



Local Branding

*- A strategy to revitalize
local communities -*



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Eriko Mori



- Live in Kanra, Gunma, Japan
- Occupation: Program Director, Global Agriculture Crossroad, TERRAKOYA
- In charge of coordinating training courses of community development and agriculture for government officers and NGO staff members from abroad.
- Member of Gunma Prefecture Agricultural and Livestock Products Brand Strategy Committee
- Member of Kanra Town New Products Research and Development Support Review Board
- I like traveling, kitchen gardening, and checking out local events in weekends.

Purpose of today's lecture

Introduce experiences and lessons learned from Japanese community development through “Local Branding” and offer opportunity to generate some ideas applicable in your own regions.



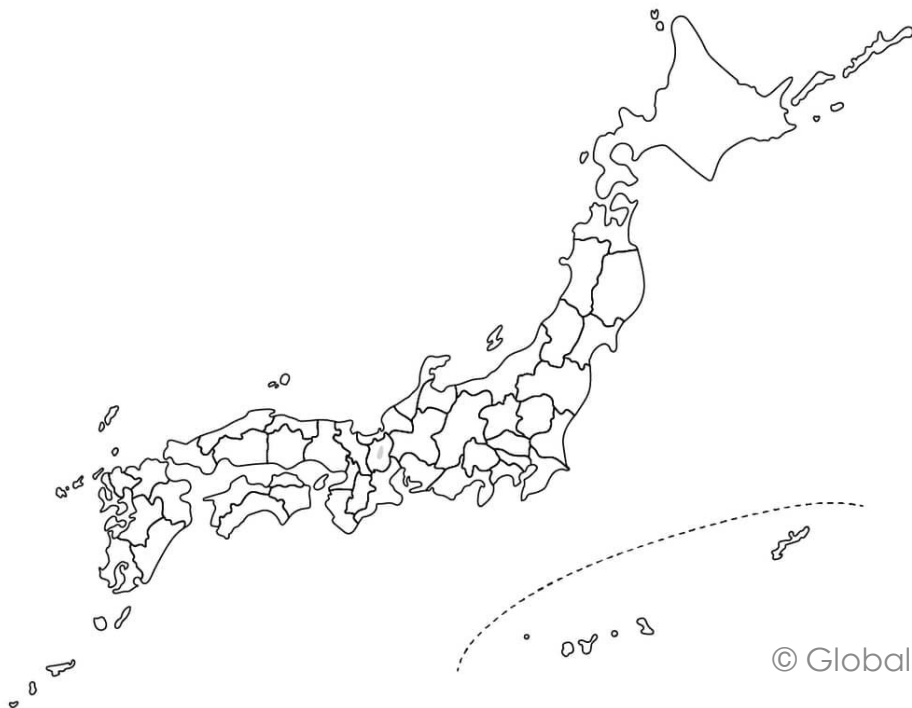
Contents of my talk

1. Introduction
2. Japanese experience contributing to regional branding
 - OVOP Movement
 - Development of local specialty products
 - Information dissemination and PR (Roadside Stations, Antenna shops)
 - Experience-based exchange programs
 - Certification of brand
3. Intervention of Academic Sector
4. Some tips for local branding

Some information about Japan



- Japan is an island country in East Asia (consists of 14,125 islands)
- Territorial area: approximately 378,000 km². Approximately 70% of the country is mountainous and 67% is forested.
- Population: 124.63 million (Feb, 2023)
- 47 prefectures, 1,718 municipalities. The Capital is Tokyo.
- Major industries: Tertiary Industry C (information and communications, finance, real estate): 43.5%; Secondary Industry (manufacturing, construction): 28.5%; Primary Industry (agriculture, forestry, fisheries): 1.1%
- Language: Japanese
- Climate: belongs to the temperate zone, with four distinct seasons and summer and winter climates are different.



***What is "Brand"
and "Branding"?***



What is the Brand?



BRAND is NOT just a presentation of "Logo" or "Brand Design".

BRAND is a "Media" of representation for Intangible value

REPRESENTS

IDENTITY

RECOGNITION of

Value

What is “Brand” and “Branding”?

