

["Yellow Leek"- local specialties of which Okayama is proud]

Hello, I'm Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

The meeting with yellow leek farmers was held in a pickup place in Musa, Okayama City last Sunday, April 13. We had lunch filled with yellow leek such as barazushi, boiled yellow leek and miso soup.

Yellow leek might not be familiar to people outside Okayama. It is literally vivid yellow and one of the local specialties of which Okayama is proud.

The point in yellow leek cultivation is to grow them without applying light, according to the farmers. It is elaborately grown by cutting general green leek once and shading its new leaves. (The cut green leek is eaten by people or farm animals.)

The yellow leek brought up with the utmost care is soft and sweet with a unique flavor. It is definitely very delicious and low-calorie food and said to be also good for intestinal disorder.

My wife cooked a pork sauté for dinner at home last Saturday, the previous day of the meeting. Its sauce was very good, so I asked her how to make it. First, she fried vegetables including onion and spinach and there added dried bonito, liquor and yellow leek soy sauce. The yellow leek soy sauce is important in particular.

Indeed yellow leek is the all-round ingredient which brings out the flavor of the dish and upgrades the meal.

You might think this mail must be just the advertisement of yellow leek.

Nevertheless, I would still like to take a role for advertisement of yellow leek by mentioning it in my e-mails because I was admired by the young farmers I met: the Fushimi Family organizing the yellow leek section, Mr. Ueda who is also famous as "yellow leek ambassador" and Mr. & Mrs. Inoue who quit Shiseido and returned to Okayama. They are doing their best so that yellow leek becomes familiar and more people can enjoy this Okayama's specialty.

I feel excited when I meet and talk with the young people working on agriculture positively. Ozono-san is growing "Ohisama Corn 88", the sweet corn which can be eaten raw and has 18-20 sugar content same as grapes. Ouchi-san is growing dragon fruit and grapes. There are also people who newly start dairy farming or fruits cultivation.

Nevertheless, the average age of Japanese agricultural workers is still about 66 years old. Fostering young workers is urgently needed. I hope that many young people will succeed the agriculture and pass it to the next generation.