

Information on "Super Rice Paddies"!!

In the 'Sakura-Furusato-Hiroba' Square, we enjoy various events such as the "Tulip Festival" in spring and the "Big Exhibition of Fireworks" in summer. We also enjoy full-bloomed cosmoses filling the Square in autumn. You may be surprised to learn that the Square used to be a rice paddy whose water level was lower than that of the Inbanuma Lake.

A heavy rain flooded the rice paddies in this region. They were brimmed with water as if the "Inbanuma grew bigger." This often plagued the farmers during the harvest season in autumn. For this reason, the region was called the area where "Rice cannot be harvested once every three years."

The needs of the society such as the postwar food shortage plus the farmers' desire to escape from the flood ran together. Consequentially, a land improvement project (National Project for Reclamation of Inbanuma, etc.) was widely carried out. The project constructed both the agricultural water facilities intended to grow rice and the agricultural drainage facilities to protect the agriculture and the region from the flood. Above all, a drainage pump station was constructed in the rice paddies located at low altitudes to electrically pump out water, which allowed rice growing to continue.

In the 1960s, the land improvement project developed the end channel of drainage, which in part helped start the housing land development. As a result, the Hokusou region developed at a breath. However, the farmers had to face a new challenge about water in return. The farmers started to worry about the increased drainage volume and the aggravation of water quality although they once had control over the water.



Before the farm field was developed (1966)



After a large block farm field was developed (2003)

Do you see that the block of rice paddy is larger in the right-hand side than in the left-hand side of the photograph? The housing land development in the back is in progress, too.

Farmers Had Thinking!!!

Specifically, they gave attention to the region where efficient rice growing was difficult because of the increasing number of flood occurrences due to the regional development plus the ill-drained paddy field consisting of small blocks!!!

Therefore, they came up with the following conclusions:

The dredge soil and the construction waste soil are filled in the rice paddy lower in water level than the Inbanuma not only to recycle the resources but also to reclaim the land up to the height of the bank. Upon leveling of the land up to the height of the bank, a land improvement project is carried out to develop the new feedwater and drainage facilities by rearranging the land. In the end, a well-organized rice paddy is developed.

Moreover, it was also agreed that the large areas of land would be cultivated by a smaller number of persons by consolidating several hundred-farm households to rear the leaders of the region.



Look At The Pictures!!! The flat and boundless rice paddies stretch out.

You can see Japan's largest rice paddy in maximum block of 7.5 ha (1.6 times the size of Tokyo Dome). You can also see a series of rice paddies called the "Large Block." The feedwater facilities, the drainage facilities, and the roads are developed by an innovative project. They permit not only the efficient rice growing with the use of a large tractor and combine, but also the challenge of growing the crops harvested in the dry field such as tomato, potato, etc.

Left: The size of a single block of rice paddy is the largest in Japan! 1st district in Usui Right: Beef cattle that feed on the whole crop silage



Land burial of drainage



Agricultural road with a low step height

The region used to be an ill-drained paddy field zone that even resisted commanding a view of the Inbanuma and denied access. Now, it invites people and presents the landscape for enjoyment; the marathon coach, Mr. Koide, and marathon runners, Y. Arimori, N. Takahashi, H. Suzuki, and M. Chiba, also enjoyed the view while training). Further, it can provide the idyllic scenery, especially in the end of summer, with the windmill recently built, the tulip festival, the fireworks exhibition, and the marvelous coordination between cultivating and stockbreeding in which the region works on the rice whole crop silage that provides the foodstuff to the cattle.

As described above, the MIDORI NET Inbanuma notably expresses the multifunctional characteristics of agriculture. The agricultural and rural area development projects conducted by the MIDORI NET Inbanuma not merely ensures stable supply of foods and the improvement in production base, but also provides amenity space to people, enables the regional development through refurbishing of drainage facilities, and conserves the water cycle through rice farming.

We believe that the development of Chiba Prefecture stems from the water control facilities developed by the availability of industrial water and city water. It is supported by the maintenance of proper management of the facilities. The "National Project for Reclamation of Inbanuma" and the succeeding "National Project for Development of Inbanuma" serve as a foundation for it.

Now, the region has developed as the time lapsed. On the other hand, the facilities have deteriorated with the lapse of time, too. The facilities that have served as a foundation is somewhat too aged. To respond to this issue, we aim to newly lay out the agricultural and rural area development project, and strengthen both reinforcement and management efforts of the facilities. By so doing, we will develop a region that allows the coexistence of rural and urban areas.

We have provided the above information in commemoration of International Year of Rice. We wish all of you will practice the motto of "Add seasoning called "Love" to the rice and the agricultural products gathered in our area before serving on the table." In the meanwhile, we will conserve the pastoral space of the MIDORI NET Inbanuma forever.



2nd pump and drainage pump station at Usui



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