

Family Strategy of Family-farming Succession: A Case of Farming Families Executing ‘Family Agreement’ in Takasaki city, Japan

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to focus on a topic of family-farming succession in contemporary Japan. Here we can see the topic in two different angles, one is political macro scoop, and the other is private micro scoop.

After World War II Japanese government promoted small-scale family farming, where the essential element is the farm-successor. But actually the number of family farm successors decreased because of industrialization and urbanization. In 1960s the government took steps against this tendency. Among them is Family Agreement between father and son of farm household. But this institution did not work sufficiently around the country at that time. Later on, after 1995, it was renewed as Family Management Agreement, which includes contract not only between generations but also between husband and wife or among family members. The main goal was elaborating a strategy of family-farming succession in order to revitalize family farming and smooth business succession and also to promote the incorporation of farm management.

Some of the communities such as Takasaki city have continued exercising ‘Family Agreement’ until nowadays. The common feature of these succeeding farming families is that their farm managers have a spirit and striving of being independent. They watch the social trends in the larger economic area. And they have been training the younger generation through out the period from their childhood to maturity. Such a fatigue of the manager we will be calling a family strategy of seeking family farm existence and domination over the generations.

1. Introduction

Each family has autonomy against social changes. In this study we can call the methods to keep their autonomy a family strategy. In Japan the traditional family institution *ie* has been expected to succeed over the generations. And there is a tendency that family successors cannot select their life-course by themselves. Their life-course selection has to be suitable to their family existence. Therefore we can see elements of a family strategy in the life-course pattern of family successors.

Farming families in Japan own their farmlands as a part of their family properties. Because of that farm management is a family business, which should be handed over from generation to generation.

However, as it is well known, Japan is a highly industrialized and urbanized country, and agricultural sector of national economy has been decreased during last five decades. There are not so many farm managers who can run successfully their family farm. In spite of that here we can see a case of challenging farm managers executing a family agreement, which was renewed as a family management agreement today.

2.The Post-war Agricultural Policy in Japan and Family Farming

First of all, we would like to focus on political change in Japanese agriculture during the last century. As mentioned above, Japanese traditional family institution, so-called *ie*, kept material and spiritual family properties. Family business was based on the material family properties, i.e. lands and equipments for its productive activities.

In modern time Japan the *ie* institution was modified as a sector, dependent on emperor and was enhanced to a national ideology. In 1898 Meiji Civil Code was created and it stated that material properties must belong to a person and the right of supervising a family has to be transferred from father to the eldest son. Because of this inheritance system family succession and family business could continue over the generations.

After the World War II in 1948 current Civil Code was established. The new code abandoned the *ie* institution and the right of supervising a family. The inheritance system was changed from solo-favoring system to even-favoring one, which means that not only the eldest son but also all other kin-family lineages were lawful heirs. The institutional background, which guaranteed generational family-business succession, was abolished.

In spite of that, our case in family farming has been somewhat different, because the post-war Japanese government improved the institution of independent family farming. From 1947 farmlands were opened for each farm families from pre-modern large farm owners, because of democracy. This agrarian reform made a lot of small-scale family farms in current Japan. Such small-scale family farms had not possessed basic properties for developing family business until the reform.

And in 1961 the Basic Law on Agriculture was established and it contributed for the improvement of modernized independent farming families. In order to farther its improvement the Japanese government adopted new strategies for supporting the status of young farm successors on their farm operation. One of them was Family Agreement in farming families.

Because of industrialization and urbanization many farming families could not keep their farm successors in this field except of some successful independent farming families. Most of the farm households kept family farming as a side business. Mainly women and senior family members were engaged in their farming, a trend, which was impossible to stop. Those times trends were overwhelmingly side-business farming, feminization of agriculture sector and ageing of the farmers. The amount of uncultivated farmland was growing and the rate of domestic food supply got reduced. The ecology and safety of food were not secured. And then in 1999 the Basic Law on Agriculture was changed into the Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas.

