

<Front Feature: Delicious Agriculture>



**Sunshine Red makes its official debut**

A new grape variety called the "red jewel" has been born in Yamanashi, the kingdom of fruit.

It is an original new variety called "Sunshine Red" developed by the prefecture.

When you put it in your mouth, a gorgeous aroma rises in addition to the "muscat aroma", and when you bite into it, the juicy sweetness fills your mouth.

A brand strategy for Yamanashi has begun to spread its deliciousness nationwide.

## **This year's initial price is 10,000 yen per kilogram**

In early July, a JA ZEN-NOH Yamanashi representative was excited, holding his smartphone. "We've exceeded 10,000 yen per kilogram!" The news arrived that the greenhouse-grown Sunshine Red grapes, which have been awarded the highest quality rank of "Tokushu", were sold for over 10,000 yen per kilogram at the first auction at Ota Market in Tokyo. The selling price at department stores and other places can be two to three times higher, and demand is expected for gifts and other purposes.

We want to surpass the hugely popular Shine Muscat. Born from this idea, "Sunshine Red" is a new Yamanashi original variety with a striking bright red color.

Due to its good taste and aroma, when it was first offered as a hometown tax return gift in 2022, it sold out in a few days, even though the donation amount for one bunch was 100,000 yen. It attracted attention, including being featured on television.

The red skin color is achieved by laying a white sheet on the vineyard before harvest and using the reflected sunlight to color the grapes. It is difficult and time-consuming to color the bunch evenly. However, a prefectural official said, "We have supplied about 15,000 seedlings to grape farmers in the prefecture by fiscal 2023, but we are being told that we want more. There are high expectations."

## **Branding through increased production**

In order for the new "Yamanashi brand" to be recognized nationwide, many people must eat it and understand its deliciousness. To do this, we need to establish a system that can steadily ship "large quantities" of "high-quality" grapes.

However, because it takes at least five to six years for grapes to fully develop their inherent characteristics, production has been low and they have only been sold at limited places such as local direct sales outlets.

The prefecture is working with JA ZEN-NOH Yamanashi and others to expand production of original varieties through the Yamanashi Prefecture Original Variety Branding Promotion Council, which aims to quickly establish a production area by systematically distributing seedlings and providing cultivation guidance.

By continuing these efforts, it is expected that the shipping volume will increase year by year from last year's 3.7 tons.

While expanding production, it is also important for these original varieties to maintain their rarity value and maintain high prices, so it is necessary to thoroughly manage the seedlings and limit cultivation to within the prefecture.

When producers purchase seedlings, they are required to submit a pledge that

specifies the terms of the agreement, such as "not transferring the seedlings to others," to prevent them from leaving the prefecture.

### **National PR begins**

As the harvest increases, PR for Sunshine Red has begun in earnest. Governor Nagasaki Kotaro personally visits major markets in the Kanto and Kansai regions to appeal to stakeholders.

While green Shine Muscat accounts for over 50% of the grape market, the red Sunshine Red will be added. If they are lined up and packed in boxes, they will look good and are expected to increase purchasing desire.

In addition, the prefecture is also developing new black grapes. In the future, you may be able to see a row of green, red, and black grapes that can be eaten with the skin.

### **What is Sunshine Red?**

A prefecture original variety that combines "Shine Muscat" with "Sunny Dolce," a red grape grown in Yamanashi Prefecture. It was developed through 15 years of rigorous

selection. The variety name "Kai Berry 7" was registered in January 2022, and the name "Sunshine Red" was registered as a trademark in August 2023. It has a high sugar content of about 19 degrees, and is seedless and can be eaten with the skin.



## **Rediscover the charm!**

### **Rice, tea, and beef polished by famous water**

Known as the fruit kingdom, Yamanashi Prefecture has many hidden gems among its other agricultural products. Among them, we will introduce rice, tea, and beef.

### **"Niji no Kirameki" is resistant to global warming**

As the quality of rice is declining nationwide due to the effects of global warming, a new variety of rice called "Niji no Kirameki" was developed by the National Agriculture and Food Research Organization. Trial cultivation began in Yamanashi Prefecture in 2019 (Heisei 31), and it was selected as a recommended variety in 2022 (Reiwa 4). Its taste has been evaluated as being equal to or better than "Koshihikari".

In 2011, which was a scorching hot year, Niji no Kirameki recorded a high rate of first-grade rice at 90%. This is an outstanding quality compared to the national average of 60% and the Yamanashi Prefecture average of 71%.

In order to promote the cultivation of Niji no Kirameki, the prefecture has established a new subsidy system for the introduction of agricultural machinery and facilities. When producers' groups purchase combine harvesters and dryers, the prefecture and municipalities will subsidize half of the cost.

Niji no Kirameki has also been highly praised by Shintaro Esaki, a chef with a three-star Michelin rating. We are also planning to collaborate with inns in the prefecture to have guests taste it.



### **Wake up with low-temperature extraction**

### **The essence of "Nanbu tea"**

Nanbu tea has a refreshing taste and goes well with a variety of dishes and ingredients. But did you know that there is a little trick to bring out its charm?

General deep-steamed tea is relatively easy to brew because it is not likely to become bitter even if you brew it quickly with hot water. However, if you brew Nanbu tea, which has a shorter steaming time than deep-steamed tea, in the same way, it will become very bitter, and you will not be able to fully enjoy its original refreshing aroma and sweetness.

When brewing Nanbu tea, the key is to use slightly lower temperature water (70° C is a good guideline) and extract it slowly for about one minute. This brings out the natural umami and sweetness of the tea, resulting in an amazingly mellow and gentle taste.

