



Mitsui Chemicals Agro Takes Schoolchildren on Exploration of Rice Paddy Organisms Raising awareness of biodiversity conservation in rice cultivation

Mitsui Chemicals Agro, Inc. (President: Satoshi Ozawa) recently took elementary school students on rice paddy organism surveys across two locations in Miyagi Prefecture. It was an opportunity for the children to learn about rice cultivation practices that enable the diverse creatures living in rice paddies to thrive.



■ **Rice Paddy Organism Survey**
Tsurusu Elementary School
Date: June 11, 2019
Location: Taiwa-cho, Kurokawa-gun,
Miyagi Prefecture
Number of participants: 35



■ **Rice Paddy Organism Survey**
Kami-Ayashi Elementary School,
Sakunami Elementary School,
Okura Elementary School
Date: June 20, 2019
Location: Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture
Number of participants: 22

The rice paddy organism survey held for third-grade students from Tsurusu Elementary School in Taiwa-cho has been hosted annually by JAAsahina (Taiwa-cho, Kurokawa-gun, Miyagi Prefecture) since 2015. Mitsui Chemicals Agro's Sendai branch office assists community coordinators, teachers and JA ZEN-NOH staff with the survey, which is conducted within the context of Community Cooperation Activities for Learning and Education* promoted by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT).

Meanwhile, this year marked the first time for the rice paddy organism survey to be held for third- and fourth-grade students from Kami-Ayashi Elementary School, Sakunami Elementary School and Okura Elementary School in Sendai, coming at the behest of former Tohoku University Science Coordinator Tomiichiro Ishigaki and with the cooperation of Mitsui Chemicals Agro's Sendai branch office.

The participating children showed terrific enthusiasm during the survey. "There's just so many different types of creatures to be found in and around the rice paddies," said one elementary school student. "I want to investigate the rice paddy out the back of my home now and see what organisms I can find there," said another participant. Even the teachers there with the children were amazed. "I can't believe how many different species there are," said one teacher. The event also offered an opportunity for participants to learn about rice farmers' efforts to conserve biodiversity and gain a deeper understanding of Mitsui Chemicals Agro's initiatives in this area.



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Mitsui Chemicals Agro is not merely a seller of agrochemicals; since 2012, it has worked with agricultural producers and consumers on activities aimed at providing people with the opportunity to consider food and biodiversity through hands-on experience in surveying the organisms found in and around rice paddies. By then publishing reports detailing the results of the rice paddy organism survey, Mitsui Chemicals Agro is able to demonstrate how rice comes from paddies that are home to a diverse array of creatures. The publishing of these reports also helps increase the added value in local rice. Mitsui Chemicals Agro will continue in its efforts to help solve societal issues by providing learning opportunities for children and undertaking initiatives aimed at increasing food production.

***Community Cooperation Activities for Learning and Education :**

A diverse array of activities in which communities and schools work in partnership to involve the whole community in supporting children's learning and growth. Participation is drawn from a wide range of local residents, including the elderly, those in their working years, students, parents and guardians, PTAs, NPOs, private companies, and various groups and organizations.