The new political enactment gained sustainable agricultural development in Japan. This policy used a concept of Farming Holdings, which replaced the Farm Households, meaning that holdings, which include various forms other than a farm household, such as an agricultural corporation and a rural community, are more sustainable than families, because they are not influenced by kin-family lineage. In 2001 agricultural incorporation, which is the strongest type of holding, was constructed, because the new law aimed at marketing policy in Japanese agriculture. In these incorporations people could choose agriculture as their career.

But in reality, most of Farming Holdings are family business, i.e. the unit of Farming Holdings is a household. Usually it is a leading theme for Japanese

agriculture to provide good conditions for family farming. On the Basic Law on Agriculture, the Family Agreement was a measure of improvement of modernized independent farming families. It was imported from western countries in 1960s. The Family Agreement was at that time father-son contract for seeking democratic family relationship and modernized farm management. However, such a contract among the family did not suit the traditional Japanese farming families and went out of use, except of some rural communities, such as Takasaki city and Hokkaido.

After introducing the new law, the contract-system was revived as Family Management Agreement for partnership within farm families and for empowerment of farming women under the policy toward developing gender-equal society. The Family Management Agreement includes a contract between husband and wife, along with the father-son contract.

3. 'Family Agreement' in Takasaki City

3-1. The Beginning of 'Family Agreement' in Takasaki City

In Takasaki city 'Family Agreement' of farming families has been promoted by City Chamber of Agriculture since 1966. There are a few communities such as Takasaki city that have continued 'Family Agreement' for more than 35 years. During 38 years, 144 farming families have had participating in signing 'Family Agreement' in Takasaki city. However, each year the number of farm households executing the contract is around 40. Last year a ceremony for signing 'Family Agreement' was held on May 12th. There were 43 farming families, which signed this agreement.

In 1960's, 'Family Agreement' was introduced into Japanese farming families in order to keep young farm successors to be involved in their family farming. In 1964, the National Chamber of Agriculture published the 'Promotion Charter of Family Agreement Farming'. At that time as industrialization progressed in Japan, young men left their family farms to engage in non-agricultural occupation field. Family Agreement was to be utilized to improve working conditions of farming families and further more their family lifestyle. It was helpful in encouraging young farm successors to satisfyingly engage in their family farming.

In 1960's Takasaki city grew by combining with surrounding rural area, then urbanization of this city spread into the rural area. Moreover in 1967 wholesale merchants' new town was built in this city and the city became the center of distribution in northern metropolitan area. Employment opportunities and business chances for Takasaki people greatly expanded. Young farm successors giving up farming became a severe problem to the agriculture of Takasaki city.

The contract was aimed to keep young farm successors in their family farming. It was a father-son contract. Originally, the age of a son for this contract was restricted to 28 or under, but later this restriction was deleted.

3-2. Types of 'Family Agreement' and Trends in Number of Household Executing 'Family Agreement' in Takasaki City

There are mainly three types of 'Family Agreement' in Takasaki city as follows:

Type 1: An agreement for reward to farm labor: in this type, for example, a manager of family farm pays a salary to family laborer, like as to a salaried worker.

Type 2: An agreement for distribution of sales value of products: in this type a manager and his family laborer make a ratio of distribution in advance.

Type 3: An agreement for inheritance of management: in this type, a farm manager

rents his father's farmlands for his farm management.

Type 1 is suitable for young farm successors. Type 3 is mostly taken by such a farming family that consists of two generation's conjugality: father, mother, son and son's wife. Then Type 3 is taken by such a farming family whose father is 60 and over. Father hands over his position as a manager to his son because of his Farmer's Pension. According to family-life stages, farm families take different types of agreement.

Table1 shows the transition of number of farming families that had participating in signing this agreement. There was a turning point between 1976 and 1977. After 1977 farm households that signed an agreement type 3 increased. This phenomena means that many sons had already become managers and new farmers had decreased. In 1980's, as urbanization progressed in Takasaki city, the land prices had skyrocketed. And inheritance tax burden for farm successors had become heavier.