The "Premium Bottle Tea," which brings out the best of Nanbu tea, is also a gift for Nanbu Town's hometown tax donations. Starting this year, affordable leaf tea made from the same tea leaves will also be added to the gift list. Please give it a try.





## **"Koshu Beef" - Producers Hone Their Skills Together**

The Koshu Beef Research Society was established in 1989, and Koshu Beef has been branded over the years. Among Japanese Black cattle, only beef with a meat quality grade of 4 or 5 can be called "Koshu Beef." It is characterized by its soft texture, vivid color, and rich flavor and texture.

Currently, the annual production of Koshu Beef is 580 head, and the number of members is 30. The prefecture is working with the Koshu Beef and Koshu Wine Beef Promotion Council, an organization of producers, to improve production techniques and stabilize distribution volumes.

Members work together to improve their production techniques, and the certification rate improves year by year. The number of fattening farmers has been on the decline, but the total number of cattle by producers has increased. Currently, about 90% of the cattle shipped are certified as Koshu Beef.

By supporting the production techniques of these branded agricultural products, the prefecture aims to increase farmers' incomes and revitalize the local economy. Why not take this opportunity to rediscover the flavors of Yamanashi Prefecture, nurtured by the famous water that originates from the minami- alps and other areas?



### **A museum cafe where you can taste ripe Yamanashi fruit**

A cafe has opened that teaches the "deliciousness of ripe peaches," which is something that Yamanashi residents, who say "I only eat hard peaches!", should know about. Museum café Sweets lab Budoya Kofu is located next to the Yamanashi Prefectural Museum, and promotes sweets made with fruits from the prefecture in order to establish the image that "Yamanashi is synonymous with sweets."

The owner, Hiroshi Furuya, is particular about using fruits that are perfectly ripe at the time of eating. In cooperation with producers, they use "fruits made especially for parfaits" that are so perfectly ripe that they cannot be shipped through normal distribution routes.

In July, they offered a seasonal peach parfait. It included four varieties, including the

popular Yume Touka variety, Kanoiwa Hakuto, Hakuho, and sweet nectarine, and was reasonably priced at around 1,600 yen. They offer it at this price because they want you to find a taste and aroma you like and become a fan. Just like fruit picking, you can tour the producing areas in one parfait, so you're sure to find your favorite variety.

Sunshine red sweets are the hot topic this fall. Introducing a "gradient parfait" that combines fruit, which become redder and more fragrant as they ripen, with flower cordial (flower syrup). Experience the deliciousness that has tourists from outside the prefecture saying, "If you want truly ripe fruit, you have to go to Yamanashi."

Open 11:00 Close 16:30 Closed on museum closed days



## **Agriculture of the Future**

We don't just pursue deliciousness.

Yamanashi agriculture is environmentally friendly and utilizes cutting-edge technology to soar into the future.

## **Taking a step towards realizing Yamanashi carbon-free agriculture**

Yamanashi Prefecture boasts the largest production of grapes, peaches, and plums in Japan. Orchards in the prefecture are already working to curb global warming through cultivation using the "4 per 1000 initiative" (※). In order to move forward toward environmentally friendly agriculture with an eye to the future of the earth, the prefecture aims to realize the "Yamanashi carbon-free agriculture model" that does not emit carbon dioxide.

Renewable energy will be used for "carbon-free agriculture."

JA and farmers will produce green hydrogen (※) at the Komekurayama Power Storage Technology Research Site in Kofu City using electricity generated by solar

power, and we will begin developing a "hydrogen heater" that uses this as fuel. We will begin joint research with manufacturers to use it in agricultural greenhouses, and will begin demonstration tests next year.

Agricultural greenhouses generally burn heavy oil, but by replacing it with green hydrogen, the aim is to appeal to consumers that grapes and peaches grown here are "carbon-free fruits."

We are also considering electrifying agricultural machinery using electricity generated by farmers themselves. Therefore, we will introduce EV light trucks and EV agricultural machinery to the Prefectural Fruit Tree Experiment Station (Yamanashi City) and other locations to verify work efficiency and operability. Based on the results of the verification, we will spread this to farmers and promote carbon-free agriculture.

#### ※4 Per 1000 Initiative

This is an international initiative based on the idea that if the amount of carbon in the surface layer (30-40 cm) of the world's soil is increased by 0.4% (4 per 1000) per year, the increase in carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) in the atmosphere due to human economic activity can be reduced to virtually zero. In the prefecture, we are working on such

initiatives as turning pruned fruit tree branches into charcoal to make them less likely to be decomposed by microorganisms, and spreading them on fields to keep the carbon in the soil semi-permanently.

#### ※Green hydrogen

Hydrogen produced using renewable energy without emitting any CO<sub>2</sub> during the manufacturing process. It is said to be the ultimate clean energy.

#### **High school students experience "master craftsmanship"!**

##### **Cutting-edge agriculture using smart glasses**

Ten third-year students of the general studies department gathered at the fruit orchard of Hokuto High School. They took turns wearing smart glasses (eyeglass-type computers) to watch the growing Shine Muscat grapes. When they looked at the bunch through the glasses, they were shown which grapes needed to be picked and how many, so anyone could easily shape the bunch.

The students who tried it said, "I was surprised that this is really possible. It makes me

think of other things that can be done using AI technology."

