

# A Statistical View on Consumers' Thoughts about the Relationship between Diet and the Environment: through a Survey of Consumers' Attitudes toward Ecologically-Friendly Rice Produced in Shiga Prefecture

Yuri TSUKAHARA

*Key Words: Environmental Issues, Diet, Environmentally-friendly agricultural products, "Ikimono brand" rice, experience of farm work, questionnaire survey*

## 1. Background and the Aim of the Research

It has been almost 10 years since 21st century, which was called the century of the environment, started. Numbers of International conferences have been held, which did not necessarily succeed in solving environmental issues. So, I propose that we change our daily lives ecologically-friendly, in order to solve those issues. In this research paper, I focus on our dietary lives and environmentally-friendly agricultural products.

Environmentally-friendly agricultural products would be able to help us to change our diet ecologically-friendly. From this viewpoint, I consider that the consumer is aware of the relationship between his/her diet and the environment, if he/she chooses environmentally-friendly or local agricultural products.

In this paper, I try to answer those 3 questions: What are the characteristics of consumers aware of the relationship between his/her diet and the environment? Why are those consumers aware of it? How can we raise consumers' awareness of it?

## 2. Method

I carried out a questionnaire survey in order to examine consumers' awareness of the relationship between his/her diet and the environment. The abstract of the survey is shown in Table 1.

The questionnaire asked consumers about their thoughts about the environmental issues, biodiversity, rural area, farmers, agriculture, food, and dietary lives. Also, it asked their relationship with agriculture.

## 3. The Result and the conclusion

31.7% of those surveyed were aware of the relationship between his/her diet and the environment and their characteristics are: environment-conscious,

ecological-conscious, highly interested in food, and strongly aware of food safety. Furthermore, they think that government should do something to protect agriculture because farmers are not rich.

It also turned out that experiencing farm work after the graduation of high school and having conversations with salespersons or farmers when buying agricultural products would raise effectively the awareness of the relationship between his/her diet and the environment.

Thus, it would be necessary to provide more opportunities to experience farm work (especially for adults) and interact with farmers, in order to raise the awareness of the relationship between his/her diet and the environment effectively.

Table 1 The abstract if the survey

<b>Theme</b>	<b>A Survey on Consumers' Attitudes toward Ecologically-friendly Produced Rice</b>
<b>Object</b>	<b>Citizens of Otsu City and Kyoto City</b>
<b>Method</b>	<b>Random Sampling</b>
<b>Duration</b>	<b>November 19-December 2, 2009</b>
<b>Result</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Distributed: Otsu City 4,710, Kyoto City 1,290</b></li> <li>• <b>Collected: Total 1,175 (Otsu City 974, Kyoto City 176, N/A 25)</b></li> <li>• <b>Collection Rate...19.6%</b></li> </ul>