

[Banana Produced in Okayama?]

Hello, I'm Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

The other day, I visited a farm in Minami ward of Okayama City, owned by an agricultural corporation D&T Farm. The corporation has recently got the right for first refusal regarding the site of former Fukutani municipal primary school and kindergarten in the area of Ashimori in Kita ward.

The farm welcomed us with bright greenery of more than 200 kinds of pesticide-free products such as bananas, pineapples, papaya, and coffee beans. They are all produced in Okayama!

I tried the banana and pineapple, and I found that the ripe yellow banana was so sweet and could eat up the skin. The centre of the mellow pineapple was edible and the condensed sweetness was incredible.

The corporation stands for a venture company of agribiotechnology which stimulates Japanese agribusiness. They got attraction from throughout Japan with the special technique, which enables tropical products which usually grow only in tropical area to be cultivated in Okayama.

The technique enables the plants to grow faster and more resilient to cold conditions by activating cold-resistant gene by keeping seeds of tropical plants under the environment of minus 60 degrees.

From now, they plan to cultivate harvests in the extremely cold environment in Siberia.

We might face famine in the coming future, but their future plan made me excited because the technique of breed improvement would be the world legacy if it is really realised.

Besides, City of Okayama will open “Okayama Start-up Support Center” this summer for those residents who want to try to run brand new business models.

This centre will be established in the corner of TSUTAYA Book Store in ICOTNICOT, a commercial facility in front of JR Okayama Station. Anyone who is interested in start-up business can stop by and interact with one another. Besides, they can access to coordinators we assign who give them necessary advice for running business.

Actually, the new business entry rate of Okayama City was 5.52% in 2015, which went below the average amongst the ordinance-designated cities. I do hope that a variety of new business models which break conventional mind-setting and styles in many industrial fields including agriculture will bubble up from Okayama.