In Yamanashi Prefecture, the "Smart Agriculture Demonstration Project (5G)" has been underway since 2020 (Reiwa 2), a collaboration between industry, government, and academia. As part of this initiative, AI was trained to learn how researchers at the Yamanashi Fruit Tree Experiment Station pick Shine Muscat grapes as a "master craftsmanship," and based on that, technology to support the work was developed by companies and universities in the prefecture.

The image data from the worker's point of view captured by the smart glasses' camera is first processed on a server at Yamanashi University's laboratory. The AI then sends back instructions to the smart glasses, such as "pick this grape" based on the "artisan's technique" that it has learned. This allows the worker to carry out the work in the same way as an expert.

### **A tool to convey "artisan's technique"**

Tasks such as picking grapes to shape grape clusters require "artisan's technique" cultivated over many years of experience. However, passing on this technique is not easy, and AI technology can be of great help.

Smart glasses are expensive and vulnerable to heat and rain, so there are hurdles to spreading them to production sites, but with future improvements, it is hoped that they will be used as a tool to pass on "artisan's technique" to new farmers.

A prefectural official said of the experience class, "The response was better than we expected. We want the participants to feel that 'agriculture is full of dreams' and to want to be involved in the future."

We will continue to keep an eye on the ever-evolving development of technology.



(Photo 1 caption) Hokuto High School students experience cutting-edge technology





(Photo 2 caption) Instructions for thinning are given through smart glasses (provided by Yamanashi University Director Mao Shaoyan's research group)

## **A close look at a bus tour of fruit and vegetable producing areas**

### **Let's start farming**

In an effort to solve problems such as the aging of farmers and a lack of successors,

Yamanashi Prefecture has started a bus tour for people who want to become farmers in the prefecture to experience the charm of agriculture.

You can visit the field and talk to experienced farmers, learn about the joys and difficulties of growing crops,

how to start farming, and life after farming.

There are also other opportunities to learn about and experience agriculture.

This time, we will report on the bus tour held on July 28th.

### **9.30am The bus departs from the north exit of Kofu Station**

Twelve of the 16 people on the tour were from outside the prefecture. They were of a wide age range, including couples in their 20s and single participants in their 50s and 60s. In addition to people who are "new to farming," there are also people who are

already experienced and "interested in other crops."

On the way, we read the pamphlets we were given and exchanged information with each other as we headed to our destination.

#### **10.15am Arrived at a peach farm in Sakaigawa-cho, Fuefuki City**

SAIAN Co., Ltd., which operates the farm we visited, has about 6.7 hectares of peach and other fruit orchards, and 0.3 hectares of strawberry fields. After Executive Director Takashi Gomi explained how peaches are cultivated, it was time for questions.

Starting with a question, "What is the annual management schedule for peaches?", a serious Q&A session continued for 45 minutes, with questions such as, "What kind of people can become independent?", "What do they do to prevent animal damage and disease?" and "How much do they earn in the off-season?"

When Gomi said, "During the harvest season, every day is a battle against the scorching heat," a participant expressed concern, saying, "I'm not confident about my physical strength given my age." The woman who expressed this concern was in her 50s. She had come from Tokyo after finishing raising her children and wanted to "try farming in my second life."

"Just do what you can. Some of our employees started farming in their 60s."

The other participants were relieved to hear this answer.

### **11.00am Peach Harvesting Experience**

"Don't twist them, don't press them with your fingers, just wrap them in your palms," they were advised, and when they tried it...

"Oh no, I can't get it!" "I'm afraid I might hurt it."

Peaches that are tightly attached to the branches are not that easy to pick. After a hard struggle, the participants finally managed to pick one, and Gomi said, "I harvest 2 tons of these every day." When you actually try it, you can see how difficult farming is.

After that, we heard from a young employee who has been farming for 7 years, and the tour came to an end. After a lunch break, we headed to the second tour site.

### **1.30pm Arrived at the sweet corn field in Fujikawaguchiko Town**

Yuhi Aihara produces sweet corn (3ha) and broccoli (0.9ha). He moved from Saitama Prefecture to Hokuto City as a "regional revitalization cooperation team member," and

later acquired farmland in Fujikawaguchiko Town. He has been farming for seven years.

From July to early September, he harvests sweet corn from 2am and ships it out by 10am.

Fruit trees are popular among new farmers, but the local vegetable brand "Fujisan Vegetables" grown in the northern foothills of Mount Fuji receives many orders from restaurants and hotels, offering an opportunity to expand sales channels.

Mr. Aihara says, "If you have any concerns about sales channels or harvest volume, we can work with agricultural cooperatives to resolve them. First of all, it's important to think carefully about what kind of farming you want to do."

### **2.00pm Sweet corn harvesting experience**

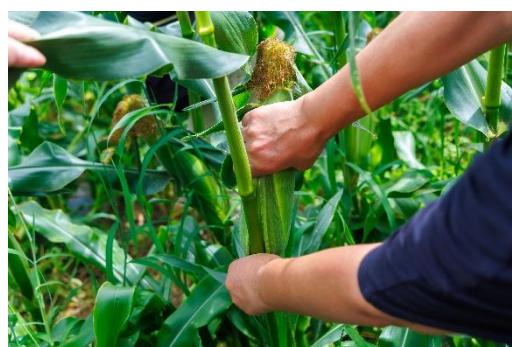
Sweet corn is delicious when barrel-shaped. Hold the base and push down to pick it. With a pleasant surprise, the participants were told to take one stalk home as a souvenir, and they walked into the lush fields and disappeared from sight.