➤ Brand Building (Branding)

Act of creating "**EXPECTATION**" for its recognition.

➤ Brand Certification

Process of acquiring "**COMMITMENT**" to meet the “expectation”.

➤ BRAND

To perceive "**TRUST**" by the public, satisfying the "Expectation" and "Commitment" about the product, company, town, country or even person.

What is “Local Brand”?

Local branding is an initiative that strengthens regional cohesion and leads to regional revitalization through the strategic use of local resources as intellectual property. Local brands were born out of the ineffectiveness of conventional regional revitalization measures that rely on the government and other outside entities in regions facing a severe economic environment. The success of a local brand is expected not only to revitalize local industries, but also to increase the sustainability of the community as a whole by spreading its influence to related industries such as manufacturing and tourism, and thereby leading to increased employment and population growth.

Current Status and Issues of Regional Brand Management Survey Research Report, Center for Regional Revitalization, 2016

Comparison between ordinary articles and the community as a branding object

	Ordinary article	Community (as a branding object)			
Final goal	Increase in profit	Community revitalization (economic, spiritual, quality of life)			
Communication object	Customers (consumers, companies) Shareholders, employees	industry	Tourism	Comfort of life	Investment acceptance
		Customers (consumers and companies)	Tourist	Residents and potential residents	Entrepreneur, Investors
Party carrying out the work	corporate organization	Local governments (prefectures, municipalities), residents, producers, organizations (universities, foundations, etc.), private organizations			

Identification of local resources

✓ What are the local resources?



Empowerment from the government
A third-party point of view

Development of local resources

✓ How to diversify?

✓ How to differentiate?



Successor training
Technological innovation

Carrying out activities, promotion, marketing

✓ How to manage activities?

✓ How to commercialize?

✓ How to disseminate information?



Coordinator training
Participatory activity development
Public relations

Generation of local identity (**Civic Pride**)

4P Analysis of Local Brand



Product

- Hand made
- Quality
- Identity
- Only-one

Price

- Medium to high (handmade and by locality)

