



Director General
Dr. Takeshi Nishio

It has been four years since the Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PRIMAFF), the sole national institute of the Ministry, was established in 2001. The following characteristic reforms were executed during the past four years. The structure of the institute has adjusted to project research, in which they have been searching for measures to overcome the problems facing Japanese agriculture. Task-force teams consist of members from administration offices, and researchers have set up to tackle the specific projects, usually on an *ad-hoc* basis in a given time, which were requested by headquarters of the Ministry, for example, projects relating to multilateral or bilateral international negotiations such as WTO or EPA talks. Several joint projects utilizing abilities of visiting researchers have launched for specific research fields, of which are not familiar with the researchers of the institute.

The project research on the 22 subjects has been carried out during the past four years under the new above-mentioned research system. Eighteen projects had been completed by the end of March 2005, which is in the 2004 fiscal year, and remaining 4 projects are under way now. Some of the titles of completed projects are as follows:

- Research on the practical uses of regional resources for rural revitalization.
- Study on overseas trends regarding the development and regulations of genetically modified crops.
- World food demand and supply project.
- Research on the establishment of a risk management system for food and agriculture.
- Research on measures for the revitalization of rural communities in response to lifestyle changes.
- Analysis of the impact of a climate change tax on the agriculture and food industries.
- Research relating to agricultural trade policies.

I strongly hope that the outcomes of these research projects will greatly contribute to the planning of new agricultural policies for my country.

On the other hand, the situation which surrounds agriculture changes every day both overseas and in Japan. New research fields should be developed corresponding to such changes. In addition, the development and introduction of new methodologies, personnel exchanges to administrative organizations and universities, and vice versa, dispatch of our researchers overseas, and invitation of leading scientists from overseas, are essential daily activities for improving the performance of the institute. We are convinced that these approaches will bring a great blessing to the institute in the future.

The Japanese economy is recovering from a serious depression. In such circumstances, The Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas revealing the new direction of agricultural administration was revised in March this year. It should be recognized that it is time to demonstrate our research ability. The reviewing to the organizational structure of the institute has begun for improving efficiency of our overall activities, in particular research activity. We will make every effort to contribute to further development of Japanese agriculture.

I hope you enjoy reading this publication. If you have any questions or comments concerning this publication and the institute, please do not hesitate to send them to us.

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