A couple in their 30s who managed to harvest a large crop of sweet corn said, "I work for a company in Tokyo, but I'd like to try farming someday. This was my first farming experience, but I think I've come a little closer to my dream." They returned to the bus

with smiles on their faces.

#### 4.30pm Disbanded at Kofu Station

One of the participants commented, "I now have a clearer vision of what it would be like to work in agriculture." It was a tour that gave them a real feel for the "hardships and passion of farming" that can only be understood by visiting the actual site.





<Feature 2>

**Fighting the Decline in Population**

It has been a year since Governor Nagasaki Kotaro issued the "Declaration to Break Through the Decline in Population Crisis" in June last year. Prefectures, municipalities, companies, and organizations have come together to launch various initiatives to overcome the population decline crisis.

Specific projects were added to the "Countermeasures Package" in the supplementary budget in June.

We are working on fleshing out our policies. We conducted various basic surveys, as shown in the table on page 11, and systematized and organized the issues that emerged from them into "three perspectives."

1. The perspective of "supporting" the hopes of families and children
2. The perspective of "fulfilling" the hopes of child-rearing
3. The perspective of "nurturing" the hopes of families and children

We will provide seamless support at each life stage.



Governor Nagasaki Kotaro and Cabinet Secretariat Advisor Yamasaki Shiro, a leading expert on the issue of population decline, spoke about "prescriptions." We will share some of the excerpts from the conversation.

Governor Nagasaki: I think that the biggest problem in Yamanashi Prefecture is that the younger generation is not confident about the future. If people have no hope in Yamanashi, they will naturally leave.

Counsellor Yamasaki: To stop the population decline, we need to target the younger generation and create a trend of them settling down or moving in.

Governor Nagasaki: Yamanashi Prefecture is trying to create industries that young people can have hope for the future. We want to accelerate the "construction of a foundation for co-creating wealth" and encourage them to plan their lives by raising wages.

Counsellor Yamasaki: The key is to enable young households, especially "dual-income households," to balance work with childbirth and child-rearing. I think we will need a broader approach, such as support for child-rearing in the community and support for health and medical care, such as infertility treatment.

### Issues revealed by basic survey

#### Economic factor survey

○Housing costs are a big burden. Unmarried and married people are hesitant to move to a better living environment, and tend to hesitate to get married, give birth, and raise children.

○Unmarried and younger people are more likely to be repaying student loans, so reducing the burden may contribute to promoting marriage and increasing the birth rate.

#### Living environment survey

○There was a positive correlation between the total fertility rate and the number of rooms per house

.○Due to rising construction costs, child-rearing households who purchased new homes have about twice the economic burden compared to child-rearing households who purchased used homes, and they are raising children in smaller homes than used homes.

### **Survey on work style reform, etc.**

- The rate at which men take childcare leave is low, and psychology such as "I don't want to cause trouble at work" is at work.
- More than 60% of companies in the prefecture responded that they "are not particularly implementing" measures to promote men's participation in child-rearing.
- The child-rearing generation has stronger concerns about income and other issues than other generations, and is less likely to be involved in regular employment. A high percentage of unmarried people want to switch to working life.

### **Prefectural citizen awareness survey on marriage**

- Many unmarried people who want to get married are waiting for a "natural encounter," and a high percentage want to be "introduced by friends or acquaintances" or "meet someone at work, etc."
- Single women tend to want matchmaking services that do not put matchmaking at the forefront, and tend to want casual encounters without marriage as a prerequisite.

### **Career tracking survey of vocational high schools in the prefecture**

○There were also industries (manufacturing, construction, etc.) where vocational high school graduates had a higher average annual income than liberal arts university graduates.

### **Yamanashi Prefecture Children's Plan Formulation Questionnaire**

○From the perspective of "ease of raising children," many people said they wanted "financial support" and "a desk where they could easily consult" as support measures they would like from the government.

Prefectural measures package to fulfill "hopes"

**Born in Yamanashi, learn, work, meet a partner, give birth to and raise children.**

The prefecture has prepared various support measures so that you can live with confidence in your future.

We will continue to provide detailed support to overcome the population decline crisis.

### **Scholarship repayment support**

The outflow of young people from the prefecture due to further education and employment is a serious problem. Therefore, in order to secure human resources for small and medium-sized enterprises in the prefecture, promote the settlement of young people in the prefecture, and increase the birth rate, we will support the repayment of scholarships.

Target: Those who have lived in the prefecture after graduation and worked for a certain period of time at a target small and medium-sized enterprise in the prefecture

Content: Scholarship repayment amount for 8 years after employment (up to 1/2 of the loan amount or 1.2 million yen)

### **Information dissemination by ambassadors**

"People who are life-sized but a little ahead of the curve." People who are active in various fields in the prefecture who fit this image will be appointed as "ambassadors for measures against the population decline crisis." We plan to have the ambassadors disseminate information on their own SNS etc.

By having them disseminate information about the population decline issue and the prefecture's efforts from the perspective of the people involved, we will approach people who have little interest. Events will also be held by the ambassadors.

### **Promoting men to take parental leave**

According to the results of the Work Style Reform Survey, the rate of men taking parental leave in the prefecture is 22.3%, far from the national target (50% by 2025). More than 60% of companies in the prefecture responded that they have not implemented any measures to promote men's participation in childcare. Small and medium-sized enterprises that are working to support the balance between work and childcare can apply for subsidies from the national government, but the implementation of "employment environment improvement measures," which is a requirement for

receiving the subsidy, has not progressed.

Therefore, the prefecture will start a project to subsidize the expenses necessary for the implementation of "employment environment improvement measures," such as conducting training related to childcare leave and establishing a consultation system.