Place

- Conscientious market
- Nostalgic market

Promotion

- Historical tale
- Nostalgia
- Sustainability

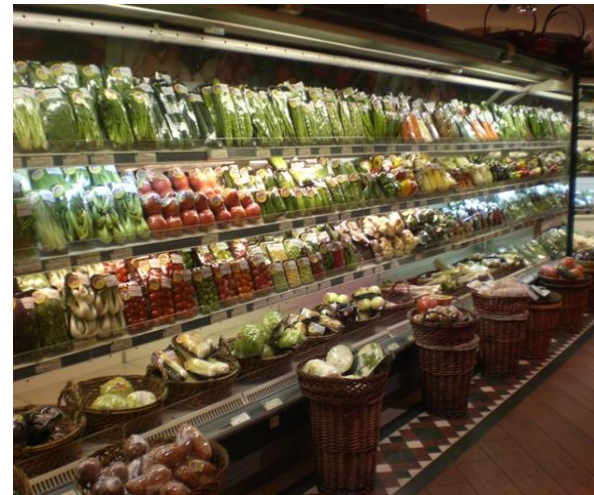


Niche markets

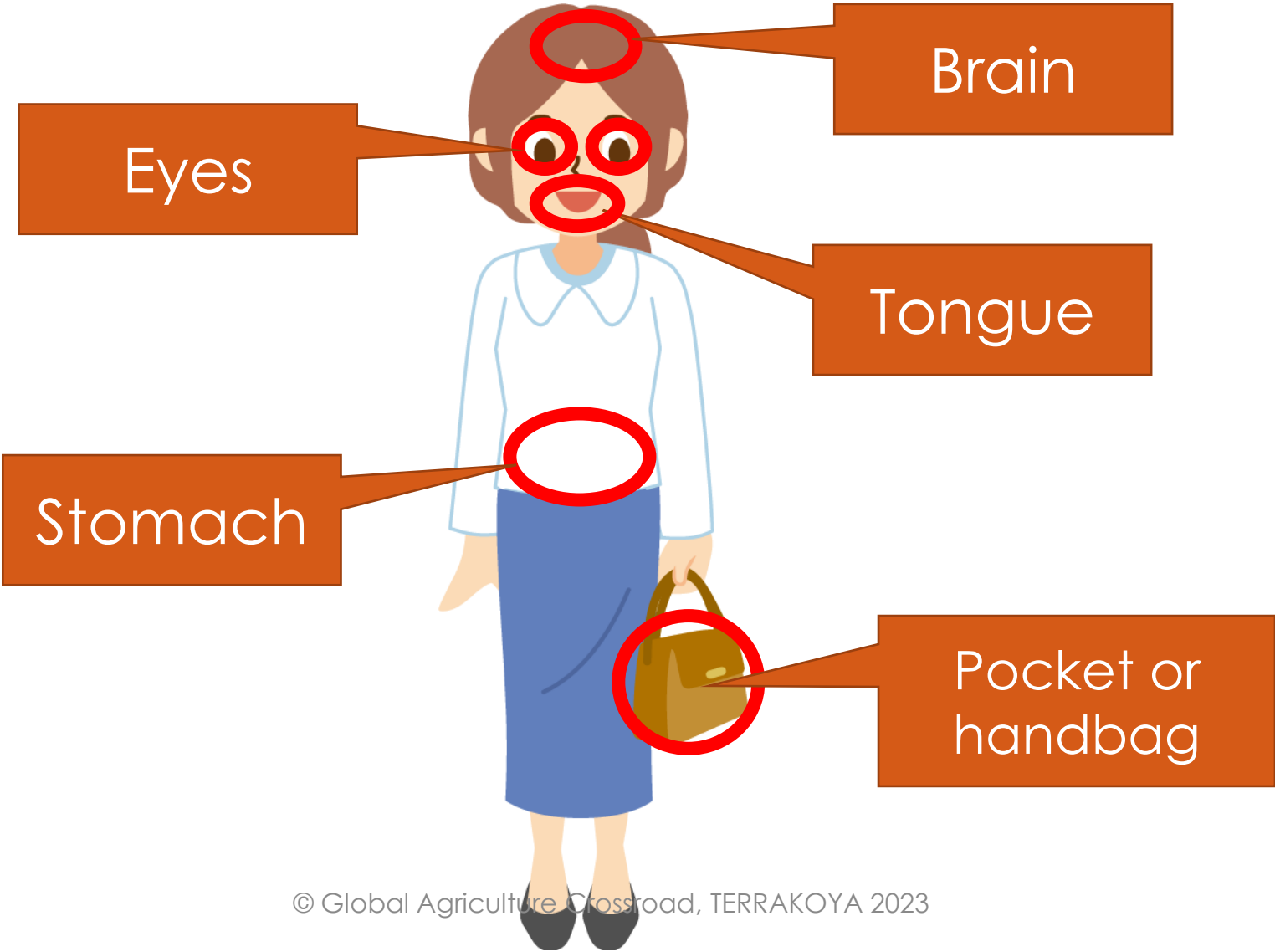
Mass market

Must identify appropriate market

Evolution of the agricultural value chain in postwar Japan



Change in Japanese consumer preferences after World War II



A methodology for revitalize local communities by local branding

I. OVOP (One Village, One Product)

OVOP is a movement initiated by the government and led by local residents based on the idea of developing **at least one agricultural product**, specialty product, or tourist resource in each town that makes the most of local resources so that it can be used not only within the region but also outside the region.

