

Carbon-Free Agriculture Through Hydrogen

The Future of Farming Starts in Yamanashi

Shine Muscat Grapes Grown with Green Hydrogen

On February 9th, a lighting ceremony for a hydrogen heater was held at the Yamanashi Prefectural Fruit Tree Research Station in Yamanashi City. When Governor Nagasaki pressed a button on a tablet device, Japan's first-ever "hydrogen heater" was ignited. The fuel: green hydrogen produced at Komekurayama (Kofu City). This marks the dawn of a new era in agriculture — one that emits zero CO₂.



Lighting Ceremony at the Fruit Tree Research Station

In the cold February air, many stakeholders gathered at the heated greenhouse of the Fruit Tree Research Station, where Shine Muscat grapes are cultivated — Governor Nagasaki, prefectural assembly members, a factory manager from the developing company, and specialists.

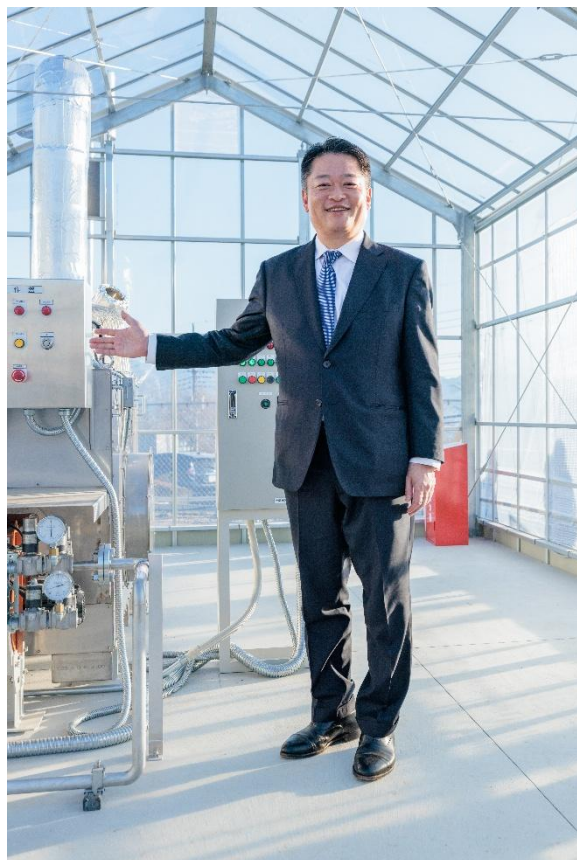
"The world is currently at a major turning point toward the realization of a decarbonized society. Hydrogen, when combined with renewable energy, is truly the trump card — an energy source capable of dramatically reducing environmental impact," Governor Nagasaki said with conviction.

"Moving away from conventional fossil fuels also helps protect the management of farmers who are currently facing yen depreciation and rising energy prices. This is the first step toward building a safe agricultural production system that is not subject to international conditions."

Until now, agricultural greenhouses have primarily been heated using fossil fuels such as heavy oil. However, farmers have constantly faced unstable management conditions due to rising crude oil prices and changes in the international situation. The hydrogen heater is one solution to these problems.

The time for ignition arrived. The governor held a tablet device capable of remotely operating the heater inside the greenhouse. When he touched the button, the heater quietly began to operate.

A prefectural official expressed enthusiasm: "From today, we will begin this innovative demonstration test. We hope to use the utilization of green hydrogen in the agricultural sector as a leading case and disseminate it widely to actual farming sites."



How Does the Hydrogen Heater Work? An Odorless, Eco-Friendly Heater

Beside the hydrogen heater stand 30 cylindrical containers about shoulder-height, lying on their sides. These are known as "candle containers" — a cluster of hydrogen cylinders. Inside, green hydrogen manufactured at Komekurayama is filled at high pressure.

Hydrogen from the cylinders is consolidated into one pipe, then sent to the heater after its pressure is reduced by a decompression device. The heater burns the hydrogen, and its heat warms the greenhouse interior.

Hydrogen is a flammable gas. Accordingly, double and triple safety measures are in place. A technical representative from Katsura Seiki Seisakusho Co., Ltd., which was involved in development, explains:

"The biggest concern with hydrogen is a phenomenon called 'flashback.' When air mixes into the piping, an ignited flame flows back through the pipe and combusts with a burst. Preventing this was crucial."

The answer is "nitrogen purging" — using non-combustible nitrogen gas to expel air from the piping during ignition and extinguishing. Additionally, a physical "flashback arrestor" is installed mid-pipe. Safety is ensured through this dual approach: nitrogen-based control and physical blocking.