Subsidy amount: Up to 200,000 yen per company

### **"Precon Health Check" Launched**

Preconception Care (Precon) is health management in preparation for future pregnancy and childbirth.

The prefecture will support the implementation of "Precon Health Check" in conjunction with health checks at workplaces and other locations so that the younger generation can have correct knowledge about pregnancy and childbirth.

For young women, visiting a gynecologist is a psychological hurdle, and the reality is that they have few opportunities to know the condition of their own body. However, severe menstrual pain not only interferes with daily life, but if left untreated, it can lead to endometriosis and other conditions, so early testing is necessary.

The prefecture has therefore started the "Precon Health Check" as an option for workplace health checks at companies in the prefecture. After taking the Precon Seminar via e-learning, women aged 18 to 39 who wish to take the exam can have their thyroid function, infections, and AMH, which measures ovarian reserve, examined through blood tests\* at the workplace health check. It is also linked to the Yamanashi University School of Medicine, and if necessary, it is possible to interview a doctor online. Men can also take the Precon Seminar.

For those who cannot be treated through workplace health checkups, housewives, and self-employed individuals, pre-complex health checkups will be conducted at cooperating medical institutions.

Knowing your body = "precon "

On August 5th and 6th, the prefecture held its first "Precon Awareness Seminar" in cooperation with Sumitomo Life Insurance, with which it has a comprehensive partnership agreement. On these two days, educational training on the theme of pre-complex was conducted for young employees of Yamanashi Chuo Bank, with approximately 70 people taking the training over the two days.

The ratio of male to female participants was almost half and half. It is important to



raise men's interest. When hormone balance is disrupted before menstruation, women experience physical and mental discomfort. If men know this, they can support their families, colleagues, and partners at work and at home.

Participants were given a quiz to think about lifestyle habits that are likely to cause male infertility, and actually wrote their own life plans on a life design sheet to consider the timing of career advancement. They seriously considered their own health and life plans.

In order to realize a healthy life plan for both men and women, let's make Precon familiar to us and start doing what we can now.



## Female digital talent development

We support women who have chosen non-regular employment due to the difficulty of balancing work and family life by supporting their transition to regular employment

through career advancement. In a labor market where there is a shortage of digital transformation promotion personnel, this is an initiative to develop digital talent and find a place to work.

Target: 20 women living in the prefecture

Content: Online digital skills learning program (approximately 4 months)

### **Yamanashi KAITEKI Housing Concierge**

A comfortable living environment is essential for raising children. According to the results of a living environment survey, people who are highly satisfied with their home tend to have the ideal number of children. Therefore, we will set up a consultation desk for the child-rearing generation to provide basic knowledge about choosing a home, housing performance, and support systems such as subsidies.

Good functionality and performance of the home reduces the burden of housework and makes it easier to raise children. It is also possible to reduce costs such as utility bills.

## **Promoting the use of used homes**

Are you a new build or a used home? Around 3/4 of people who live in their own homes in the prefecture choose a new home. However, it has become clear that households with children who choose a new home have a greater financial burden and are raising children in a smaller home than a used home.

It is possible to live comfortably in a used home by renovating it. The prefecture plans to publicize the appeal of used homes through YouTube videos and seminars.

### **Aiming for 100% male parental leave**

Do you know the rate of male employees at the Yamanashi Prefectural Government taking childcare leave?

In fiscal 2021 (Reiwa 3), it was 14.8%, significantly lower than the national average of 40.7%.

However, since August 2023, it has reached 91%. What on earth happened?

Following the "Declaration to Break Through the Population Decline Crisis" (June 9, 2023), Governor Nagasaki Kotaro announced an initiative in July of the same year to increase the rate of male employees taking childcare leave. The pillar of this initiative is "making three months of childcare leave the rule." This was the start of a new initiative that could be called a "childcare leave revolution."

This is an initiative that is unique in the country, in which male employees aim to be involved in childcare at home for at least three months by combining paid leave, reduced working hours, and telework when their spouse gives birth.

## **Making paternity leave the norm for men**

Until now, male employees have been hesitant to take paternity leave for reasons such as "it will be a nuisance to the workplace" and "the work will be too busy". However, childcare should be shared between husband and wife. Yamanashi Prefecture believes that not being able to take time off during the most precious period of one's life is not the fault of the individual employee, but an organizational problem that greatly affects the awareness and behavior of employees. In order to create an environment where it is easy to take paternity leave, Yamanashi Prefecture has introduced a personnel system (see the diagram below).

Male employees will meet with their supervisor at least three months before the expected date of delivery to plan how they will become "Iku-men". As a rule, they will be required to flexibly combine paternity leave and telecommuting to take care of their children at home for at least three months. Taking paternity leave will reduce income, but they will use income simulation sheets prepared by the prefecture to create a plan that suits their household's actual situation.

At work, superiors will provide detailed support to male employees so that they can take paternity leave with peace of mind. Employees who are promoted to managerial

positions are required to attend management training every year, and we are actively working to change the mindset of managers.

### **Why "three months"?**

Why is the childcare leave period three months? Because in one month, you only realize how difficult childcare is, and in two months, you only begin to understand a little about childcare. By facing childcare carefully for three months, you will be able to experience the joys of childcare for the first time, and we thought that this would further deepen the bonds between couples and families.

As a result of these efforts, the rate of male employees taking childcare leave has risen to 91.5% since last summer. We aim for 100% in fiscal 2024. Yamanashi Prefecture hopes that this initiative will spread to cities, towns, and companies in the prefecture, and that it will lead to measures to combat the declining birthrate and work style reform throughout the region.

