

# Envisioning the Future of Agriculture: The ESD Way



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By Junichi Takahashi

Obihiro University of Agriculture and Veterinary Medicine held the Obihiro Asia and the Pacific Seminar on Education for Rural Development (OASERD), in Obihiro, Japan, in August 2007. OASERD promotes ESD in agriculture and livestock production in the Asia-Pacific region. So far, specialists have participated in discussions to further promote ESD for agriculture in rural areas, and to produce more tangible programmes and outreach activities. Even with the support of modern and advanced agricultural technology in Japanese rural societies, recent global environmental and food security and safety issues have cast a pall over rural development.

Food security stability and assuring food safety are problems in most international communities today. Because of globalization and the deregulation of food products, however, zoonotic infections caused by livestock pathogens, have quickly spread across

the globe in the latter part of the 20th century. Taking into account increased population growth in developing countries, as well as the deterioration of the Earth's environment, collective action is needed to face these challenges.

According to data published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2003, anthropogenic sources of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide) have abruptly increased due to agricultural and livestock activities. Their sources range from enteric fermentation, animal waste and rice paddies, to biomass burning, landfills and domestic sewage. Developing

land for agriculture has resulted in deforestation and a loss of biological diversity. Global warming is leading to changes in farming styles in rural areas in Japan. Moreover, these changes have also contributed to a spread of endemic infectious diseases in tropical regions and affected environmental hygiene related to securing safe water sources.

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The following updated seminar programmes will be offered:  
 2009 "ESD on agriculture and livestock production and global environmental issues"  
 2010 "ESD on infectious diseases and global environmental issues"  
 2011 "ESD on food security and global environmental issues"  
 2012 "ESD on human health and global earth environment"  
 2013 "ESD on distribution of agriculture and livestock products for food safety and global environmental issues"