3-3.From Father-Son Agreement to Partners' Agreement

In 1986, son's wife began to participate in 'Family Agreement'. It put into practice by a proposal from wives' group. Because of shortage of farm labor it demanded women's labor in her family farming. After that in 1990 mothers began to participate in Family Agreement, too.

In 1990's, the Division of Women and Life in the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries began to promote the Family Management Agreement that renamed the Family Agreement. It aimed to empower farming women. In the revision of the Farmer's Pension Act in 1996, women were given the right to take a farmer's pension if they executed the Family Management Agreement. In these movements of 1990's, 'Family Agreement' of Takasaki city was widely noticed as one of the models of Family Management Agreement.

4.'Family Agreement' and Rural Communities in Takasaki City

4-1. Areas of Distribution of Farming Families Executing 'Family Agreement'

Table 2 shows trends in development of the number of farming families executing 'Family Agreement' according to rural community. Then we can recognize geographical distribution of farming families executing 'Family Agreement' in Takasaki city. There are 13 rural communities in this city. About 40 percent of the farming families executing 'Family Agreement' are located in the rural community No.9 (the Yawata agricultural area), and about 20 percent of that are located in the rural community No.13 (the Takigawa agricultural area). It means somewhat less than 60 percent of farming families executing 'Family Agreement' of this city gathered in these two agricultural areas. Another 20 percent of that is located in the rural communities No.5 and No.6 these communities belong to the Seibu agricultural area. Remaining 20 percent spread all over the city. These three agricultural areas are located in the suburbs of Takasaki city and in which the full-time farm households gathered.

In the Yawata and the Takigawa agricultural areas farming families executing 'Family Agreement' are performing cooperative agricultural management within the rural community. From 1977 to 1981 in the Yawata agricultural area several agricultural producers' cooperative corporations for horticulture were formed, which was specialized in producing tomatoes in glass or plastic houses. Between 1974 and 1983, in the Takigawa agricultural area four farming families formed limited responsible companies for hog-raising respectively. And these companies came to

receive management diagnosis of a licensed tax accountant together.

In Japan liberalization of agricultural products began between the 1970s and early 1980s. The competition principle of a market was introduced into agricultural management, and the amount of investment of a farming fund increased. It was the time when the successors in the Yawata and the Takigawa agricultural area had grown up enough to be farm managers and about ten years have passed after their engagement in their family farming. At the same time the institution of 'Family Agreement' was introduced in Takasaki city for the farm successor born in 1938 and afterwards.

There were 43 farming families executing 'Family Agreement' in 2003. Among these farming families there were 50 males mainly engaged in farming. Twenty-six of them were born between 1945 and 1954, which means that they belong to the generation so-called baby boomers and post-baby boomers. In the Yawata and the Takigawa agricultural areas there were relatively numerous males mainly engaged in farming who attained the independent family farming under the Japanese governmental sanctions in favor of the status of young farm successors.

Then, next section shows conditions of farm management styles of these agricultural areas in detail.

4-2. Cooperative Management of Tomato Producing in Rural Community - the Yawata Agricultural Area -

Sixteen out of 43 farming families executing 'Family Agreement' last year are in the Yawata agricultural area. Eleven of the 16 farming families are members of one of the three agricultural producers' cooperative corporations, which produce tomatoes in glass or plastic houses. These corporations were organized during 1977 and 1981 by 20 farming families for the purpose of acquiring farming subsidies to construct glass houses and plastic houses. They own 21 glass and plastic houses altogether and run a workshop for assorting, packing and shipping tomatoes. They employ many part-time workers. It looks like a factory. Eleven out of these 20 farming families are executing 'Family Agreement' today.

Most of these 11 farm successors are so called baby-boomers, 7 out of 11 successors born between 1947 and 1952. When the successors were in school there were many classes than other generations. The students who were not first sons became office workers after graduating from high school. The farm successors were to become their farm managers eventually. A community leader of the cooperative corporations suggested them to take part in the corporations and to engage in their family farming. They were filled with expectation to their successful farming. One of the successors said, "I will overcome all my office work rivals in earning". In those years from 1966 to 1971, they started to be involved with this contract of 'Family Agreement'.