Value-adding

differentiation

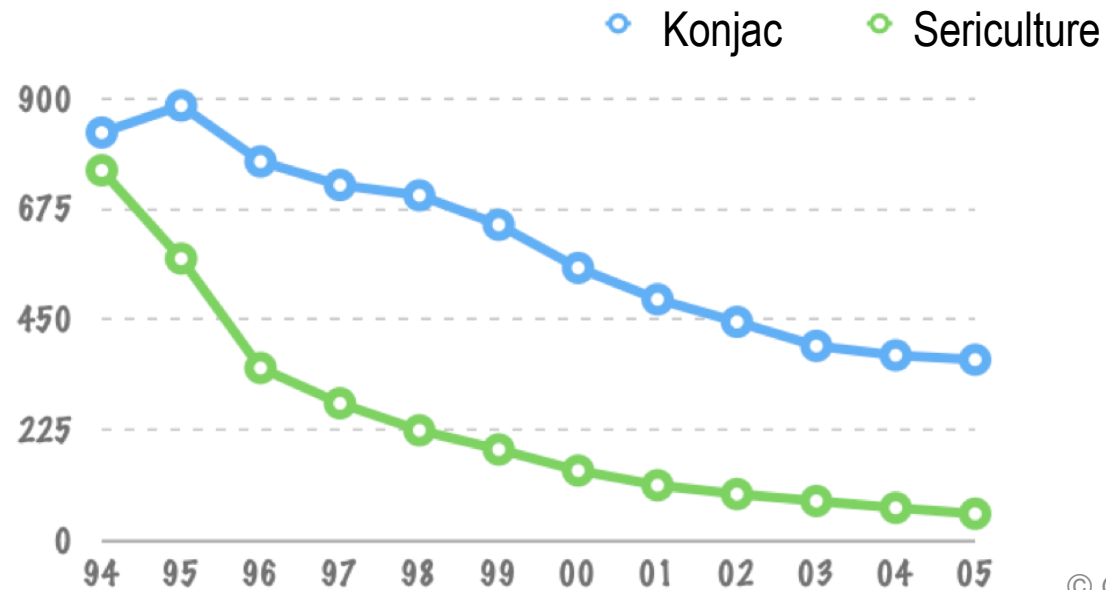
にほんちず
日本地図
 とくさんひん
特産品



Each region could activate economic initiatives utilizing the available, transformable resources.

Both a tangible or non-tangible products that give its identity: a story, a landscape, a typical food, an agricultural product, etc. that can generate economic income, employment, human development opportunities.

Case of Kanra *- Period of Agricultural Transition -*



Case of Kanra

- Thoroughly uncover local resources -

- Establishing a "Development Promotion Section" within the town office
⇒ Close cooperation between the Section and farmers
- Introducing promising crops suited to each community and giving shape to dormant resources!



Japanese paper



Apple juice



Cultivation of wasabi in fields (oka-wasabi)

