

Epilogue

It was about three months after the Great East Japan Earthquake when I was asked to write this book. The weather was really getting hot in Sendai by then.

After the earthquake, I was offered various opportunities as a university professor to speak in public and to write papers about food issues in relation to the earthquake. When I started to think about how to sort out what I had said publicly and written papers, the offer to write this book came along. That's one example of synchronicity. In terms of scheduling, it was really tight, but I was determined to take this offer and write a book that was easy enough for ordinary readers to understand, if they are keen about food issues, even if they are not experts in the food industry and grain business. Nonetheless, I wanted the content of this book to be just as relevant and accurate as the books for specialists.

Chapter 1 is based on two articles I wrote. One was an opening article for a magazine, *Nogyo to Keizai* (Agriculture and Economy), published in September 2011, and the title was “Blind Spots and Bottlenecks in our Food System Exposed by the Great East Japan Earthquake.” The *Nogyo to Keizai* magazine is widely recognized in the field of agricultural economy, but I needed to brush up my article so that ordinary people could read it without difficulty. A little before this magazine hit the market, another article of mine was published in the magazine called *Seifun Shinko* (Promoting Milling), and that article's title was “Promoting Japan's Milling Industry: Lesson Learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake.” Chapter 1 consists of parts from these two articles.

Chapter 2 developed around the main concept of this book, which my editor and I wanted to emphasize, that the things people take for granted now are the hard-won results of our predecessors' selfless efforts. I decided with my editor to feature the episode of the “Hog Lift” in chapter 2. As a matter of fact, there is a declining number of people who know about the “Hog Lift” through

their own experience, but the ramifications of this key event have grown bigger and bigger every year. A large number of people in both Iowa and Yamanashi have been benefiting from this historical event and enjoying the partnership without considering its origin. They just take this partnership for granted. Lori Erickson's beautiful picture book describes this episode. Had it not been for the various materials prepared by the U.S. Grains Council, I wouldn't have incorporated the episode into this book in such an ideal way.

Chapter 3 was newly written for this book. Currently available data about the U.S. agriculture and farming are too fragments into various categories, so I wrote this chapter to give readers the big picture on this matter. The phrase "right crop for the right land" has been used to describe the characteristics of Japanese farming, but it is also true that the U.S. agriculture is also based on this principle.

Chapter 4 is based on my voluminous paper that I sent to the international symposium hosted by the Korea Rural Economic Institute in August 2011, in Seoul. That paper was titled "JA's International Strategies Centering around Feed Grain Procurement and Direct Overseas Investment," and I touched up this paper for this book to highlight how JA has been dealing with grain imports for the sake of the entire country of Japan. Zen-Noh and Japan's trade conglomerates have different agendas, but both have been responsible for procuring food and feed to build an important foundation for the growth of corporate Japan. In this regard, it is important for us to understand how the international grain trade has developed over the past 30 years. This is important when we look into Japan's food situation in the future. My personal experiences and viewpoints as a former Zen-Noh employee are evident in various places. Therefore, some people may sense a certain bias in favor of Zen-Noh, but my true intention in this book is to focus on how Japan as a whole has been procuring feed grain. I hope readers will also acknowledge that there have been cases of cooperation, such as when Zen-Noh worked with a trade conglomerate to launch CGB to run the grain procurement business.

Chapter 5 is based on my March 2011 article in the journal "Asu no

Shokuhin Sangyo (Food Industry in the Future)” with the title “Biotech Crops and the Food Industry: Required Adaptive Abilities for Change.”

Two points I stressed over and over in this book are the amount of grains Japan imports and the amount of biotech crops Japan imports. I emphasized these figures in order to make people think about these key facts once again. I made a presentation with the same theme at the public symposium “Biotech Crops and their Uses,” organized by the Science Council of Japan in August 2010. My paper was also published by “Gakujutsu no Dokou (Trends in the Sciences)” in its February 2011 issue. I have been trying over and over to make my point through these papers, using the newest data each time. I think readers will realize the situation they are in now, if only they understand my point of view. Then they will know what to do next in order to improve the current situation.

Chapter 6 was newly written for the most part, but I have spoken publicly about most of what is written in this chapter. I summarized what I have done so far and showed some hints that will help readers think about their future.

Usually, to write this kind of book, it is always the groups and organizations in the field of the subject matter – in this case food and agriculture – that writers must rely on, but I would like to express my special appreciation rather to those who gave me lots of valuable advice to strike a balance between my thoughts based on my own experience, and the objective facts.

First, Mr. Tetsuo Hamamoto, the representative of the U.S. Grains Council in Japan, provided me with valuable hints on critical points based on his wide range of experience and in-depth knowledge about the long history of the grain trade between the U.S. and Japan. Had it not been for the help I received from Mr. Hamamoto and the U.S. Grains Council, I would have had a much harder time to write about the Hog Lift episode in such a short time. I thank Mr. Hamamoto and his organization from the bottom of my heart.

Another person I am very grateful to is Ms. Eiko Nakano, the editor of this book. Ms. Nakano and I had exchanged opinions a remarkable number of times since the start of this book project. Over the course of time, she pointed

out many places where my way of writing could cause misunderstanding or difficulty for ordinary readers. I believe it is all due to her professional advice that I could write an easy-to-read book for those who are not particularly familiar with the grain trade or the U.S.-Japan relationship. I truly thank her for her insights.

This book was published at the end of 2011, the year that Japan experienced the unprecedented disaster of the Great East Japan Earthquake. I sincerely hope that this book will serve as a starting point for readers to become more and more interested in the history of U.S.-Japan relations, especially the history of our food trade, and to participate in strengthening ties between the U.S. and Japan yet further in order to extend and renew this bilateral history.

Thank you very much.
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Profile

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Born 1960 in Tokyo. Acquired BA from Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Joined Japan's National Federation of Agricultural Cooperative Associations (Zen-Noh) working in the feed department and general planning department. Later became executive vice president of Zen-Noh Unico America Corp. Teaching since 2006 at Miyagi University. MBA from Harvard Business School, LL.M. from Tsukuba University. Corporate Law credits for the Doctoral Program in Systems Management and Business Law from the Graduate School of Business Sciences, University of Tsukuba. His previous writings include "Agribusiness ni Okeru Shuchu to Kankyo" (2007) and "Chusho Kigyo to Keiei" (2010).