

Message from the President



Dr. Yohei SATO

The COP15 Climate Summit was held in Copenhagen in December 2009 to develop a post-Kyoto framework to combat global warming. The media reported that heated discussions continued throughout the summit until closing; even the United States, which had withdrawn from the Kyoto Protocol, took part. However, the conference ended without presenting any new framework.

Nevertheless, during the conference new activity regarding fighting greenhouse gases started in the agricultural sector. The New Zealand Government proposed the “Global Research Alliance (GRA) on Agricultural Greenhouse Gases” an international research network, which was launched by a ministerial declaration. Japan joined the new network as a founding member. The first meeting of high-level government officials was held in New Zealand in April 2010. Three research areas were proposed, and Japan became the coordinating country for one of them: the rice paddy farming investigations. Our institution was registered as the coordinating institution for the research. As the readers of the past annual reports are already aware, our institution has accumulated excellent results from studies on controlling methane gas emissions from rice paddies, and we have maintained close relationships with research institutions and researchers in the monsoon region of Asia through the MARCO network to exchange research information. We understand that these past accomplishments led to our institution being awarded such an important role in the GRA.

This is just one example of our past research projects and persistent efforts expanding to the next stage of development. Within Japan, such developments include techniques to control greenhouse gas emissions from farm soil, techniques to store carbon in farm soil, and a validation test for plant-based remediation of cadmium-contaminated soil (phytoremediation). This phytoremediation research — described in the article entitled “Development of a remediation technology for cadmium-contaminated soil using highly cadmium-absorbent rice species (phytoremediation): A step forward to a new, low-cost soil remediation technology” — was selected as one of the ten most exciting topics for 2009 in the field of agriculture, forestry, and fishery research.

With numerous research institutions producing numerous results each year, we are proud of the fact that our research projects have been included among the ten most exciting topics selected every year since 2005.

We organized the information we had accumulated on farm soil and radioactivity in the agricultural environment into databases and published them. The databases our institution has developed to date are available for use on the Internet. We recommend you visit our website at <http://www.niaes.affrc.go.jp/>.

This annual report is a summary of our research activities and accomplishments during the fiscal year 2010. We hope that this annual report will provide readers with useful information, and we look forward to receiving your candid comments and suggestions.

We are pursuing high-level research that aspires toward our basic philosophy of harmony and coexistence with nature, society, and people, and we are striving toward our institution’s goal of helping to surmount the world’s food and environmental problems.

Yohei Sato, Dr. Agr.
President