

Seibu Kaihatsu Nosan and Sumitomo Corporation partner to drive smart farming and sustainable agriculture in Japan

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Seibu Kaihatsu Nosan Co., Ltd., Sumitomo Corporation, and Sumitomo Corporation Tohoku Co., Ltd. have entered into a business alliance agreement to promote sustainable agricultural production and regional development in Japan's Tohoku region.

The three companies will advance joint projects with local producers and agricultural companies focused on realizing sustainable agriculture by: (1) enhancing work efficiency and stabilizing food production through smart farming technologies, (2) revitalizing regional production via human resource development and distribution support and (3) promoting the adoption of environmentally friendly agricultural inputs and cultivation techniques.

Four joint projects will be implemented under the alliance as below.

1. **Stable Food Production Through Work Efficiency Improvement**

These efforts will demonstrate the productivity and efficiency benefits of smart farming technologies, as well as optimal methods of adoption in the field. Through demonstration events, the companies will support the introduction of these

technologies to producers across Tohoku, aiming to ensure stable food production.

2. **Regional Revitalization Through Human Resource Development**

This project will establish consulting services and training programs by collecting and analyzing farm data from smartphones and machinery, with the aim of improving efficiency and expanding production areas. Drawing on extensive practical experience in farmland aggregation and management, the companies will help ensure the sustainability and growth of agriculture rooted in regional communities.

3. **Support for Agricultural Distribution**

This project will support both the development of cultivation systems responsive to market fluctuations and enhanced quality control by linking producer data with food processing and distribution companies. The companies will also support producers by undertaking post-harvest operations such as drying and sorting, thereby contributing to enhanced production, quality assurance and distribution in Tohoku.

4. **Promotion of Environmentally Friendly Farming**

This effort will demonstrate the use of agricultural inputs and cultivation systems that help reduce environmental impact, examine efficient methods of introduction and promote adoption throughout the Tohoku region. In addition, the companies will pursue studies on the practical implementation of a carbon credit program.

Japan faces an urgent challenge of declining and aging agricultural workers. Over the past 20 years, the number of farmers has halved, and as of 2023, their average age reached approximately 69. In addition, farmland maintenance is a major issue — abandoned farmland now totals 420,000 hectares, equivalent to nearly 10% of the nation's 4.29 million hectares of farmland.

Seibu Kaihatsu Nosan currently manages approximately 1,000 hectares of farmland, making it one of Japan's largest agricultural corporations. In response to challenges such as a declining farming population and the spread of abandoned farmland, the company leverages smart agricultural technologies — including IoT-based work recording, automated machinery steering and agricultural drones — to achieve efficient agricultural operations on its large-scale managed farmland. In addition, by undertaking farm operations such as spraying, harvesting and drying on behalf of neighboring producers, the company supports the vitality of regional agriculture.

Building on prior joint efforts to test and promote digital and labor-saving technologies that lead to improved productivity and efficiency, Sumitomo Corporation, Sumitomo Corporation Tohoku and Seibu Kaihatsu Nosan have now expanded the scope of their collaboration by signing a new alliance to accelerate contributions to the Tohoku region