Katsura Seiki Seisakusho, headquartered in Yokohama, has its main factory in Sutama-cho, Hokuto City. Since its founding in 1966, the company has developed expertise in LPG supply equipment and has been working on hydrogen utilization since 2014. The hydrogen heater represents the culmination of that technology.

A remote control system via tablet device is adopted, automatically cycling on and off according to the greenhouse temperature settings. At night, it automatically ignites when the temperature drops below the preset level.

When hydrogen burns, only water (water vapor) is produced. No CO₂ is emitted — a decisive difference from conventional heavy oil heaters.



Exploring the Potential of Hydrogen Use in a Demonstration Greenhouse

This demonstration test will be conducted over three years starting in 2026. The greenhouse area is 500 square meters, and the crop is Shine Muscat — Yamanashi Prefecture's prized premium grape. The heater will operate from February to May, maintaining the optimal temperature for growth.

Three major aspects will be investigated: "Safety," "Operability," and "Economic viability." First, safety. Will the system operate safely? Even with extensive safety measures built into

the design, there are things that cannot be known without actual long-term use in the field. This will be carefully monitored over three years.

Next, operability. How much hydrogen will be consumed? This heater has a thermal output of 116 kilowatts and consumes a maximum of 33 cubic meters of hydrogen per hour. Accumulating actual data is important.

Then, economic viability. Heavy oil heaters are currently prevalent on-site. Compared to those, how much hydrogen will be needed and what will the cost be? The breakeven point will be identified — specifically, whether switching to hydrogen can still sustain farmers' profits, balancing expenses and income.

The growth status of the grapes will also be carefully observed: quality, yield, and differences compared to grapes raised with conventional heavy oil heaters. Data will be accumulated over three years on how heater operation and hydrogen consumption change with year-to-year climate variation.

How Will Carbon-Free Shine Muscat Change?

A key feature of the hydrogen heater is that it emits no carbon dioxide during combustion.

The prefecture will establish a carbon-free agricultural production system and appeal to consumers by marketing the fruit as grown in a clean environment.

The story of "eco-friendly Shine Muscat grown with green hydrogen" aims to achieve further added value.

One thing noticed during heater operation: there is no petroleum smell typical of boilers. Odorless hydrogen is a fuel that is also kind to producers.

Of course, hydrogen heaters are not inexpensive at this point. However, by accumulating data through demonstration tests and making repeated improvements, cost reductions can be expected. Looking ahead to widespread adoption at production sites, the prefecture will also consider subsidy policies.

What Only Yamanashi Can Do — Locally Produced, Locally Consumed Energy

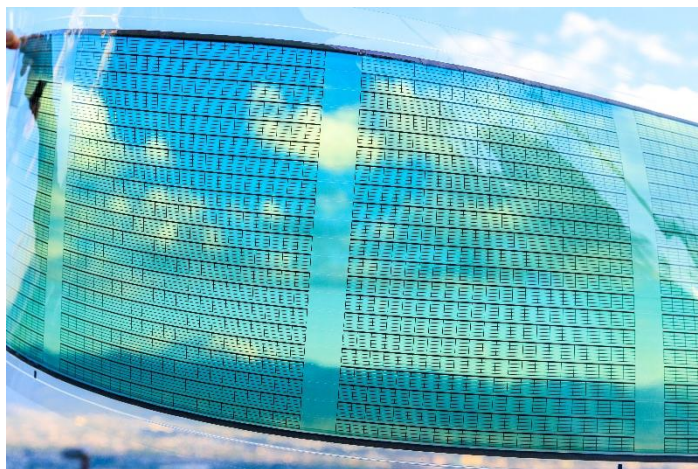
The green hydrogen used as fuel for this demonstration test is entirely manufactured at Komekurayama, where water is electrolyzed using electricity from solar and hydroelectric power (renewable energy) to produce hydrogen — green hydrogen made without any fossil fuels.

The prefecture has been advancing efforts to lead the world in the development and diffusion of green hydrogen. This October, an "International Hydrogen Summit" is scheduled to be held, where experts from around the world will gather and exchange operational know-

how and knowledge accumulated at green hydrogen demonstration sites.

Furthermore, a grander vision exists for the future: install solar cells on greenhouse roofs, use the generated electricity on-site, and send surplus electricity to Komekurayama to produce hydrogen for use as heater fuel — complete local energy production and consumption.

As the first installment of Yamanashi carbon-free agriculture, a demonstration test of grape cultivation using organic thin-film solar cells is also underway. The solar cells generate electricity to power LED lights at night, improving the coloring of Sunshine Red, Yamanashi Prefecture's original grape variety.