For the future of Yamanashi, let's work together as a region to create an environment where it is easy for men to take childcare leave.

<Feature 3>

**Towards a disaster-resistant Yamanashi**

**Formulation of a new resilience plan**

The prefecture has revised the Yamanashi Prefecture Resilience Plan (March 26, 2024) to prepare for large-scale natural disasters such as the expected Nankai Trough earthquake, the Tokyo metropolitan earthquake, the volcanic eruption of Mt. Fuji, heavy rain and heavy snow. The review reflects knowledge gained from the Noto Peninsula earthquake and recent disasters that have become more severe and frequent, as well as the revisions to the national "Basic Plan for National Resilience" (revised for the first time in five years in July 2023).

The resilience plan is not just a measure for disasters, but also has an aspect of improving regional strength in peacetime. Things that function as disaster prevention measures in emergencies also help create the appeal of the region, leading to the creation of a region where everyone can live comfortably. That is the resilience plan.

The plan is based on the "five pillars" shown in the diagram below.

## Development and management of disaster prevention infrastructure

- Promotion of river development to prevent flood damage
- Promotion of disaster mitigation measures to support evacuation in the event of a volcanic eruption of Mt. Fuji
- Promotion of development of erosion control facilities to prevent landslides
- Promotion of earthquake resistance of agricultural reservoirs



## Strengthening of lifelines

- Development of a road network with redundancy (multiplicity) in preparation for the severance of major roads over a wide area
- Promotion of strengthening the power supply system
- Expanding the introduction of independent and distributed energy



Promotion of small-scale hydroelectric power generation



### Improvement of disaster prevention capabilities in the region

Human resource development to support the strengthening of regional disaster prevention capabilities

Implementation of evacuation shelter training in cooperation with evacuation shelter managers and voluntary disaster prevention organizations

Provision of disaster prevention information and development of consultation systems for foreigners

Public elementary and junior high schools Promoting disaster prevention measures and education in schools and prefectural schools

### **Strengthening public-private cooperation**

- Concluding agreements with private companies, etc. in preparation for disasters
  
- Strengthening cooperation with electric power companies, etc.
  
- Promoting cooperation and collaboration with disaster-related NPOs, volunteer groups, etc.
  
- Promoting the strengthening of disaster prevention and mitigation measures for small and medium-sized enterprises

### **Advancing policies through the use of digital technology, etc.**

- Establishing an information collection and transmission system using cutting-edge technology
  
- Promoting the wide-area and joint use of fire and emergency digital radio
  
- Operating information systems for rivers, landslides, etc.
  
- Improving work efficiency through the use of drones and ICT construction at the site

**Have you had your home inspected for earthquake resistance?**

Old wooden houses may have low earthquake resistance. Seismic inspections of wooden houses started before May 1981 are free of charge, so please contact your local city or town.

〈Feature 4〉

**Protect logistics functions by reducing redelivery**

**Subsidizing the cost of purchasing delivery boxes**

From April 2024, upper limits will be imposed on overtime work for truck drivers, resulting in a labor shortage.

Does this apply to you? No, no, if you act as if it is someone else's problem, one day the logistics function could suddenly collapse, and you might not get what you want when you want it.

As one initiative to deal with this "logistics problem of 2024," Yamanashi Prefecture has created a subsidy system for the purchase of delivery boxes.

**Delivery box purchase subsidy system**

The prefecture will subsidize the purchase of delivery boxes together with municipalities, as reducing redelivery will support the logistics infrastructure and contribute to reducing CO2 emissions.

\*Whether this is implemented and the content of the subsidy will vary by municipality.

### **Other initiatives to reduce redelivery**

In addition to installing delivery boxes, there are other ways to reduce redelivery.

◎Using drop-off delivery

◎Picking up at a convenience store

◎Picking up at the delivery company's office

◎Specifying a flexible delivery date and time

<Yamanashi Kenjin>

**Wanting to create a society where everyone can learn, regardless of nationality**

Teaching Japanese and other subjects to children of foreign origins

Sawanobori Kazuhiro

There is a nationwide shortage of teachers.

In the midst of all this, there is a teacher who is over 65 years old and still teaching.

The second instalment of the Yamanashi Kaketo series, which introduces prefecture residents who are working hard to live for the future, is this man's story.

When we look into the background of his teaching Japanese and other subjects to children of foreign nationality, we can see the future of Yamanashi.

In a classroom at Minami-Alps City Ochiai Elementary School, Sawanobori Kazuhiro (66) was doing a crossword puzzle with a Peruvian fourth-grade student.

"What kind of noodles are thicker than somen and thinner than udon?"

"Eh, I don't know..."

"Let's look it up on the computer."

(The sound of a computer clicking away)

"Hi, ya, mu, gi?"

"Yes, that's right!"

Sawanobori, who was an elementary school teacher for many years, teaches Japanese to 15 foreign children in Minami-Alps City. In addition to Ochiai Elementary School, he will also teach at six other schools in the city. As Japanese language education for foreigners in the city is covered by two teachers, Sawanobori has almost no free time in his schedule.

"Foreign children have difficulty learning with paper-based teaching materials because they do not have furigana. That's why I also use a computer when teaching. I want to teach them a study style through my classes."

During his active career, he worked in the depopulated town of Hayakawa. When he was assigned as vice principal at Hayakawa Kita Elementary School, the total number of students was 11. It was expected that the number would decrease to about four in a few

years.

