

Sino-Japanese Exchange and Cooperation in Food and Agriculture Since China Entered the WTO

An Overview Focusing on Heilongjiang Province (Summary)

Jialei Liu

Visiting Researcher, Research Division, ERINA

Heilongjiang Province is one of China's important agricultural production areas. The province's Sanjiang Plain is one of the few food production hubs where mechanization has been achieved. Since the late 1970s, wide-ranging human exchange, and financial and technical cooperation between Heilongjiang Province and Japanese governmental institutions (JICA, JBIC), local authorities (Hokkaido, Niigata Prefecture, etc.), private companies (Nichimen, Marubeni), and non-governmental organizations (Niigata Prefecture Japan-China Friendship Association) has taken place in the field of food and agriculture. In Heilongjiang, significant achievements have been made in terms of the development of technology for rice cultivation in cold areas, the upgrading of agricultural water supply and food facilities, and improvements in medical facilities in farming communities, not to mention an improvement in the standard of living in such communities. With the occurrence of surplus food production in the latter half of the 1990s, China's food supply has been shifting from the "era of shortages" that prevailed hitherto, to an "era of surfeit". Due to this, the problems faced in agriculture in Heilongjiang Province

have already changed from that of the supply of food being unable to meet demand to such issues as a downturn in food prices and sluggish growth in the incomes of farming families. China's membership of the WTO will result in an increase in imports of agricultural produce, and the double trade-off between surplus food and agricultural incomes will become more severe in Heilongjiang, which is a hub for food production. Attention has focused on exchange and cooperation between Heilongjiang Province and Japan in the field of food and agriculture, as a means of solving the province's agricultural problems, and desirable approaches to this exchange and cooperation will be studied in the future.

The following are extremely important in terms of Sino-Japanese agricultural exchange in the future.

- (1) Establishing an awareness of the importance of long-term human exchange.
- (2) Establishing an awareness of the importance of ensuring that sustainable agricultural production in harmony with the environment takes root in the agricultural practices of both China and Japan.