"Decarbonized Farm Equipment" Being Deployed One After Another

To develop carbon-free agriculture, electrification verification is also progressing for other farm equipment.

Pruning work is indispensable for grape cultivation. Rechargeable pruning shears and handy saws run on batteries and emit no exhaust fumes. If charged with clean power such as solar energy, CO₂ emissions during the production process can be reduced to zero.



Furthermore, an EV light truck has also been introduced. In the future, it will be charged with electricity produced from renewable energy and used for farm transportation. An electric automatic robot lawnmower has also been equipped. By combining it with the hydrogen heater, carbon-free agriculture can be realized throughout all processes — from cultivation to harvest to transportation.



*Based on information as of February 26. (Applies to all content in this issue.)

[Inquiry] Agricultural Technology Division TEL 055-223-1616 FAX 055-223-1622

Every Resident Feels a Sense of Prosperity

FY2026 Budget Feature

Homeland Resilience and Nation-Building Through Openness

Embodied Through Three Priority Themes

The prefecture submitted its initial budget proposal for FY2026 to the February regular assembly. FY2026 is the final year of the Yamanashi Comprehensive Plan (2023 version). Efforts will accelerate toward "realizing a Yamanashi where every resident feels a sense of prosperity." To embody "Homeland Resilience" and "Nation-Building Through Openness," three themes were selected as priority items: "Challenge to New Global Standards and Values," "Further Strengthening of Residents' Lives," and "Acceleration of the Three-Up Virtuous Cycle."

A Budget to "Fulfill the Mission"

Largest-Ever General Account Initial Budget: 532.1 Billion Yen

While minimizing the burden on the prefecture, national subsidies and advantageous local bonds with low future prefectural burden were utilized to maximize effectiveness. As a result, the proportion of the prefecture's bond budget borne by the national government in the future remains at a high level of 41%. Through such efforts, freely available fiscal resources are effectively used for policy implementation, while the amount drawn from major funds (the prefecture's "savings") is restrained.

*Policy budget: Budget excluding mandatory expenditures (personnel costs, public assistance, debt service)

POINT 1 Challenge to New Global Standards and Values

Fuji Tram

Vehicle selection will consider domestic and European models as candidates. Additionally, cybersecurity measures and operation management systems will be investigated. To support the introduction of the Fuji Tram, and to contribute to the redevelopment of the fifth station and volcanic disaster prevention, basic design work for electricity and telecommunications facilities on Mt. Fuji will be conducted.

Advanced Secondary Transportation

In line with the "Fuji Tram Network Concept," and parallel to formulating the basic policy for restructuring the public transport network, support for municipalities' "public ride-share" demonstration projects and promotion of "autonomous taxi" demonstration projects together with local communities will be strengthened. Additionally, "flying cars," linked with the Linear Central Shinkansen, are highly expected to improve visitor convenience. A demo flight will be held for residents to experience the future of transportation, and candidate sites and facility requirements for takeoff/landing pads will be investigated.

Toward the Realization of a Hydrogen Society

As decarbonization efforts advance worldwide, the Green Hydrogen Park-Hakushu (Hokuto City) in the prefecture is accelerating efforts toward the "implementation" of large-scale hydrogen production technology, attracting high interest from many countries. To discuss the diverse challenges involved in realizing a hydrogen society, an "International Hydrogen Summit" will be held in October. A new consortium for industry-academia-government collaboration will also be established to continuously accumulate and disseminate the "implementation knowledge" and "operational knowledge" that will be the summit's main agenda.

Greening 100-Year Vision

Toward sustainable urban development in harmony with nature, work will begin on the "Yamanashi Greening 100-Year Vision" — a long-term greening guideline looking 100 years ahead — co-designing the future vision for cities and greenery together with residents.

POINT 2 Further Strengthening of Residents' Lives

Housing Environment Improvement Using Vacant Houses

Many inquiries are received from households outside the prefecture wishing to relocate or study in mountain villages in order to raise children in Yamanashi's nature-rich environment. However, a lack of housing for reception in mountainous areas has been a bottleneck. Collaboration with local governments will advance the development of housing making effective use of vacant houses.

Learning Support for High School Students

Support will be provided for high school students from low-income households and single-parent families to advance their education. Online learning support and other learning

environments will be developed.

Support for Securing Child Support for Single-Parent Families

To support the stable lives of single-parent families, expenses for procedures to secure child support will be subsidized.

Building a Stable Food Aid System

In FY2025, emergency food support during extended school holidays was provided for low-income households. Activities of the council connecting donated food and support organizations will be fully launched to realize sustainable support. Temporary food provision will also be made to children's cafeterias.



