

Development and Current Issues of Community-Based Farming Organizations: Focusing on Changes in Labor Composition

MAGAKI Wakaba and HIRABAYASHI Mitsuyuki

Summary

Since the 1990s, numerous community-based farming organizations organized by local landowners have been established, particularly in western Japan. Following the introduction of the Cross-Commodity Income Stabilization Program in 2007, the number of these organizations increased rapidly, even in regions where they had previously been uncommon. However, many of the newly established organizations were regarded as lacking substantive farming activities. This study examines changes in the activities of community-based farming organizations and the challenges they currently face from the introduction of the 2007 policy to the present, with particular attention to shifts in labor composition. To achieve this objective, a follow-up mail survey was conducted in 2022 targeting the same organizations surveyed by the Policy Research Institute, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries between 2007 and 2009. The analysis integrates the results of this follow-up survey with data from the *Survey of the Actual Conditions of Community-Based Farming Organizations*. The findings indicate that the surveyed organizations have expanded in scale while also increasing their rates of incorporation and ownership of agricultural machinery. Even in the Tohoku region, where community-based farming organizations were once considered to have limited farming activity, those that remain active today have increasingly prioritized farmland preservation. At the same time, organizations across all regions face growing difficulties in securing labor from member households for farming operations. As a result, reliance on hired workers has increased, highlighting a significant challenge to the long-term sustainability of community-based farming organizations.

Keyword: Community-based farming, Agricultural machinery operators, Agricultural labor forces