

## **Farmers' challenges against radiation problem, Environment and/or Economy**

Roeurn Siranet

Master 2<sup>nd</sup> year, International Environmental and Agricultural Sciences, Graduate School of Agriculture

On 18-19<sup>th</sup> July 2011, there was a trip co-organized by IEAS (International Environmental and Agricultural Science) and FOLENS (Education Program for Field Orient-Leaders in Environmental Sectors in Asia and Africa) to Fujieda, Shizuoka prefecture. At about 7am30 on 17<sup>th</sup> July, we departed the TUAT and it took us around 4 hours to arrive at the Kinezuka family where we stayed and carried out our activities during the trip.

Soon after arrival at the Kinezuka family, professor Takashi Gomi of IEAS and Professor Taka Furuichi of FOLENS, along with Mr. Kinezuka, led the students to visit organic tea plantation which has been developed for about 35 years. Mr. Kinezuka explained the advantages of organic farming compared to inorganic one, arguing the balance in ecology for pest management and great taste of organic tea. Meanwhile, he expressed his concerned over the radiation effect on the agricultural product due to the Fukushima Daiichi plant accident following the earthquake and Tsunami on 11<sup>th</sup> March as some farmers did during the discussion session. The farmers raised their concerns over the challenges of safty of agricultural product and economic impacts of radiation (consumer's reluctance to the radiation affected product). Regarding the matter, the farmers blamed the Japanese government over the use of nuclear energy and suggested the shutdown of nuclear plant. From their point of view, nuclear power, responsible about 40% as source of energy in Japan, needs abandoning while some scholars still favour nuclear power; moreover, when asked about what sources can be used to replace the nuclear source and utilized for the energy-needed economic growth and what will happen to the economy with lack of energy, it is really difficult not only for scholars but also for farmers themselves related to this question. So, it is undeniable that nuclear power is still an important source if the economy is to grow well. The field trip provided opportunity to know what are the consequences after nuclear accident, the challenge of famers and government's compensation and minimizing risk of impact of development process on environment.

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day morning, all students and local farmers join the rice transplanting of organic paddy rice field. This gave opportunity students to feel the real organic field and learn about how important of community for the success and sustainability of an activity. After lunch, the bus left Fujieda and saftly arrived TUAT at around 7pm30.