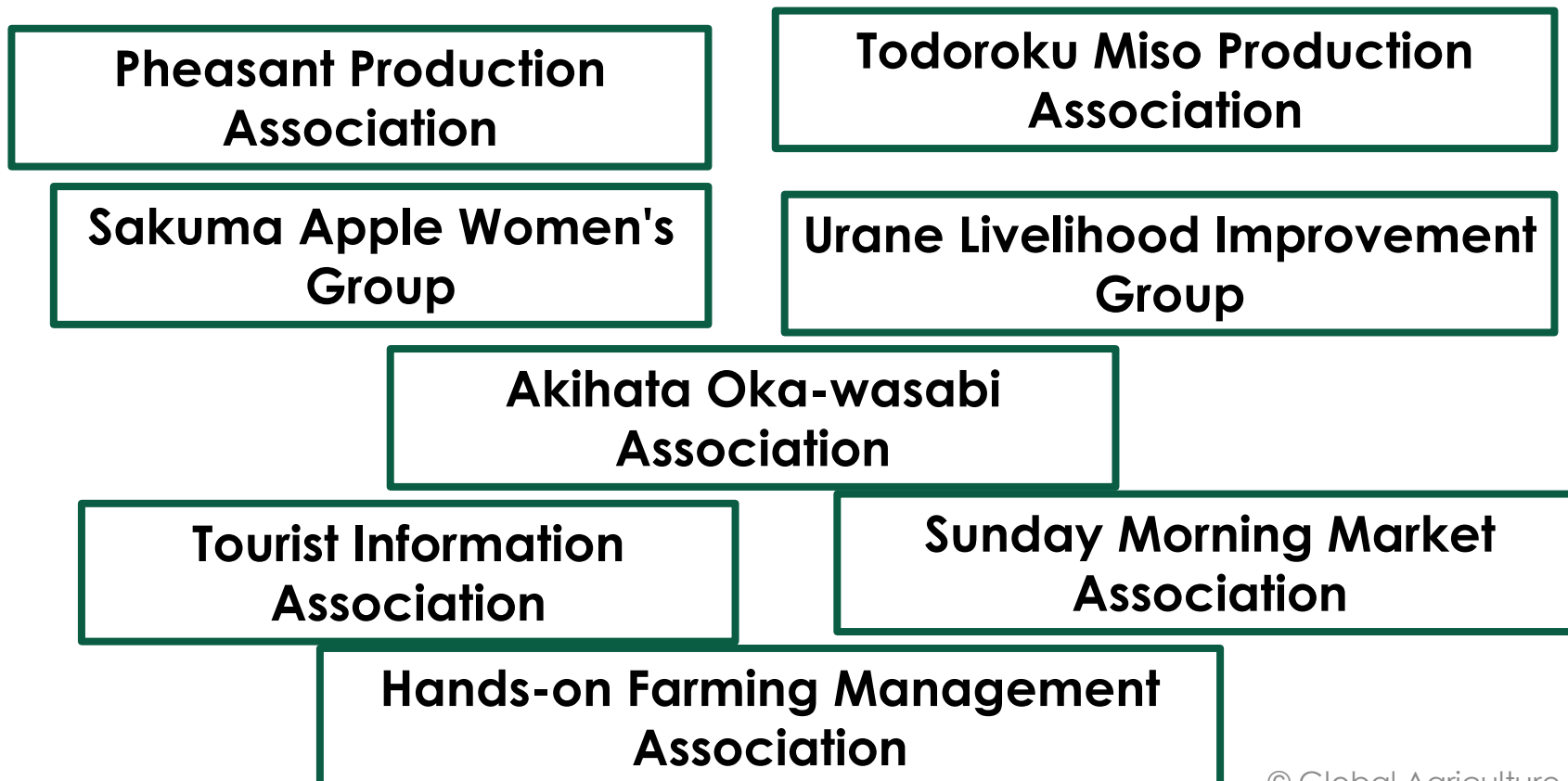


Kiwi fruit

Drawing out people's energy through organization

- **Organizing of residents**

No matter how small the number of people, group them together and position them as a single organization to promote initiatives.



Drawing out people's energy through organization

- Formation of project teams within the town office to prepare for the opening of the "Bussan (Product) Center."
("subcommittee on product assortment," "subcommittee on cafeteria menu," etc.)
 - Formation of project teams to prepare for the opening of the "Furusato-kan" (Project Team on Selection of Hands-on Training Courses)
("Project Team on Initial Coordination/Procurement of Equipment and Supplies," and "Project Team on Creation of Seasonal Menu")
- ⇒ The management guideline of the "Product Center" is **"promotion of the town"**.
- ⇒ Project members consist mostly of women.
Studying of important issues such as cafeteria menu, image of the building, selection of products for sale, selection of tableware for the cafeteria, etc.



Roadside Station Kanra

Italian wine



Yokoo Daily Foods

Various konjac products



Musashi Seika Inc.

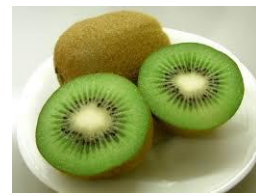


地粉ピザ



Corno Macaroni Co., Ltd.

Various pasta products



Kiwi fruit



Specialties and souvenirs of Kanra-machi



Seitoku Meijo Co., Ltd.

Local sake



Komatsuya

Kanra-no-sato Manju

Kanra-chan Soft Sablé



Nasuan

Chijigaki soba (zaru soba noodles)

Promotion of the town

- Roadside Station (Michi no Eki) -



Role of Roadside Station (Michino-eki)

3 functions of Michino-eki

Rest **Rest function**

Provision of services in a wide variety of parking facilities, restrooms, shop, cafeteria, etc.

Community Role to facilitate cooperation with the community

Use of Michino-eki as a hub with the community and residents

Information Information transmission function

Offer of information on roads, events and tourism

■ **New features required**

- (1) Tourism and industrial promotion centre
- (2) Community revitalization (employment generation)
- (3) Strengthening the disaster risk reduction function, etc.

