

Study on Green Tourism Experience —Cases of Popular Strawberry Farms in Chiba Prefecture

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Background and Objectives

The notion of ‘green tourism’, in which people are encouraged to pursue rural leisure activities in a manner that will benefit the countryside, rather than harm, is gaining popularity. (A. Jones, 1987)

Due to today’s enormous social pressure, many people need proximity to nature in order to get recreation in their leisure time. To promote green tourism in cooperation and participation, MAFF (Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, Japan) arranges green tourism experiences into five categories; farmer restaurants (to taste), local products shops (to buy), farmhouses (to stay), experience of agriculture, forestry and fisheries (to enjoy) and citizen farms (to make). (MAFF HP,2018)

Chiba prefecture is having an advantage in the location as it adjoins to Tokyo metropolitan area, this means that agriculture, fishery experiences and other wide ranges of green-blue tourism activities that can be done on a one-day-trip from the big city. Therefore, it is convenient for urban residents, travelers and visitors to interact and communicate with local farmers and valuable knowledge and experience can easily be exchanged.

Method

The research was conducted in two stages; by collecting literature information and by analysis. Chiba-ken has been chosen as the study area because of the rich nature and beautiful seascape from three sides surrounded. We chose strawberry farms for research because in recent years strawberry picking has received more and more attention and formed a new trend.

Results and Considerations

According to statistics, it is concluded that the largest agricultural experience project in Chiba prefecture is the strawberry picking (Table). The area with the largest distribution of strawberry farms is Kimitsu area, and especially Kimitsu city (Fig.1). Through the study, we found the main reasons for the prosperity of strawberry picking agriculture in this specific area. First, Kimitsu city as a historic strawberry production area has superior geographical conditions. It is possible for the visitors to do the sightseeing in a one-day-trip as the ride is about one hour from Tokyo or Kanagawa when using the Tokyo Bay Aquarain/Tsuchiyama Auto Roadway (Fig.2). Another crucial reason is the strong support from the agricultural office on the improvement of cultivation technology and management improvement of producers. Producers in Kimitsu city are working diligently and making efforts by participating in a

workshop held by 'JA Kimito Strawberry Committee' .

As a kind of agricultural management, sightseeing farms are often used as a sideline by farmers. Therefore, facilities and services are often inadequate from a tourism perspective. Sightseeing agriculture in Kimito city has benefited from the direct sales system of strawberries, and it can be said to be a model in sightseeing agriculture. For the consideration of development within tourism agriculture, more regional characteristics should be combined, and more emphasis should be placed on promoting regional advantages.

Keywords: green tourism, agriculture, tourism agriculture, MAFF

Table over the quantity of experiences in Chiba Prefecture

Activities	Strawberry	Sweet Potato	Bamboo Shoot	Rice	Blueberry
Amount	60	32	27	24	22
Activities	Peanut	Pear	Livestock	Flower Picked	Cauliflower
Amount	20	20	18	16	14
Activities	Corn	Potato	Grapes	Soybeans	Chestnut
Amount	13	13	12	12	12
Activities	Char-grilled	Fishery	Nature	Dairy Farm	Aquatic Food
Amount	11	11	10	9	9
Activities	Orange	Wild Vegetable	Broad Bean	Beach Comb	Shiitake
Amount	9	8	6	6	5
Activities	Loquat	Tomato	Persimmon	Fig	Apple
Amount	5	4	4	4	3
Activities	Taro	Kiwi Fruit	Melon	Carrot	Radish
Amount	3	3	3	3	2
Activities	Broccoli	Onion			
Amount	2	2			

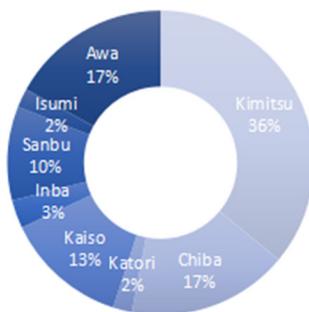


Fig.1 The distribution of strawberry fields



Fig.2 The location of Kimito City