

Effective Microorganisms: A Technology for Kyusei Nature Farming and for Agriculture Worldwide

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Honorable Guests and Colleagues

Participants of the Conference

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To begin with, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Herve La Prairie, President of IFOAM who has agreed to serve as chairman of this Fourth International Conference on Kyusei Nature Farming with the theme of "Effective Microorganisms for a Sustainable Agriculture and Environment." We are indeed honored to have you as our chairman.

I also wish to extend my gratitude and appreciation to the staff of ADANK/Europe, the program and organizing committees, conference coordinators, and volunteers who have contributed so much time and effort to make this conference a reality and highly significant event. As you can see from the program, the conference will address a number of is-sues that will determine whether we can develop a truly sustainable agriculture and environment in the years ahead. In addressing these issues, our conference participants will make almost 50 presentations including keynote addresses, invited lectures, and technical research papers and posters. The participants represent more than 20 countries from 5 continents, i.e., Europe, North and South America, Asia and Africa. My sincere thanks and appreciation to all of you for your attendance. In 1935, Mokichi Okada, a Japanese naturalist and philosopher, and early advocate of the principles of Kyusei Nature Farming, predicted that an agriculture based on the use of synthetic chemicals was not sustainable. Certainly, the degradative effects that we have seen from intensive use of agrichemicals on soil quality, food quality, human health and the environment would substantiate his prediction.

During the 1980's, a considerable amount of research was conducted by what is now known as the International Nature Farming Research Center (INFRC) in Japan to develop Kyusei Nature Farming as a viable and sustainable method of farming. More recently, the concept and use of Effective Microorganisms (EM) has been the subject of extensive research in countries throughout the Asia-Pacific Region and in North and South America. Results of this research on Kyusei Nature Farming, with the added dimension of EM, have been presented at all IFOAM meetings since 1986. This, of course, has helped to strengthen the relationship between Kyusei Nature Farming research organizations (i.e., APNAN, EMRO, and INFRC) and IFOAM.

Kyusei Nature Farming is not a fanning method that leaves everything to nature. While it does have some similarities with organic faming, it goes considerably beyond organic farming, both conceptually and practically. It is a farming method which has a definite mission and goal, that is, to enhance the quality of human life by eliminating hunger, disease, poverty and conflict. To achieve this goal, Kyusei Nature Farming must satisfy the following five requirements:

1. It must produce safe and nutritious food to enhance human health.
2. It must be economically and spiritually beneficial to both producers and consumers.
3. It must be sustainable and easily practiced by anyone.
4. It must conform to nature and protect the environment.
5. It must produce sufficient food of high quality for an expanding world population.

Kyusei Nature Farming's international movement began with the first international conference on Kyusei Nature Farming that was held in Thailand in 1989. The second conference in Brazil in 1991 and the third conference in the United States in 1993 have stimulated considerable interest in this farming method throughout these countries and others in their regions. Plans have already been made to hold future conferences in China (1997), Africa (1999), Russia (2001), and India (2003).

The institution that has supported international research on Kyusei Nature Farming, INFRC, is a non-governmental, non-profit organization that transcends religious and political ideologies for the expressed purpose of solving agricultural and environmental problems. In those cases where profits

are derived from the sale of EM in a particular country, such profits are used in that country for developing improved nature farming techniques and solving environmental problems.

Effective Microorganisms or EM is an added dimension to Kyusei Nature Farming. EM consists of mixed cultures of compatible and beneficial microorganisms that have been selected from the natural environment. Research has shown that EM cultures as microbial inoculants can enhance soil quality and the growth, yield and quality of crops.

EM is entirely safe to use which is based upon some 15 years of research and experience. The microorganisms which comprise EM cultures are neither engineered nor exotic types. Often, they are the same microorganisms that are used in the processing and manufacturing of foods and feeds.

There are many opinions, pro and con, about the use of microbial inoculants, such as EM, in agriculture. Thus, it is absolutely vital that research on these products be conducted in a scientifically-sound manner with treatments replicated and randomized, and results analyzed in a statistically-valid design.

This Forth International Conference on Kyusei Nature Farming and EM Technology is being held here in Paris to introduce relevant concepts and techniques to the European community. We look forward to interesting discussions of mutual interest and hope that the conference provides you with new ideas and strategies that will be useful in the development of more sustainable organic and nature farming systems throughout the world.

Thank you very much.