

# AAINews

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## Group Training Course on Vegetable Cultivation for the Republic of Tajikistan

At the JICA Tsukuba International Centre (TBIC), trainees from developing countries attend hands-on training courses on rice cultivation, agricultural machinery, irrigation/drainage and vegetable cultivation. Recently AAI was commissioned to conduct one of these training courses, titled the "Country focused Group Training Course on Vegetable Cultivation for the Republic of Tajikistan". This took place from mid-August to the end of November. The objective of this course was capacity building of human resources to contribute to agricultural development in Tajikistan. For this purpose, theory and knowledge about vegetable cultivation and agricultural extension was provided through lectures, practical training and field excursions to learn about the current situation of vegetable production and extension in Japan. In addition to the current situation of vegetable production in Japan, cultivation techniques, and plant physiology, the trainees were also expected to learn about the technical extension system and method.

AAI was in charge of the allocation of training instructors and related administrative work, planning and implementation of the curriculum, co-ordination of lecturers and field excursions, and the planning, preparation and instruction for experiments and practical training. The course was carried out at the TBIC with a staff member and instructor from JICA, as well as a training supervisor. AAI staff served as overall training instructors overseeing the entire training course.

The training course was carried out along the principle of "theory and practice". In planning the training curriculum, we tried to arrange it in such a way that the trainees themselves could learn about the flow; starting from seeding, preparation of the field, applying fertilizer, transplantation of seedlings, cultivation management, to the final yield survey. However, due to the trainees' limited period of stay, multiple stages had to be performed in parallel, and the challenge was how effectively and efficiently to make sure the trainees learned both the theory and practice. Rather than just stand by and observe, trainees were asked to actually get involved in cultivation work themselves, so as to learn with their own hands. Also, in order to avoid one-way communication of information, efforts were made to establish a good relationship to ensure information exchange on various technologies/techniques with each other even after the trainees returned to Tajikistan.

For the first two weeks or so before the actual training on vegetable cultivation started, the trainees were given a general orientation course on society in Japan, course orientation on the objectives, concrete dates/timetable schedule and subjects to be covered by the training course, as well as an intensive language course to learn basic everyday Japanese. In addition, TBIC has evening courses on the Japanese language and computers etc. which can be attended by anybody who so wishes. Also, recreational events are organized in the evenings and on weekends, such as a Japanese cultural evening and other parties, to provide opportunities to meet trainees from other countries.

At the beginning of the training course the trainees asked many questions always making comparisons with technologies/techniques available in their own country. However, as the training moved on they started actively asking questions regarding more fundamental aspects of vegetable cultivation. These were directed not only to the instructors but also to the farmers they visited on field excursions, and thus trainees were trying to make the most of the given opportunities. They worked on practical training, research and report presentations enthusiastically with excellent teamwork, and apparently they fully grasped the significance of the training course. While waiting for the bus to bring them back to the airport at the end of the three and half months of training, I already started missing the trainees. Thus I felt both the happiness and sadness pertaining to the training project, and I am all the more determined to continue communication with those trainees in the future.

(By Hasegawa in Tsukuba, Feb 2002)



Experiment on fertilizer application to potatoes



Practical training on seedling preparation