Overview of Roadside Station Kanra



Food court



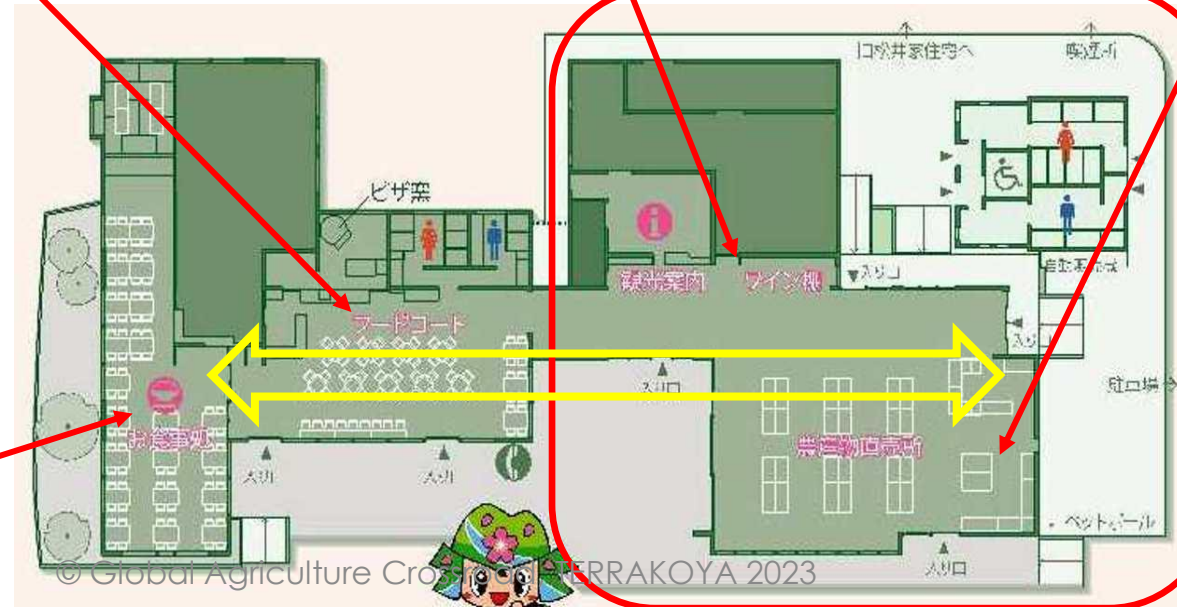
Wine & Local Sake Corner



Farmers' market corner



Restaurant



Establishment of the KANRA brand certification system



- Purpose: To dig up excellent products in Kanra Town and use them as brand products
 - Increase added value by certification and promote it inside and outside the town
 - To revitalize the local economy and improve the image of the town.
- Advantage : By usage of the KANRA brand certification mark on local products, you can appeal to added value

KANRA brand certified products



Todoroku Miso



Lemon cake



Local flour
noodles



Honey



Apple juice



Garden eggs



Jam



Tofu dessert



Salad dressing

Experiences can also be contents that contributes to local branding

Original Sake (Rice wine)



Rice planting



Rice harvesting



Sake brewing experience



Original Sake "Kanra ni Hitomebore"



People who participated in the Local Sake Project

Antena Shop

- Located in the Urban Area
- Point of market research and promotion of new products to capture consumer demand
- Administered by Local and/or Central Government



