

Mass media familiarized with Japan's technofarming culture

Seventeen media representatives from 13 countries across the Asia-Pacific marveled at the lifestyles of villagers surrounded by modern amenities in the deep countryside. They observed these while becoming familiar with modern technologies, innovations, and best practices in Japan to improve agricultural productivity during the multicountry observational study mission on Best Practices in Promoting Innovation and Productivity in Agriculture for Mass Media Practitioners, 8–14 September.

Experts from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Agribusiness Support Center, Mebiol Inc., *The Japan Agricultural News*, Chiba University, TV Hamura, and Aomori prefecture introduced advanced farming technologies and innovations to raise farm productivity, agricultural product quality, and farmers' incomes and quality of life. Site visits that demonstrated the interplay between agricultural technology and innovations included Taisei Industrial Co., Ltd., developer of unique cryotechnology for maintaining agrifood freshness; Inakadate village, originator of widely copied paddy field art; Hirosaki Apple Park; and Tsuji Farm's film agrifacility utilizing Mebiol's technology. Participants commented on the eye-opening experience of meeting small farmers in villages who rely on innovative technology and innovation to create prosperous livelihoods. They added that in their countries, farming often meant daily drudgery, discouraging many from the career.

One objective of the mission was to demonstrate how governments can transfer information more effectively to multitudes of farmers scattered in rural areas by leveraging mass media. In some countries, the media are involved in this through government sponsorships and private initiatives. Delegate from Sri Lanka Peiris Habaragamuralalage Harsha Udayakantha, Editor in Chief of *Treasure Island* magazine pointed out, "We are publishing a series



Cambodian delegate and journalist Lamngeune Latsaath plucking apples at the Hirosaki Apple Park.

of feature stories, news releases, reports, and pictorials in different media to encourage people, especially the young generation engaged in education, on readily available innovations in agrotechnology to improve agriculture and related segments and therefore ensure the future prosperity of the masses.”

This mission encouraged partnerships among media practitioners and the APO, NPOs, and other national organizations in promoting innovative ideas and techniques for improving productivity agriculture and the lives of farming families. 🌀