Roundtable discussion on “Land use in rural regions”
10th OECD Rural Development Conference
19th May 2015, Memphis, United States

Revitalizing Rural Areas in Japan

Katsuhiko YAMAUCHI
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries (MAFF)
Japan
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To take measures against

- Rapid population decrease
- Centralization to Tokyo metropolitan
- Increase in (i) abandoned farmland, (ii) crop damage by wild animals, and (iii) vacant houses
- Mulfunctioning of communities and social services (transportation, health care...)

Population and the aging rate in rural and urban areas
2. Policy direction to invigorate rural areas

Creating jobs in rural areas
- Identify and utilize local resources
- Value-adding to local products
- Promote collaboration between primary, secondary and tertiary industries
- Develop and utilize renewable energies
- Promote social businesses
- Invite various talented people from outside, utilize women’s power

Strengthening linkages between communities
- Plan and design land use and communities’ future vision
- Enhance community functions to manage local resources
- Centralize social/public services into core area
- Improve networks between communities

Promoting interactions between rural and urban area
- Publicity for values of rural areas
- Promote green tourism, second house, migration...
- Dispatch voluntary supporters to rural areas
3. Main support programs to invigorate rural areas

Support programs by MAFF

- Rural Invigoration Project (infrastructure support)
- Promotion of rural and urban interaction (support for institutions)
- Direct payments (improve and maintain multifunctionality)

• Focus on local resources/communities (not limited in agriculture)
• Bottom up, self-standing style
• Flexible to tailor the project components

Coordination with other Ministries

- Education
- Tourism
- Medical/health care
Rural Invigoration Project

- **Target institutions and requirements**
  
  - Local governments (prefectural or municipal level), cooperatives, NGOs or local institutions composed by farmers, communities, NGOs, private sector, local governments, etc.
  
  - Submission of Rural Invigoration Plan which identify challenges and opportunities and describe their future vision and actions in a targeted area

- **Support menu**
  
  - Infrastructure improvement for agricultural, forest or fishery production, processing facilities to increase the value of local products
  
  - Living conditions improvement for local residents and migrants
  
  - Facility construction or renewal to promote interaction between rural and urban area, migration from urban area, utilization/preservation of local resources

Rice processing facility  
Preservation of traditional culture  
Unused school renewal for green tourism
Promotion of rural-urban interaction

• **Target institutions**
  • Rural association composed by communities, NGOs, private sector, local governments, etc., covering from one community to several municipalities

• **Support menu**
  • Fund provision for the activities of:
    (i) exchange projects for children experiencing farming and rural life
    (ii) promotion of green tourism
    (iii) improvement of rural amenities (landscape, nature, ...)
    (iv) promotion of migration
    (v) collaboration between agriculture and health care
    (vi) network development between producers and consumers, etc.
  • Fund provision for human resource development, matching/dispatch of skilled supporters
  • Repair of vacant houses/unused school buildings to utilize for the activities above

School program to experience farming  Green tourism  Health care program in a rural area
Direct payments contributing to rural development

**Multifunctionality payments**

- Support communities’ joint activities for:
  1. preserving local resources, and strengthening institutional arrangements
  2. Improving the quality of local resources, and repairing/renewing agricultural facilities to lengthen their service lives

**Direct payment to farmers in hilly and mountainous areas**

- Support activities in hilly and mountainous areas for:
  1. preventing the farmland abandonment
  2. maintaining agricultural facilities (canals, farm roads,...)
  3. Improving landscape

**Direct payment for environmentally friendly agriculture**

- Support the farming operations to reduce chemical fertilizer and agrichemical consumption by 50% or more in principle
4. Case study: Yoshida Furusato-mura Company

• Yoshida area locates in hilly and mountainous area in western Japan.
• Population has dramatically decreased from 5,000 (1955) to 2,800 (1985).
• In order to increase job opportunities, Yoshida Furusato-mura Company, the third sector funded by local government, private sector and residents, was established in 1985.
• The company operates various services, hiring 69 employees in this area.
Thank you for your attention