

Case Study 8

Aleph, Inc.

Registered Participant Name: Aleph, Inc.

Type of Organization: Private business

Relevant Aichi Targets (Rice Paddy Targets): 1, 4, 7, 8, 12, 15 (1, 5, 7, 8, 12, 14)

Aleph Inc. manages about 300 restaurants all over Japan; its mainstay is the hamburger steak restaurant chain “Bikkuri Donkey”. Aiming to provide customers with traceable, safe and healthy meals, we established restrictions on agrochemicals and cultivation standards for crops, and expanded the number of farmers eligible for our contracts. With regard to rice procurement, we started working with contracted producers to reduce agrochemicals in 1996. Through trial and error, all producers succeeded in growing rice without agrochemicals except one application of herbicide. Since 2006, this rice (Less Agrochemical Rice) is served in all of our restaurants. Many organisms such as frogs, dragonflies, loaches and herons are now seen in the Less Agrochemical rice paddies.

In 2004, during our struggle for Less Agrochemical Rice, we learned of the winter-flooded rice paddies in Miyagi prefecture. In 2005, “Kabukuri-numa and the surrounding rice paddies,” where some local farmers were facing the challenges of winter-flooded paddy rice farming, was designated as a Ramsar site. We were deeply impressed by this designation, and launched winter-flooding project for the demonstration and dissemination of this method. In order to demonstrate winter-flooded type organic rice paddies, we developed a 1000 square meter area of rice paddies in Eniwa City, Hokkaido. We started organic rice farming on our own. Local people and employees can experience farm work and wildlife monitoring in our paddies. In collaboration with some interested farmers, we have also examined whether the winter-flooded type organic rice farming method is really possible to implement widely in Hokkaido.

In 2009, we launched the “Living-Things-Friendly Rice Paddies” project, which was derived from the Less Agrochemical rice and winter-flooded rice paddy projects. The aim of the project is to conserve rice paddy biodiversity through our mainstream business dealings with farmers and customers. There are three requirements for “Living-Things-Friendly” rice paddies: organic farming, wildlife monitoring by farmers, and production methods mindful of environmental concerns involving rice paddies and organisms: such as winter-flooding, biotopes, fishways etc.. In 2011 we attained our midterm target to increase “Living-Things-Friendly” rice paddies up to 100 hectares, accounting for about 10% of our total rice procurement. We served “Living-Things-Friendly” rice in 21 restaurants in 2014. We can find many organisms in “Living-Things-Friendly” rice paddies, and the wildlife monitoring event there in summer is popular among customers of our restaurants.

From now on, we will keep on procuring “Less Agrochemical” and “Living-Things-Friendly” rice for our restaurants. And, we will also develop our projects with farmers to the stage

where we can say all Bikkuri Donkey rice is sustainable and enhances biodiversity. In addition, we are committed to continuing our efforts to raise awareness of the value of biodiversity in rice paddies through inviting customers and employees to wildlife monitoring of farmers’ rice paddies and experiencing agriculture in the Eniwa demonstrated rice paddy, and also by distributing an original song and dance video, “fuyumizu tango,” (the winter-flooding tango).



Case Study 6 wildlife survey with local citizens



Case Study 7 organic rice paddy biotope



Case Study 8 wildlife monitoring in paddies

