

Objective of the international symposium

G8 environment ministers will gather in Kobe to discuss about “Global warming, Biodiversity, 3R”. Following this meeting, G8 summit conference in Toyako will discuss on “Global environmental issues” including food issue. We, the organic farmers and related parties, would like to promote the following appeals and policies to the intergovernmental conferences:

that organic agriculture can contribute to solve environmental problems;

that there is no solution for environmental issues without considering the way of agriculture;

that food issue and environmental issue have to be discussed together.

In order to appeal these points, we are holding this “international symposium to think environment and agriculture – the role of organic farming on global environmental issues. Let’s make policy proposals to G8 summit by organic farmers!” In the process of symposium preparation, we decided to propose Kobe Declaration of “organic agriculture to solve the global environmental problems”. In this declaration, we concentrated the opinions of organic farmers and related parties in Japan, with cooperation of international knowledge.

At the same time, we are publishing the opinion ads “The opinions of 200 people on agriculture and environment” on the Internet, and appeal to all over Japan and the world.

Today’s modern industrial society depending on the limited resources, and the heavy market economy centered society based on WTO structure, are destroying the global environment and weakening agriculture in each country. We’d like to change this trend, and to transform into recycling-oriented, cooperative sustainable society. We believe the sustainable organic agriculture, that is what real agriculture should be, is the starting point to achieve that goal.

Japanese Law on Promotion of Organic Agriculture was enacted in December 2006, and whole country is trying to promote organic agriculture. It is important for organic farmers and consumers to cooperate and collaborate.

It is also important that people and parties working on separate topics of “Agriculture and Food” and “Environment” to share awareness.

We have very limited time considering today’s population growth and environmental deterioration. We hope today’s symposium will make a new start toward the sustainable society.

Kobe Declaration on “Organic agriculture is to solve the global environment problems”

Announced at “The International symposium to think about agriculture and environment” May 25th, 2008.

By the National “Change Agriculture!” movement

We propose “The policy of sustainable agriculture, food, and environment issues based on organic agriculture” for the themes of global warming, biodiversity, food crises, low-carbon/sustainable society, discussed at the G8 summit in Toyako, Japan 2008.

The global scale crises like abnormal climate, food and resource price crises, water resource depletion, are worsening today. In order to solve these crises, we focus on the connection of agriculture, food, and environment.

The world’s croplands and pastures, which occupies about one third of the earth surface, have supported human society for centuries. They have produced food, provided clothing and housing for people, formed cultures and conserved local environment. That was the human relationship with the Earth.

However, the modern agriculture was built into modern industrial and business structures, which have pushed industrialization and global trade to extreme. Thus, today’s industrial agriculture takes part in destroying the environment. We aim to overcome the modern industrial society depending on the limited resources, and the heavy market economy centered society based on WTO structure, and to transform into sustainable recycling-based, cooperating society.

We believe the sustainable organic agriculture, that is what real agriculture should be, is the starting point to achieve that goal.

We propose here the issues that governments of Japan and G8 countries should work on to improve the global environment.

1 . Promote appropriate scale organic agriculture so that producers, distributors, and consumers can cooperate.

Small-scale, mixed farming, that can fit to the diversity of local environment, is the most effective management form to realize sustainable organic agriculture. We need appropriate-scale distribution system that can work with such variety of small-scale farms.

Today, the food safety is increasingly jeopardized by extreme commercialization of food products and overriding priority on market. In order to achieve food safety, we need to establish a stable relationship between producers and consumers. Here, we need to develop human relationship that can learn from each other and support each other.

We should promote appropriate-scale organic agriculture in the world so that producers, distributors, and consumers can cooperate.

2 . Realize the policy to develop local community and biodiversity based on agriculture, food, and environment.

Human body is a part of natural cycle and is supported by food and agriculture. Every life and environment is indivisibly connected. We should recognize this close connection among agriculture, food, and environment. The development of sustainable organic agriculture that harmonizes with diverse ecology of the Earth makes a foundation for human health.

The policy based on agriculture, food, and environment, can be formed by establishing organic farming. By this, we can finally secure biodiversity.

We should encourage independence and diversity of each region and country by maintaining biodiversity, and thus encourage the stability of local community and global environment.

3 . Establish the environmentally sound global trading rules which value local agriculture and food self-sufficiency.

Organic agriculture is a farming method of less environmental burden. It utilizes local resources and gathers production materials in local area, so it emits less greenhouse gas for transport. Organic agriculture of “local production for local consumption” style shortens food miles.

Standardization of agricultural production is not an ideal producer-consumer relationship for future sustainable society. On the contrary, what we need is the structure to support wide variety of agriculture that can fit local environment and local resource of each region and country. We need to establish a trading rule to appreciate wide variety of agriculture each other.

The government of every country should set a clear numeric target of food-self-sufficiency and organic agriculture, stop exploiting the developing countries, and establish the global rules to promote food and agricultural sovereignty.

4 . Establish the recycling-oriented and cooperative society based on natural cycle and life cycle.

In order to establish a sustainable society, we need to value local resource cycle and promote crop-livestock cooperation and producer-consumer cooperation. Any byproducts or waste from agricultural production or food consumption should be utilized as valuable local resources. Organic agriculture can utilize organic waste resource in the local community and can promote crop-animal cooperation.

The sustainable livestock farming should increase homemade feed and recycle of resource. They also should reduce farm poisoning and environmental load by cooperating with consumers to use their food residue.

We should go forward now to establish the life-valuing recycle-oriented and cooperative society based on waste reduce, reuse and recycle by restoring the real agriculture.