

Welcome Address
Mr. Herve La Prairie
Conference Chairman, and
President, International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements Daoulas, France

Conference Participants
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed a pleasure to welcome you this morning to this Fourth International Conference on Kyusei Nature Farming being held in the beautiful city of Paris. As chairman of this conference, I am honored to greet you here today to deliberate an important new concept in agriculture that has proven to be successful in many parts of the world. I refer to a method of organic farming called Kyusei Nature Farming, as well as a new technology, that is, Effective Microorganisms or EM. Accordingly then, the theme of the conference is "Kyusei Nature Farming and Effective Microorganisms for a Sustainable Agriculture and Environment."

This conference is being held here today to introduce and explain the concepts of Kyusei Nature Farming and EM technology to European countries and to the world. The conference is the fourth in a series that began in Thailand in 1989. The second was held in Brazil in 1991 and the third in the United States in 1993.

I understand that plans are now firm to hold the fifth such conference in China in 1997 and the sixth conference in Africa in 1999. Thus, the conference is not one which is isolated, but one of a continuing program of activities. In addition, this conference blends in with that of the international conferences of IFOAM, of which I am currently the President. The international conferences of IFOAM and Kyusei Nature Farming are held in alternate years.

Organizing a conference of this magnitude is no easy task, especially when we have participants from over 20 countries spread over four continents. I did not imagine how difficult it would be when I was invited to chair this conference. The invitation was extended to me after discussions I had with Professor Higa in New Zealand last year at the IFOAM conference. However, I am pleased that I accepted this challenge as it has been a stimulating experience for me to coordinate the work. I would like to express my thanks to all the staff at ADANK for their untiring efforts to make this international conference a success.

At this point, I would like to extend a warm welcome to our distinguished guests. Firstly, Rev. Setsunori Shinoda, Director of the International Nature Farming Research Center (INFRC), Atami, Japan, representing Rev. Yasushi Matsumoto, Chairman of the Board, INFRC, who is unable to be with us to grace this occasion. Secondly, Prof. Teruo Higa, University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa, Japan, who developed the concept and technology of Effective Microorganisms, and Mrs. Higa. Your presence here today is of great significance to us.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to Mr. Bertrand Hervieu, who is a sociologist by profession and is the Director of Research at CNRS. Your acceptance of our invitation to be a guest speaker is most graciously acknowledged.

I would also like to welcome all of the conference participants from Europe, North and South America, and Asia. On behalf of all of you may I extend my thanks and appreciation to our guest speakers, presenters of technical papers and posters, our sponsors, associates and members of the organizing and program committees.

Now, on behalf of the organizing committee, I am pleased to declare this conference open. Our wish is that you will enjoy this conference, contribute effectively toward it and take back with you knowledge, experiences, contacts and happy memories of this Fourth International Conference on Kyusei Nature Farming and Effective Microorganisms for a Sustainable Agriculture and Environment.