so we can mitigate the crisis in this area.”

Other sites that hosted visits by mission members included the pioneering plant factory on the Kashiwa-no-ha campus of Chiba University; bustling Tokyo Metropolitan Central Wholesale Ota Market; and Fuefukigawa Fruit Park, a sprawling facility combining agrotourism opportunities with working fruit orchards. 🌱



A representative of Tsukuba Virtual Museum of Agricultural Technology explaining traditional farming tools.