

Mikitaro Shobayashi

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Fields of Interests:

Multifunctionality of agriculture and its policy and trade implications, Agri-environmental policies, Agricultural water resources policies, Global warming and agriculture, Agriculture in emission trading, Rural development policy, Agricultural policy system

Dr. Shobayashi, with his broad experiences in working on water resources and agricultural policies, is interested in contributing to policy making in Japan on efficient allocation of natural and agricultural resources.

Regarding water, he served the World Bank in Washington D.C. as an operation officer and was involved in a team at the Bank to establish a new innovative policy for Pakistan including the establishment of water market. He was also responsible for establishing irrigation policy in Japan when he worked for MAFF and took a strong initiative to introduce a pilot project for quasi-water market. He is also interested in transforming irrigation districts in Japan to financially autonomous institutions.

Regarding the agricultural side, he was the main author of OECD's reports on multifunctionality of agriculture and its policy implications; the report covers various aspects of agriculture and trade, and identified conditions where production-linked policy could be justified to protect agricultural production as well as multifunctionality associated with agricultural production. He was also responsible for planning and developing agri-environmental policies when he was seconded to a prefectural government in Shiga. He was a core member of introducing an agri-environmental payment for farmers who comply with environmental requirements, which was the first attempt in Japan.

After quitting from MAFF in 2007, he has been conducting researches on both water and agriculture in a context that water and agricultural policies should be consistent with general principles regarding efficient allocation of resources. In this aspect, he is very much interested also in carbon emission trading with agriculture as offset providers. He is the chairman of the Special Committee in MAFF for establishing methodologies to estimate credits associated with green house gas reduction or sequestration in agriculture. He is also a member of the Planning Committee for Rebuilding the Area Affected by the Earthquake and Tsunami on March 11, 2011, which was established by the Prime Minister.

His research interests in the recent years also lie in how good agricultural policy systems should be developed so that changing policy environment facing agriculture and rural areas could be incorporated in policy making. His recent research also covers establishing a new institutional framework to encourage agricultural landowners to act collectively to increase use efficiency as well as to preserve rural landscape.