Intervention of Academic Sector

Students' participation to projects



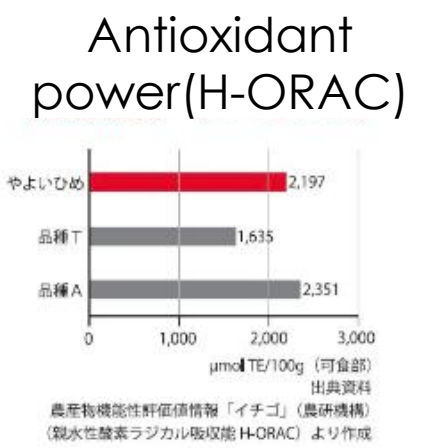
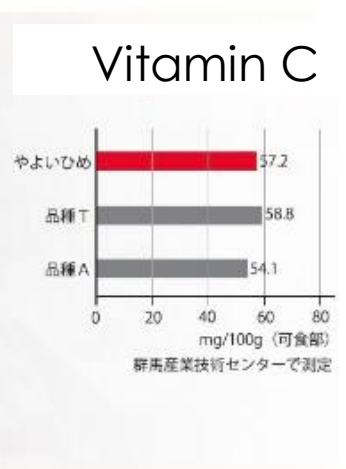
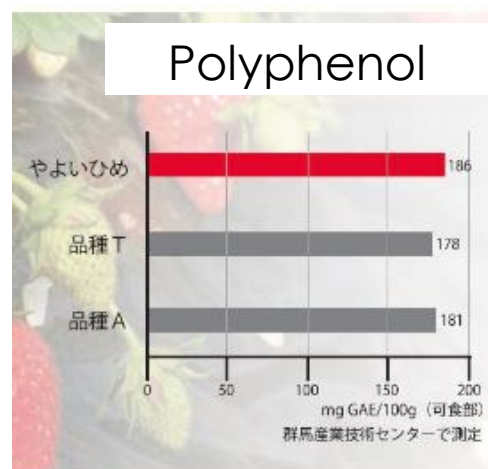
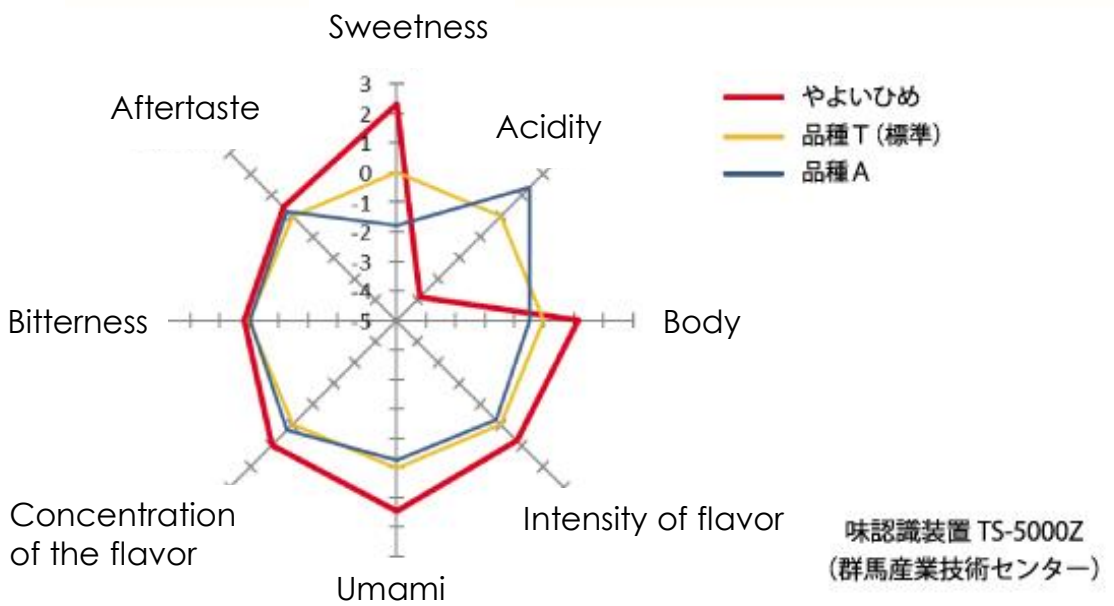
Green Soybean Mince Cutlet
(Agriculture High School,
Numata, Gunma)



Bottled water
(Takasaki University of
Commerce, Takasaki, Gunma)

Intervention of Academic Sector

Research on the functionality of agricultural products



Brand born from a University



First success with cultured tuna (Kinki University)