It has passed more 20 years since the establishment of this cooperative management. It is a time to pay off their debt for farming subsidies and also time to renew glass houses and plastic houses. They are facing a problem of whether to renew these equipments or not.

The successors born in this area after the second half of the 1950s had worked in a company as salaried man after their graduating from university or high school. But after their early retirement they started being engaged in their family farming. Those who had heirs not currently engaged in farming kept hoping that their inheritor sons will be engaged in family farming after their retirement from their companies.

4-3. Agricultural Corporations for Hog Raising – the Takigawa Agricultural Area-

Nine out of 43 farming families executing 'Family Agreement' last year are in the Takigawa agricultural area. There are four farming families that are running limited responsible companies for hog-raising independently. These farm companies were established during 1978 and 1983. Three of them are farming families executing 'Family Agreement'. These farm successors are also baby-boomers.

The biggest company of these is raising more than 160 pigs. It employs many part-time workers. Every company equips modernized automatic system to raise hogs, thus they need not work on holidays and they can enjoy their free time. These successors learn in management from a licensed tax accountant together.

One of the successors' wives said, "I married my husband because of challenging spirit of his personality. It is no concern of mine whether he is a farm manager or a factory manager. But I prefer farming to manufacturing. Animals are lovely." She had no experience working in farm before her marriage.

These farms are anxious about urbanization of their community. Hog-raising is noisy because pigs oink and they smell awful. New inhabitants dislike it. And as the prices of housing lots rise, inheritance tax becomes a burden to them. For example when the successor of the biggest farm holding inherits his father's properties, his inheritance tax is estimated as 60,000,000 yen (about US\$600,000). However, the successors who are not currently engaged in farming and worked in the companies are going to succeed their independent family farming.

5. Farming Holdings and Family-Farm Successions

As mentioned above, baby boomers' and post-baby boomers' successors began to be engaged in their family farming under the Basic Law on Agriculture after the war, corporate with their neighboring in rural communities and organized agricultural producers' cooperative corporations. However, how their succeeding generation took the training for becoming under the New Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas? The following two examples are carrying out independent farm companies and are the cases where a generation's reproduction was attained from the family agreement between a parent generation and a child generation to the family agreement of a child generation and a grandchild generation.

5-1.A Case of a Dairy Producing

5-1-1.Overview

Dairy farming family A has established a limited responsible company in 1981, which is located on a hilltop of northwest Takasaki. Their farmland is equal to 10ha, which is quite large management scale in Japanese standard. When the interview was conducted in July 2000, the ranch kept 300 dairy cows of a Holstein kind, 6 dairy cows of a Jersey kind and 6 young Japanese oxen. Just two months ago, the farming family established another limited responsible company for processing homemade ice cream and yogurt.

Its working force consisted in manager (b.1943), his wife, the first son and his wife, the second son, the third son, a round year worker, four part-time workers and four temporarily hired workers. The manager's wife took accounting tasks herself and the third son was in charge of processing dairy production. It takes about 30 minutes by

car from their family residence to the ranch. The second and the third son, who were single, lived in the dormitory of the ranch.

In 1966, the manager had signed a contract with his father, 'Family Agreement' valid until his father's death in 1980. Afterwards in 1990, the first son began to get engaged in family business and had signed a contract with the manager. Currently the first son's wife had also signed the contract of Family Management Agreement.

5-1-2. Manager's career

a. Successor-minded educational background

The manager was the eldest son in his father's family. He had 5 younger brothers and sisters. As the eldest son, he helped his parents from his early age. In his junior high school days he was a member of a baseball team and his wish was to enter a high school, which has a well established and successful amateur baseball team. However, he had to enter another agricultural high school and to learn horticulture, in order to succeed his father's peach farm.

He was also expected to get engaged in his family farm from his early stage then he could not enter university, while his younger brothers were given the chance to study at the high level educational institutions by their father.