For half a century, children at this school had been performing local folk tales as original plays. Sensing the value of educational activities integrated with the community, he thought, "We must not lose this elementary school." He created a flyer to inform parents of the good points of the area and distributed it with parents and the board of education at a local development exhibition held in Tokyo. Contrary to his expectations, the number of students at Hayakawa Kita Elementary School eventually increased to 18. This was due to an increase in the number of people moving from Tokyo.

"I've always liked using things related to my hometown as teaching materials, rather than faithfully teaching textbooks."

After retiring in 2019, I started working in my hometown. Just then, a senior colleague said to me, "There's a shortage of staff in schools. You don't even have a farm at home, so why don't you try teaching at a school again?" And for some reason, I decided to return to the classroom.

The following year, I became a full-time re-employed teacher. Back at the school after a long time, I was as busy as ever, dealing with parents and preparing for classes and events. I thought I wouldn't have to take on heavy responsibilities because I was a re-



employed teacher, but I was the homeroom teacher for second graders in place of a teacher on maternity leave, and also served as the head of the school's academic department, assisting the principal and vice principal. I was confused when I was asked, but I accepted the job, thinking that I could use my experience and knowledge to help.

"All teachers stand in front of the children with a 'beautiful mirror.' We can always discipline ourselves by looking at ourselves reflected in that mirror. Returning to the classroom after retirement made this feeling even stronger."

Sawanobori was also given another job. That job was to teach Japanese to foreign children. He took on the job lightly, but it was difficult. Since there were no textbooks, he didn't know what to teach and how, so he spent every day trying and failing.

So in April 2010, he used the university's correspondence education system to enroll in a Japanese teacher training course\*.

"The content of the lessons hasn't changed much since I studied at university. But I learned systematically things like Japanese grammar that is easy for foreigners to understand, and the difficult sounds of the 'ra' row. Now that I have a clear purpose for teaching, I enjoy creating lessons."

What Sawanobori is worried about now is that foreign children will lose the opportunity to continue on to higher education. There are volunteer Japanese language classes in Yamanashi Prefecture. But few children attend them.

"Children quickly acquire the language of their daily life. However, many Japanese people do not realize that the language of study required for school study is different. If they do not master the language of study, they will not be able to understand the questions on the tests and will not be able to achieve good grades. The number of foreigners living in Japan will increase in the future. We need to create a system to properly teach the language of study, which takes 5 to 7 years to master, and at the same time, we as Japanese society need to be more conscious of coexistence with foreigners."

Sawanobori wants to continue this work until he collapses.

In fiscal 2021, Yamanashi Prefecture started the nation's first "25-student elementary school class." In fiscal 2024, it was expanded to fourth grade elementary school students. Smaller classes mean more classes and more teachers are needed. Amid a nationwide teacher shortage, the prefectural board of education is trying to secure human resources by reappointing teachers under the age of 65 who have retired and accepting people

with teaching licenses as term-limited teachers. With the increase in foreign workers, the importance of Japanese language education is also increasing.



(Photo 1 caption) After the "Japanese Language Class" lesson, Mr. Sawanobori and the students smile



(Photo 2 caption) In the classroom, easy-to-understand Japanese example sentences are posted



(Photo 3 caption) Foreign children learn using hiragana, which is easy to understand



(Photo 4 caption) We also use computers to learn study styles

## **FUREAI SQUARE**

Would you like to post a photo you took in "Fureai"?

We look forward to your favorite photo!

## **Hidden Scenic View**

The spot overlooking Kitadake from Nakashiranesan in Minami-Alps City is perfect for hiking. From now on, the season will change to autumn attire. The changing appearance of the mountains is worth seeing



## **Time Slip to the Showa Era**

Olympic Street in the middle of the city of Kofu. The alley is full of Showa retro

atmosphere and is lined with various drinking establishments. Immerse yourself in the

Showa retro atmosphere and take a detour



### **To the Mansion of the Railway King**

The Nezu Memorial Museum in Yamanashi City preserves the mansion of the Nezu

family, the family home of the first Nezu Kaichiro, known as the "Railway King." In

autumn, large ginkgo trees and other trees add a touch of elegance to the building. The

photo on the right shows the statue of Kaichiro in Manriki Park, Yamanashi City.



## **Favorite Cafe**

CISCO COFFEE stands on the shores of Lake Kawaguchi. The view from inside the cafe is reminiscent of the American West Coast. Take a break with a carefully hand-dripped cup of coffee and a delicious cake.



## **A beautiful fermented curry**

Good to eat and good to look at. Hachidoriya has been producing fans as a koji curry during the day and a spice bar at night since it opened in Marunouchi, Kofu City in June last year. Heal your tired body with food.



## Summer Memories

The Shinmei fireworks were held on August 7th. Cheers rose up as the large flowers sparkled in the night sky...see you next year!



## Q&A SPACE

This corner answers questions and inquiries about prefectural government sent in by everyone.

The question for this issue is this one.

**Is it true (seriously) that you can skateboard at the prefectural office?**

Yes. You can skateboard in the courtyard.



### **Why did you open the courtyard of the prefectural office?**

Skateboarding has become more popular, and more people are enjoying it in front of Kofu Station. However, skating on the sidewalk is dangerous. Young people who enjoy skateboarding have complained that there are not enough places to skate.

In response to these complaints, the idea of opening the courtyard of the prefectural office was born, and on June 22nd, a skateboard park (play area) was opened in the fountain area in front of the main building of the prefectural office.

This is the first time in the country that a skateboard park has been turned into a prefectural office site.

