

Closing remarks

Keiji Kainuma
Director General, JIRCAS

At the end of the meeting, I would like to express my deep appreciation to all the participants in the 4th Biosafety Symposium, at the same time the 3rd JIRCAS International Symposium for their valuable contribution which enabled the symposium to be so meaningful and fruitful. We are very pleased indeed that among the 230 participants, 90 overseas participants came from 27 countries. Particularly, I would like to thank all the speakers and moderators for their effort in making the panels exciting and interesting.

I feel that the symposium starting from panel one to six was extremely informative as up-to-date information relating to the development of biosafety of recombinant DNA organisms in the world was outlined. In this symposium, we invited for the first time leading scientists from developing countries and asked them to introduce the present situation of the biosafety issues in each country. As all of you recognized, the information will be extremely valuable for all of us. In this regard, I would like to emphasize that international collaboration is essential to promote the harmonization of biosafety guidelines for the development of transformed crops, in particular in the developing regions.

As mentioned in Dr. Economidis' summation, the first symposium was held at Kiawah Island in 1990, and I was invited to present the Japanese guidelines of field tests. Unfortunately, due to time constraint I could not attend this meeting as well as the other subsequent meetings. I am therefore very pleased that now I can fulfill part of my responsibility for the organization of the biosafety symposium.

If you forgive me, I will briefly outline my personal relationship with biosafety issues. During 1988 to 1990, I was in charge of enacting the policy relating to agricultural biotechnology in MAFF. At that time, we worked very hard to develop the guidelines for field tests of transgenic plants and published the guidelines in 1989. We conducted the first field tests of TMV-tomato in Tsukuba in 1991. Also, I was in charge of the establishment of the organization responsible for the promotion of practical application of biotechnology. This organization designated as STAFF, which is now cosponsoring this Symposium, carries out extensive work on rice genome analysis in collaboration with MAFF research institutes. STAFF members come from more than 100 private organizations and 43 prefectural governments.

I believe that The 4th Biosafety Symposium at Tsukuba will become the milestone for the use of recombinant DNA organisms in this country. As announced last night, I am particularly pleased to transfer my duties to Dr. Willy De Greef, who is accepting the responsibility to host the 5th Symposium in 1998 in Belgium.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the organizing committee and secretariat for their dedication to this symposium. Without their efforts, we would not have

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been able to hold this meeting so successfully.

Thank you.