One of his high school teachers, whose major was dairy, had significant influence on the manager's occupational selection. At his third high school year the manager already made up his mind to change his family farm from peach farm to dairy cattle.

b. Initial engaging into family farming

The manager got engaged in family farming just after his graduation from the high school in 1961. He started his career as an assistant in his father's peach farm. In 1967 he got married. His marriage was the next important step to develop his farm management abilities. He decided to build a small cowshed for about 15 milking cows in his yard. It was a time for consolidating manager's business.

c. Becoming a manager of farming

In 1968 the manager's mother died at the age of 51. In 1970 his grandfather was admitted to hospital and his father fell ill. All these unfortunate family events urgently required him to manage his family farm by himself when he was only 27 years old it is really young age for farm manager in Japan. Soon after in 1972 the manager legally inherited all of his family properties from his father before his death, and then in 1973 he changed completely his succeeded peach farm to a dairy farm.

d. Establishment of his company

In 1981, by a development project of the city, the manager's farmlands were compelled to move to another place. Because of urbanization in rural area and a large number of children of baby boom generation, Takasaki city had to construct some new junior high schools in rural area of the city. A new junior high school was built on the family A's farmlands.

The manager and his wife sought for their new farmland large enough to run dairy farm in and out Gumma Prefecture. Then the family bought current 10ha ranch paying 400 million yen (about US\$4 million) and established a limited responsible company. The family raised the capital, which was subsidized by the government, and the wife carried out all accounting tasks by herself instead of hiring specialist in accounting. She visited a tax information office several times and learned how to pay off their debt in advance. The manager was devoting all his time to select breed of cattle. It produced a result that he has received some official commendation for selective breeding of cattle, e.g. he was awarded for successful dairy management by the

Japanese emperor in 1987. The couple has demonstrated their best ability in carrying out their partnership in their farm management.

e. Fostering the next farm-succession

The manager's three sons studied agriculture in schools, and now they all engage in their family business. The eldest son took an internship program at a large-sized farm in California, USA. The second son was educated at agricultural high school in Hokkaido, which is a well-known region for large-sized farm management in Japan. The third son learned milk- processing technology at an Academy for agriculture in Gumma Prefecture. The manager opened two dairies for homemade production shops in 2000. He will alienate his position as manager of these shops to his third son, as soon as possible after his marriage.

5-2.A Case of Flower Planting

5-2-1.Overview

In 2001 family B had a flower planting farm, its management-land scale is one ha (70a owned, 30a lend), 50 a rice pad, 30 a plastic house for cyclamen. Its working force consisted in 6 persons, manager (b.1950), his wife, elder son (b.1978), younger son and two year round part-timers. The manager planned to expand his farmland and to establish his company in 3 or 5 years, because from 2001 his both sons began to get engaged into his flower-planting farm.

His family lived together including also head of household, his wife, his two sons and his daughter. The farm family has been executing 'Family Agreement' for 33 years.

5-2-2.Manager's Career

a. Successor-minded educational background

In Japan usually the first son succeeds family farm. However the manager's father was the fourth son who succeeded his family farm, because his elder brother had been dead in World War II. The father had continued his career as salaried man even after his family-farm succession. As the side-business farm household, the farm family planted rice and barley, and bred silkworm. It was a traditional agricultural pattern in this region at that time, and therefore the manager, his brother and sister helped their farm operation from very really age. Especially the manager, as the first son, was expected to be the main work force in his farm. For example, he was obliged to take care of domestic animals, such as pigs and oxen before going to school. That is the reason why he hates animals nowadays and he choose to start flower-planting business. Even if he would have great profits from milking caw, he would never develop such business.