### **Can anyone use it?**

Anyone can use it, regardless of whether they are from inside or outside the prefecture. There is no age limit. The play area is set up on the second and fourth Saturdays of each month from 10:00 to 17:00. It is separated by safety cones and simple netting, so we have taken into consideration the safety of those relaxing in the fountain area.

Since the kickoff event on June 15th, it has been crowded with parents and children, as well as groups of elementary, junior high, and high school students.

**Is there a fee to use it?**

It is free. There is no need to register in advance or write your name when entering, and you are free to enter and exit. You can also use the jump platform and other facilities for free.

However, skateboards and protective gear are not available for rental, so users must bring their own. In principle, any injuries or troubles are the responsibility of the user, so safety first.



(Photo 1 caption) Yuki Tsunoda, sports Promotion Division



(Photo 2 caption) A skateboarder performing tricks in the prefectural office courtyard



(Photo 3 caption) Kids experiencing skateboarding at the kickoff event

## Hitotachi on the cover



## Inheriting Yamanashi Agriculture

Second-year students in the Fruit and Horticulture Department at Fuefuki High School are harvesting black beets, tightly packed black grapes. For three days in early August, they split into three groups and went out to the fields in the morning. Black beets are a cross between Fujiminori and Pione, and are said to color well even in the high temperatures caused by global warming.

## YAMANASHI POLICY NEWS

### Japan's finest works

#### Gathered in the Fuji Five Lakes region

#### First exhibition held in the prefecture

The "Art City Fuji Five Lakes Project - The Beauty of Nitten" exhibition by members of Nitten, which holds one of Japan's largest art exhibitions, was held for three months from July at the Kawaguchiko Museum of Art (Fujikawaguchiko Town).

This event is one of the efforts by the prefecture, Fujikawaguchiko Town, and Nitten to make the Fuji Five Lakes region an international art city. It was held for the first time as part of the activities of the "Fuji Five Lakes Natural Capital Region Forum" (headquarters: Yamanashi Prefecture), an organization that aims to develop the region into a "natural capital region" that combines resort areas rich in nature with the functions of the capital region.

The exhibition displayed about 100 works in five categories: Japanese painting, Western painting, sculpture, craft art, and calligraphy. During the exhibition, a

workshop was also held where children could try their hand at authentic Japanese painting.

It is said that even for artists, it is difficult to become a member of Nitten. It was a rare opportunity to view the best works of the members up close.

The prefecture will make the Fuji Five Lakes region an attractive and valuable art center where artists can interact and create new works one after another.



(Photo 1 caption) Governor Nagasaki (second from the left) and attendees cutting the ribbon at the opening ceremony

**Challenge to new business**

**Unmanned store opens**

**A step towards resolving labor shortages**

In July of this year, an unmanned store where you can shop without going through a cash register opened in the Marugoto Yamanashikan (1st floor of the Prefectural Disaster Prevention Building). It is open from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm, and is open all year round.

You register your credit card information in a smartphone app in advance, and when you pick up a product in the store and leave, the payment is automatically completed.

The store is designed to detect the movement of people and products using 18 cameras and weight sensors on the shelves, and artificial intelligence (AI) recognizes the purchase of the product.

This store was created as part of the prefecture's "open innovation" initiative, which encourages companies to create new products and services by incorporating outside ideas and technologies. The facility is operated by Alps Co., Ltd. (Showa-cho), a service company based in the prefecture, and utilizes AI image recognition technology from Cloudpick Japan Co., Ltd. (Chuo-ku, Tokyo), a startup company, and is expected to help alleviate labor shortages.

The prefecture will continue to support new business ventures by connecting the resources of prefecture-based companies with the unique technologies of startups.



(Photo 2 caption) When entering the store, customers scan the code displayed on their smartphone app.



(Photo 3 caption) After picking up the products and leaving the store, purchase history can be checked on the app.

### Top sales of fruits

### In Tokyo and Kyoto



The prefecture and the Prefectural Agricultural and Livestock Products Sales Strengthening Measures Council (Chairman Akira Nakazawa) held top sales events to promote peaches and grapes produced in the prefecture at the Tokyo Central Wholesale Market and Ota Market (Tokyo) in July and the Kyoto Central Wholesale Market (Kyoto Prefecture) in August. Governor Nagasaki, Chairman Nakazawa, and others handed the cards to market officials.

Governor Nagasaki, in a top sales pitch at Ota Market, called for increased consumption of Yamanashi fruits, saying, "Yamanashi fruits are works of art made by artisans. We want our customers to feel joy when they pick them up and feel happy when they eat them."

Top sales are held every year during the fruit season, in cooperation with the JA Group in the prefecture and a council organized by the prefecture. The prefecture will continue to actively promote the appeal of Yamanashi's agricultural, livestock, and marine products, and work to improve the brand value of Yamanashi.



(Photo 4 caption) Governor Nagasaki and others handing out peaches at Ota Market

## **"Regular purchases" via mail order**

### **Beware of problems**

There have been problems with mail order sales, such as when you see an advertisement emphasizing a low price and place an order thinking it's a trial, only to find that "regular purchases" are a condition.

Check the contract details carefully before ordering.

- Is regular purchase a condition?
- Is there a set duration or number of purchases?
- What is the total amount to be paid?
- Have you checked the contact method for cancellation?
- Have you checked the return policy and cancellation conditions?
- Have you checked the terms of use?

\*If you are shopping online, check the contract details on the "final confirmation screen" and save it by taking a screenshot or printing it.