

Myanmar delegates investigate agricultural innovations in Japan

Innovations in food production systems and postharvest operations are crucial to increasing the productivity and quality of agricultural products. With an aging, diminishing labor force and declining land area for agricultural production, the only way to increase output is the introduction of innovations including advanced production technologies and farm machinery, along with appropriate support infrastructure, R&D, and extension systems. However, many developing countries lack access to production technologies, training, and infrastructure support.

Myanmar's economy relies heavily on agriculture, which provides employment to over half of the workforce and is linked to activities that provide livelihoods to about two-thirds of the population. Farmers have limited access to technology and information on value addition or the food value chain, however. Improving agricultural productivity and value addition are critical to reducing poverty and raising the competitiveness of the country's agricultural and food exports.

With a special cash grant from the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the APO organized an observational study mission from Myanmar on agricultural innovations in Japan, 19–26 August. The mission provided opportunities for 20 participants from Myanmar to study innovations in farming systems and post-harvest operations in Japan and a platform to network with organizations and institutions that could facilitate future cooperation and exchanges of knowledge.

Experts from the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Kyoto University; Tokyo University of Agriculture and Technology; and National Agriculture and Food Research Organization (NARO) led discussions on technologies to improve agricultural productivity, referring to innovations in rice production and agricultural mechanization. Dr. Satoshi Yoshinaga of NARO commented, "The sharing of knowledge and technology with the delegates can be applied to help increase the efficiency and productivity of rice in Myanmar and also reduce the labor cost for rice production."

The mission included visits to several research institutes under NARO, tractor manufacturer Kubota Corporation, food-processing machinery manufacturer Satake Corporation, fertilizer provider Katakura Chikkarin, and rice mill and storage facilities operated by agricultural cooperatives. Myanmar delegate Dr. Myo Kywe thought that, "This project will help in further collaborations and cooperation between Myanmar and the companies visited to help elevate agricultural productivity in my country." 🌾



A demonstration of an innovative irrigation system at the National Institute for Rural Engineering.