Identification of local resources

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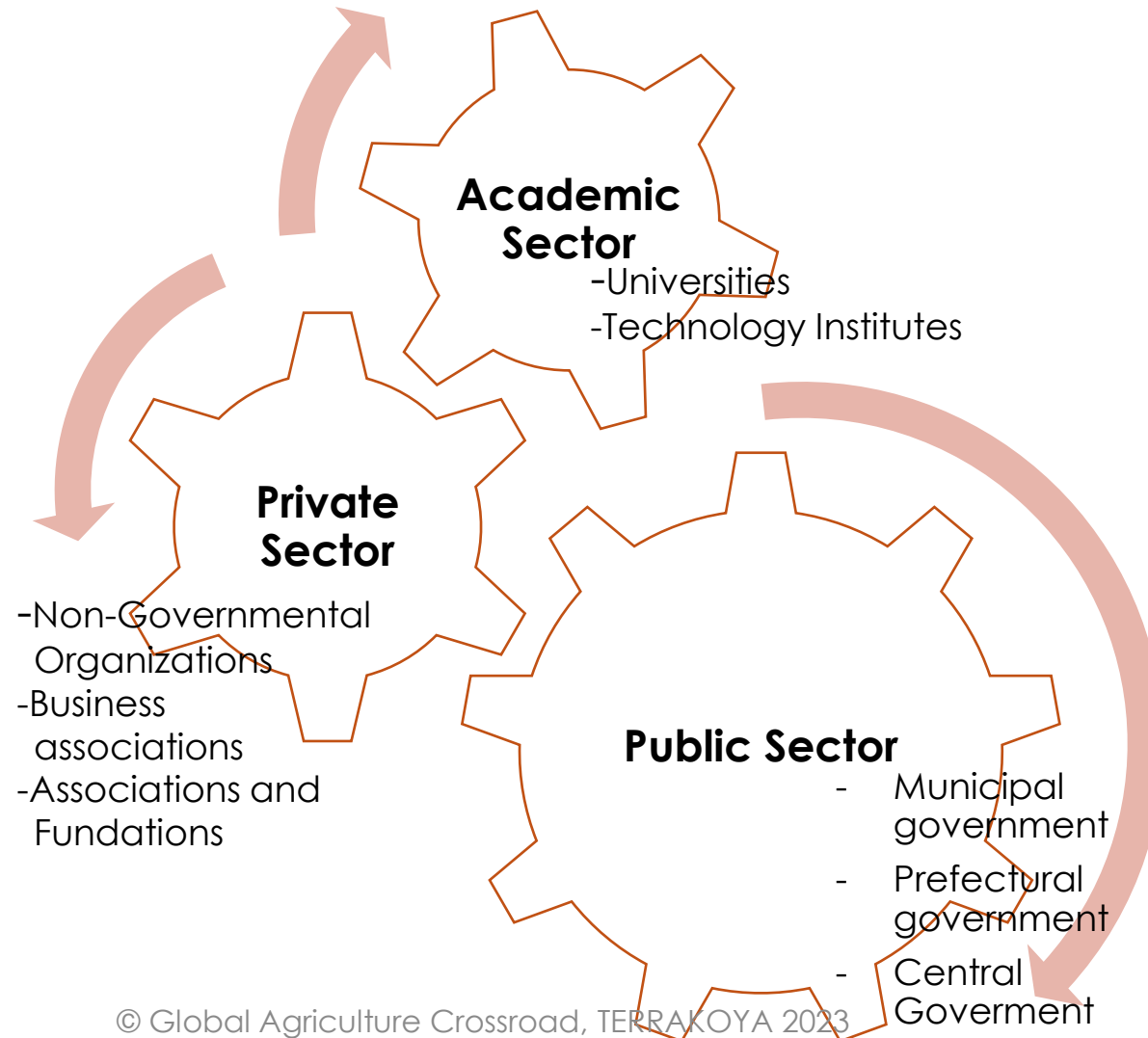
Coordinator training
Participatory activity development
Public relations

Generation of local identity (**Civic Pride**)

Essential elements for branding

- ① Discovery of local resources that can be utilized
 - Rediscovery of the town's products and resources
- ② Have characteristics and personality
 - Storytelling and unique added value
- ③ Involvement of people
 - Collaboration and cooperation with residents, companies, and organizations
- ④ Have a specific place to handle the products
 - Roadside stations, stores, etc.

Importance of the establishment of **support networks** for the communities or municipalities involved, with a line of actors to facilitate and accompany implementation.





Case of Funabashi, Chiba Local Branding by Komatsuna



Thank you for your attention

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***Any questions
and comments?***