

Cultivation of brewer's rice “Yamadanishiki” with natural farming in Aso region

阿蘇地域における酒米「山田錦」の自然農法栽培

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Aso region spreads around one of the world’s largest caldera stretching 18 km from east to west and 25 km from north to south. In addition to the grasslands maintained by field burning (*Noyaki*) in March, the landscape and agriculture in Aso region have been featured by the abundant and clean spring water. The spring water permits rice production inside Aso region and supplies water resource to the downstream basin including Kumamoto City. The water has been, however, polluted by chemical fertilizer and agricultural chemicals.

阿蘇は、火山と野焼きの火の山であると同時に、豊かな湧水があり、熊本市の水道を賄う地下水の基となる水の山でもある。しかし近年では、農薬や化学肥料などによる水質汚染が問題となりつつある。



The rice produced by Kita Ikiiki Club contains less than 7% of protein, while most brewer’s rice in Japan (including Yamadanishiki) contains more than 8% protein. The low content of protein permits the brewers to produce pure tasted Sake. So, their rice is sold at twice the price of standard rice

通常、酒米は8%ほどの粗たんぱくを含むが、自然栽培の喜多いきいきくらぶの「山田錦」の粗たんぱく含有率は7%以下と低い。たんぱく質が少ない酒米は、日本酒の醸造用として優れており、喜多いきいきくらぶの「山田錦」は普通の食用米の2倍ほどの価格で取引されている。



Label of sake bottle 酒瓶の説明

Several groups of able famers in Aso region attempt organic or natural farming to reduce pollutant source to the water. Kita Ikiiki Club is one of such farmers’ group. They produce a high quality variety of brewer’s rice, Yamadanishiki, with natural farming. They do not apply any fertilizer (organic or inorganic) or agricultural chemicals.

阿蘇地域では、いくつかのグループが、化学農薬や化学肥料を用いない有機農法や自然農法による米作りに挑んでいる。「喜多いきいきくらぶ」もそうしたグループのひとつで、自然農法による酒米「山田錦」の栽培をしている。



Farmers of Kita Ikiiki Club visit a member's paddy field to brush up their farming technique.

The worthwhile challenge for environment conservation and high profitability attract son and heir of the farmers in the village. While the cool climate of Aso region suppresses the damage by pest and insect in the natural farming of rice, a big problem is weed control. Without using herbicide, the members of Kita Ikiiki Club spend much time and labor to the weed control by machine or hand. Thus, several new tools for easy weeding are examined in the paddy fields.

環境保全型農業で阿蘇の水を守るというやりがいと、収益性の高さから、喜多いきいきくらぶに参加している農家では、後継者が育っている。一方、農薬を使わないことで雑草が増えやすく、除草に掛かる労力が大きい。新しい道具を使った除草方法が試みられている。



Student of Tokai University
Trying a new easy method for weeding
簡便な除草法を試す東海大学の学生