

Chapter 3-12

Environmentally-friendly Agriculture

Abstract

Shiga Prefecture has established the Ordinance for Promotion of Environmentally-friendly Agriculture to proactively promote “environmentally-friendly agriculture” that uses technologies that reduce the impact on the environment of Lake Biwa and its environs to grow produce by realization of measures such as the reduction in the amount of substances used including synthetic agricultural chemicals and chemical fertilizers and the prevention of the outflow of muddy water.

In FY2012, of the area for cultivation of environmentally-friendly agricultural produce, paddy rice had expanded to cover 38% of the rice-growing area in the prefecture, and the aim is to make environmentally-friendly agriculture the established standard in the agricultural industry of Shiga Prefecture.

Keywords: Environmentally-friendly agriculture, The Ordinance for Environmentally-friendly Agriculture Promotion, Environmentally-friendly agricultural produce, Environmentally-friendly agricultural produce accreditation system, “Protecting Lake Biwa by Eating”

1. Ordinance for Environmentally-friendly Agriculture Promotion

Shiga Prefecture established the “Ordinance for Environmentally-friendly Agriculture Promotion” in March 2003 with the aim of providing consumers with safe, reliable agricultural produce and ensuring agricultural production in harmony with the environment, as well as contributing to the wholesome development of agriculture in Shiga Prefecture and conserving the environment of Lake Biwa and its environs.

As well as defining the roles not only of the prefecture, but also entities such as farmers, agricultural organizations, agricultural produce distributors and consumers, this ordinance also stipulates that prefectural governor shall formulate basic planning for the promotion of environmentally-friendly agriculture and establishes initiatives including the “Environmentally-friendly Agricultural Produce Accreditation” system.

2. The Basic Plan for Environmentally-friendly Agriculture Promotion

In accordance with Article 7 of the Ordinance, the basic plan was formulated in

December 2003 with “Creation of a Good Relationship between Human, Agricultural Produce and Lake Biwa” as its theme.

Subsequently, the plan was revised in 2007 and 2011, and the current version (2011 revision) adopts the three basic policies below to guide the implementation of measures.

(1) Basic Policy 1

Further expansion of the practice of environmentally-friendly technologies with the aim of the standardization and establishment of environmentally-friendly agriculture

(2) Basic Policy 2

Promotion of the production and distribution of Shiga area brand “environmentally-friendly produce”

(3) Basic Policy 3

Promotion of undertakings hand in hand with the local population to proactively encourage the use of environmentally-friendly produce

3. Environmentally-friendly Agriculture Promotion

Based on the ordinance and the basic plan, support was provided for farmers implementing environmentally-friendly agriculture undertakings not only through

the Environmentally-friendly Agricultural Produce Accreditation System, but also by means of initiatives such as direct payment for environmental agriculture (FY2004 – FY2008), support for farming activities as a policy for the enhancement of conservation of farming communities that provide links between generations (FY2007 – FY2011) and subsidies for direct payments for environmentally-conserving agriculture (FY2011 to the present).

As a result of these initiatives, environmentally-friendly agricultural produc-

tion was being practiced on 13,557 ha in FY2012, with rice paddies expanding to 38%, or 12,135 ha of the total area.

In addition, with “Protecting Lake Biwa by Eating” as the slogan, efforts are being made to promote understanding of environmentally-friendly agriculture among consumers both within and outside the prefecture.

(Food Brand Promotion Division,
Shiga Prefectural Government)



Fig. 3-12-1 Environmentally-friendly agricultural produce PR poster



Fig. 3-12-2 Environmentally-friendly agricultural produce

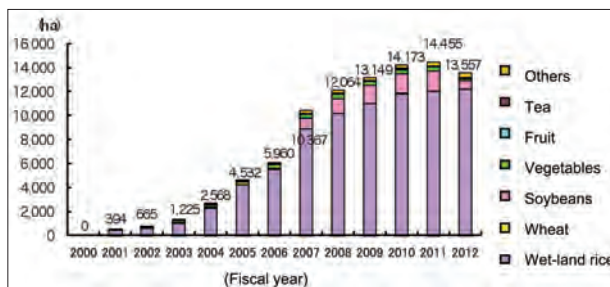


Fig. 3-12-3 Changes in environmentally-friendly agricultural produce cultivating area

Environmentally-friendly Agricultural Produce: Based on standards set by the prefecture, agricultural produce that is produced using 50% or less of the synthetic agricultural chemicals and chemical fertilizers utilized during ordinary cultivation and that makes use of technologies that reduce the impact on the environment of Lake Biwa and its environs by measures such as preventing the outflow of muddy water.