

Welcome Address

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Distinguished guests and participants,

On behalf of the Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Research Council of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries(MAFF), it is my great pleasure to extend sincere greetings and best wishes to all the participants in the "4th International Symposium on the Biosafety Results of Field Tests of Genetically Modified Plants and Microorganisms" which is organized by the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), under the joint support of STAFF, USDA, Oklahoma State University, EC-Directorate General XII and Agriculture, Agri-Food Canada.

The Research Council has been continuing, among other activities, to promote international research collaboration with both developing and developed countries as well as with international research organizations. To strengthen these activities, the former Tropical Agriculture Research Center (TARC) was reorganized into an entirely new research center, JIRCAS with an expanded mandate in the covering of regions as well as research subjects. This is actually the third International Symposium since the establishment of JIRCAS.

In recent years, food supply and environmental deterioration problems on a global scale have become increasingly critical, especially in the developing regions. It is generally recognized that sustainable development of agriculture is essential to solve these problems. I believe that biotechnology, particularly development and use of genetically modified organisms, is a major technology for promotion of sustainable agriculture.

I am convinced that the presentations and discussions that will be held during this symposium, focused on the biosafety of genetically modified plants and microorganisms, will bring significant results for the development and commercialization of transgenic products.

I do hope that the symposium will be fruitful and successful.

I again wish to express my cordial welcome to all the guests and participants.

Thank you.