In his high school days he was a member of brass band and he kept a secret longing to be a musician. It was a turning point for him, when he first happened to see a planting farm of cyclamen. Now he thinks that planting cyclamen is not just an agriculture but also art and very attractive business. One of his classmates was a successor of cyclamen planting farm. The manager was given a pot of cyclamen by his friend and he began planting it. After certain time he was really very happy to see his own blooming cyclamen. At his third high school year he bought 200 pots of seeding cyclamen out his pocket money. He got a secondhand plastic house from a neighboring vegetable planting farm and placed his seedling cyclamen there. At that time he already made up his mind to succeed his family farm.

b. Initial engaging into family farming

In March 1967 at his high school graduation he got engaged into farming by building small new plastic house. Normally, his generation young farmers had to pass about two years internship at large scale farms. But being fiercely independent by nature he decided to start his business by himself. At first he felt envy to his classmates, who had already regular income as salaried men. Later however he realized that he made the right choice for himself.

c. Becoming a manager of farming

In 1975 his father retired. Usually the retired people continued to work in family farm in rural communities. But his father did not so, because of being a city community leader with many public duties. Within 5 or 6 years, just after the manager entered the business, the farmland owner's name was transferred from his father to himself, 10 a each year. Post-war Japanese inheritance institution is even between the heirs, spouse and children. In this case, his sister and brother needed not to inherit the farmland, because they graduated from university by their father's financial support.

In 1976 the manager got married and his wife began to help his business as an accountant. After a short maternity leave she resumed her family business duties.

d. Fostering the next farm-succession and farm holding

The manager's elder son learned horticulture at university and after that he passed two years internship at large scale farm. From 2001 he is engaging in his family Business. In spring of the 2001 he had passed internship in Netherlands for a month. The younger son also learned horticulture at high school and now he is engaging in his family farm. The daughter graduated from high school in 2001 and now she is learning flower gardening at business school. She will be able to get engaged in her family business, too, if she wants, because of the good management conditions of the family business. They all were willing to help their family farm from their younger age, playing games connected with flower planting still in their early childhood. In their high school they worked part-time in their parents' farm. The elder son played an important role of an assistant manager recruiting other seasonal part-time workers among his classmates.

The Manager was planning to expand his farmland by renting 12 a neighboring uncultivated land, and to enlarge his plastic house with 10 a more. He hoped that he would be able to establish a limited responsible company in three or five years.

6-2. Common Features of Both Cases

Those above two farm managers are entrepreneur-managers who were established as a successor of family farm under the Basic Law on Agriculture after the war. And they currently aim at the further management scale expansion through bringing up their successors of the next generation, while it is based on family farming.

The common feature of these managers' occupation career is as follows. (1) Independent personality of the managers. (2) Helping their father's farm as the eldest sons in their families from their early age. (3) Attending agricultural high school as future successors of their family farm. (4) Early engagement into their family farming right after their graduation for the high school. (5) Formation of their family career and family succession. (6) Sudden role taking of solo manager at early age because of family complications. (7) Successful partnership with their wives in farm management. (8) Giving a special technical education in agriculture to all their children, not only to the eldest son. (9) Letting their children to select agriculture as their occupation, which is rather rare case in Japan. (10) Introducing a large capital and enlarging the scale of

their family business because of the fact that several children got involved into their family business.

The awareness that the eldest sons would inherit family's belonging to the agriculture was formed through the lifestyle from the time of their childhood. Their habits of an inheritor formed their independent type personality. Although they inherited family farming, they reclaimed the management field in themselves and have found out the management domain in which self-determination is possible.

Early retirement of their fathers, wives partnership and children's master expertise from a school education made such a thing possible. They also made children their partners of family business. These examples make clear that the management scale expansion of the Farm Holding is based on family related issues.

7. Conclusion and Discussion

The aim of this study was to focus on a topic of family-farming succession in contemporary Japan. Here we could see the topic from two different angles: a political macro scoop, and a private micro scoop.

After World War II Japanese government promoted family farming, where the essential element is the farm-successor. From 1947 farmland was opened for each farm family from large farm owners. The agrarian reform made a lot of small-scale family farms, which had not possessed basic property for developing family-business. And in 1961 the Basic Law on Agriculture was established and it contributed for the improvement of modernized independent farming families.

However, the number of family farm successors has been decreasing because of industrialization and urbanization. And then in 1999 the Basic Law on Agriculture was changed into the Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas. Under the new law the policy used a concept of Farming Holdings, which include various forms other than a farm household, such as an agricultural corporation and a rural community. But in reality, most of Farming Holdings were family business, i.e. the unit of Farming Holdings was a household.