Acceptance of Foreign Workers

As the working-age population declines, foreign workers are increasing in various fields. To promote acceptance and settlement, matching between companies and foreign workers will be advanced. Support for companies providing Japanese language education to the families of foreign workers will also be expanded.



Asian Black Bear Countermeasures

To strengthen preparedness for emergency culling, the holding of hunter training

workshops and other activities will be promoted. Support will be provided to municipalities tackling the felling of fruit trees left unattended around satoyama (rural landscapes).

International Child Care

International child care that nurtures mutual acceptance of diversity from an early age and awareness as members supporting society together is extremely important. A new research group of experts in multicultural coexistence, education, and childcare will be launched, and the placement of specialist coordinators will be advanced.

POINT 3 Acceleration of the Three-Up Virtuous Cycle

Three-Up: Skill UP ► Revenue UP ► Wage UP

To overcome rising prices, it is important to boost residents' incomes. Accordingly, efforts leading to a virtuous cycle of wage increases will be accelerated.

Prosperity Co-Creation Three-Up

The number of certified companies practicing Three-Up has expanded to exceed 1,000 companies this year. Certified companies will be designated as primary support targets, with preferential treatment in energy-saving/renewable energy equipment introduction subsidies and prefectural financing schemes. New support measures directly contributing to companies' productivity improvement will also be introduced.

Support for Small and Medium Enterprise Equipment Development

New support will be provided for equipment development that greatly contributes to productivity improvement. Furthermore, accountancy work support such as tax accountant advisory contract costs and accounting software introduction will be provided. A new program that allows delegation of application work to administrative scriveners will also be established, covering not just prefectural but also national subsidy applications.

Career-Up University (CUU) Program

The number of CUU participants working on their own skill improvement is steadily increasing. New industry-specific and level-based (from young workers to managers) specialized courses, for which requests have been received, will be established.

Women's Digital Human Resource Development and Employment Support

Feedback from women who attended the digital human resource development course indicated that "the hurdle to actually finding employment is high." Accordingly, a system will

be introduced where participants can learn through actual web production company projects, deliver work, and earn compensation. Accompanying support will be enhanced to secure employment opportunities at prefectural companies.

Supporting SME DX Acceleration

The prefecture will provide consistent support for digital transformation (DX) in small and medium enterprises (SMEs), promoting productivity improvement. Human resource development promoting DX within companies will also be supported.

Carer Support

Support for carers facing the risk of leaving employment due to caregiving contributes to improving labor participation rates. Seminars and advisor dispatches will promote awareness reform among companies and behavioral change within organizations. Training of work support care managers and their dispatch to companies will be undertaken.

*Some items are also included in the February supplementary budget.

Source: Yamanashi Prefecture "Carer Actual Conditions Survey 2025"

Supporting Young Chefs! Utilizing the "Regional Revitalization Cooperator" Program

Yamanashi Prefecture is a treasure trove of ingredients blessed with nature's bounty — fruits, wine, traditional vegetables, and more. To make use of these local ingredients, the prefecture is pursuing the establishment of a "Gourmet Economy." This feature introduces the support measures for young chefs being undertaken as part of that effort.

The "Gourmet Economy" that Yamanashi Prefecture targets is not about having tourists enjoy a meal as a bonus during sightseeing, but about creating a new framework where "food itself becomes the purpose of the trip" — people go to Yamanashi specifically to eat that dish.

Nurturing chefs is essential to having many people think "I want to go there just to eat." At the same time, it is necessary to disseminate information and prepare content about Yamanashi's fine wines and cuisine, so that young next-generation chefs also choose Yamanashi as a place to open their businesses.

Starting in 2025, young chefs will be appointed as "Regional Revitalization Cooperators," with the aim of having them settle in the prefecture. The Regional Revitalization Cooperator program is a Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications program that aims for settlement by moving one's residence from urban areas to another municipality, engaging in "regional cooperation activities" such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, and development and PR of special products during the specified period.

From January 20 to 22 of this year, the prefecture held a "Trial Regional Revitalization Cooperator" program. Seven chefs and restaurant professionals wishing to work in Yamanashi were introduced to prefectural ingredients and toured leading restaurants in the prefecture.

On the first day, January 20, participants visited the "Yamanashi Fine Wine and Food Matching Business Meeting" held at Hotel Kaneyamaen in Fujiyoshida City. On the day, 17 producers carrying prefectural ingredients, the Trial Cooperators, and other food industry professionals gathered and conducted business meetings.

These Ingredients Were Gathered! Yamanashi Fine Wine and Food Matching Business Meeting

Many branded pork varieties exist in the prefecture. Some are even raised on local wine.



