

Closing Remarks

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DEAR Ladies and Gentlemen,

After two days of hard work, our symposium is reaching its end.

With careful and scientific organization, the 9th JIRCAS International Symposium on Value-addition to Agricultural Products has returned a wonderful result.

Over 200 delegates from 40 different countries of 5 continents, belonging to various sectors—policy development, agronomics, nutrition and food safety, agribusiness, postharvest research etc.—have joined here in order to discuss many current problems.

In the trend toward economic globalization, every country has its own conditions, its own characteristics, and its own conveniences and inconveniences, but there are numerous challenges bearing down on developing countries. Many keynote presentations and national reports, as well as our general discussions, have mentioned that problems in the agri-food sector, including postharvest technology, are important in many developing countries. The income gap between people in the cities and the countryside is increasing day by day, and farmers who would like to settle in cities are becoming more and more numerous. As a remedy to this, we have to try our best to find suitable solutions. To be practical and effective, we have not only to apply technical measures, but also to attach much importance to adequate policies.

From the technical viewpoint, farming will include not only cultivation of cereals, orchards and edible roots, but forest growing, animal breeding, fishery and aquaculture are also worthy of attention. These trades have proved their effectiveness in increasing farmers' income and living standard, as the reports in this symposium have mentioned. Our agri-production will be effective only when it is linked with good storage, better processing and rational consumption of final products. Another aspect is to ensure food security, particularly for small- and medium-scale enterprises in developing countries. Through this symposium, we also recognize that global integration does not necessarily conflict with the characteristics and value of functional and traditional foodstuffs, and does not require the cessation of cultivation of indigenous plants and minor crops. On the contrary, if they were well studied, manufactured and marketed, such commodities can help farmers to make more money. Each country has to progress in its own way on these issues.

Another thing that we cannot fail to mention at the end of our symposium: over 200 delegates from many provinces of various nations convened together at JIRCAS for two days. Perhaps before this, we had contacted each other by email or through scientific reports. Thanks to this symposium, we made acquaintances, and we understand each other more and more in a sympathetic and friendly atmosphere. More comprehension, better friendship and closer cooperation—these are the most important results we harvested through this meeting. We are sure that this result will be multiplied after the closing of our symposium.

Everything, be it the most beautiful, has to come to an end! Our symposium also! On behalf of all participants, we would like to express our greatest thanks to JIRCAS, and to the organizational and secretarial staff, who have done their best to provide us with a very scientific and very friendly forum. During the trip home, everybody will take with them some of this warm and hearty atmosphere.

Thank you for your attention!