Farming families executing 'Family Agreement' in Takasaki City were a case of superior independent farming families and keeping their farm successors. In Takasaki City 'Family Agreement' of farming families was introduced in 1966 and continued for more than 35 years. During 38 years many farm successors grew up to be a manager and brought up the next generation. The life-course pattern of these successors changes with generations as follows.

The life-course pattern typical to the successors born in 1940: they got engaged in their family farming right after their graduation from an agricultural high school because of being the eldest son of their farming family. Although they were not allowed to choose a school and an occupation by themselves, they could be engaged in democratic family farming because of 'Family Agreement'.

On the other hand, the life-course pattern typical to the successors, who were born after the second half of the 1950s, was that they were able to choose their education and occupation by themselves. They were once engaged in the industry of non-agriculture and then got engaged in their family farming. Their school education did not usually relate to their occupational training.

But the life-course pattern typical to the successors, who were borne after the second half of the 1960s, was different from former generations. They were children of managers who established their modernized farm management by executing 'Family

Agreement'. They studied agriculture in schools and began to be engaged in their family farming soon after their graduation. Not only the eldest son but also other children might be engaged in their family business. They selected agriculture as their occupation by themselves.

As mentioned above, occupational awareness was made by habit in family life from the childhood. And it is obvious that cultural capital of family farm, which is succeeded at the place of everyday life, was just an important inherited property for continuing family business as well as economic capital. Although the concept of Farm Households was replaced by Farming Holdings following the new agricultural policy, sustainable agriculture is greatly based on the family relation of farm households.

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Table 1 Number of Households Executing 'Family Agreement' (Every 5 years)

Unit: households

Year	1966	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003
Number of times	1	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	36	37	38
Total	24	37	32	51	41	45	45	44	44	44	43
Type 1	5	8	6	15	15	13	13	11	11	12	13
Type 2	7	25	15	18	8	4	3	1	1	1	1
Type 3	0	4	11	18	18	28	29	32	32	31	29
Others	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Takasaki City Chamber of Agriculture

Table 2 Number of Households Executing 'Family Agreement' by Rural Communities (Total for 5 years)

Unit: households,%

Year	1966-197 5	1976-198 0	1981-198 5	1986-199 0	1991-199 5	1996-200 0	2001	2002	2003
Number of Times	1~10	11~15	16~20	21~25	26~30	31~35	36	37	38
Total	360	221	159	87	132	227	44	44	43
Community No.1	36	15	17	8	7	10	2	2	2
No.2	5	0	0	1	3	5	1	1	1
No.3	10	0	0	0	2	5	1	1	1
No.4	5	5	4	1	2	5	1	1	1
No.5	49	14	9	7	12	26	6	6	6
No.6	21	17	14	8	15	22	4	4	4
No.7	9	7	8	4	6	5	1	1	1
No.8	25	12	4	2	5	10	2	2	2
No.9	112	79	73	40	54	90	17	17	16
No.10	6	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No.11	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No.12	16	8	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
No.13	64	56	29	16	26	49	9	9	9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Community No.1	10.0	6.8	10.7	9.2	5.3	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.7
No.2	1.4	0.0	0.0	1.1	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3
No.3	2.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.5	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3
No.4	1.4	2.3	2.5	1.1	1.5	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3
No.5	13.6	6.3	5.7	8.0	9.1	11.5	13.6	13.6	14.0
No.6	5.8	7.7	8.8	9.2	11.4	9.7	9.1	9.1	9.3
No.7	2.5	3.2	5.0	4.6	4.5	2.2	2.3	2.3	2.3
No.8	6.9	5.4	2.5	2.3	3.8	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.7
No.9	31.1	35.7	45.9	46.0	40.9	39.6	38.6	38.6	37.2
No.10	1.7	3.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
No.11	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
No.12	4.4	3.6	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
No.13	17.8	25.3	18.2	18.4	19.7	21.6	20.5	20.5	20.9

Note: Data in 1981,1988,1989,1992 and 1993 are unknown.

Source: Takasaki City Chamber of Agriculture