Made by hanging cheese on a string, resulting in a gourd-like shape.



Tomatoes cultivated in Fujiyoshida City. The large temperature difference between morning and evening makes the flesh grow sweet.



A fluffy-textured "Takenoko-imo (Kyoto Taro)" is grown in the area around Uenohara City.



Maitake Mushrooms (Log-Grown): A specialty of Tabayama Village, grown with ample sunlight. Characterized by deep black color and strong aroma.



Herbs: Fresh, aromatic prefectural herbs are frequently used in restaurants in Tokyo.



Koshu Miso: Fermented using two types of koji — rice and barley. The proportion of koji varies by manufacturer.



What Were the Matching Results?

We asked producers about the business meetings at the Yamanashi Fine Wine and Food Matching Business Meeting, which was attended by 17 producers of agricultural, livestock, and aquatic products, sake breweries, and manufacturers from within Yamanashi Prefecture.



— Why did you participate in the business meeting?

Because I thought it would be a great opportunity to make our store known to many people.

— How was the response from the chefs?

It was very good. For example, I had the impression that in the past many people felt foreign wines and cheeses had more added value, but recently, more people are choosing domestic products from the perspective of local production/consumption and food mileage (an indicator showing the environmental burden of transportation from production site to table). People from the metropolitan area seem particularly responsive to the phrase "Yamanashi Prefecture-grown."

— Looking forward to the future.

Yes. Many people called out to me, which also gave me confidence.

Learning Yamanashi's Food Possibilities in the Field

To have young chefs experience prefectural ingredients and terroir, they visited various restaurants and farms. After the business meeting, participants visited "notori" restaurant in Oshino Village.

"notori" is a restaurant offering "Fuji Hokuroku Cuisine" making use of fresh local ingredients. Chef Kohei Horiuchi, who won the grand prize at Japan's largest chef competition "REDU-35202021," presides as chef, while his brother Moichiro, a sommelier, handles drink pairings with the course meals.

On the day, an eleven-dish course was presented pairing prefectural wines and sake, and a talk was held about the pariage of fine wine and cuisine using prefectural ingredients.

Among the highlights, the signature dish "Budding" features not just the game and wild plants used, but even the plate on which the dish is served is made from prefectural materials. It is conceived with the image of "cuisine budding from Yamanashi's soil." By using all local ingredients, it is designed to be less susceptible to rising material costs and climate change, with the intention to "provide it stably at any time." Participants commented: "I didn't realize Yamanashi Prefecture's ingredients were this rich" and "Even if I'm not selected as a Regional Revitalization Cooperator, I want to maintain ties with Yamanashi Prefecture going forward."

Subsequent activities included learning about freshwater fish aquaculture such as sweetfish, rainbow trout, and Fujinosuke at the Prefectural Fisheries Technology Center, and experiencing the cultivation of water rape and water green onion in Fujiyoshida City, taking three full days to deeply experience Yamanashi's food.



Voices from "Trial Regional Revitalization Cooperator" Participants

Takeshi Abe



Born in Hokuto City, Yamanashi, 1988. After graduating high school, joined a local restaurant aiming to become a chef. Subsequently worked as a chef in Canada and Australia. After returning to Japan, experienced diverse food businesses including French cuisine restaurants, and honed his skills at an established Chinese restaurant in Hakuba Village, Nagano Prefecture. Has served as second-generation head chef since 2015.

Since graduating high school, I have honed my skills in various places both domestically and internationally. While I feel I have been blessed with very honorable opportunities, I was thinking I wanted to work in my hometown of Yamanashi when I learned of the Regional Revitalization Cooperator program.

Through visiting many producers this time, what I re-recognized was the high quality of Yamanashi Prefecture's ingredients. On the other hand, juices that would sell for 5,000 yen at Tokyo department stores are sometimes selling for around 3,000 yen.

One thing I have valued throughout my culinary career is paying producers appropriate prices. For that, I polish my cooking skills and make customers happy. And receive compensation from customers... I have been mindful of creating this kind of "happy cycle." Once I start activities as a Regional Revitalization Cooperator, I want to work on expanding awareness of Yamanashi Prefecture's ingredients and further enhancing their brand power.

Kenya Suzuki



Born in Ota Ward, Tokyo, 1993. After graduating from Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, joined an IT company. From 2020, studied cooking at "Shima Shoku no Terakoya" in Shimane Prefecture. After working at a Japanese cuisine restaurant in Ginza, Tokyo, became chef at the creative cuisine restaurant "Lift Up" in Sapporo, Hokkaido (now relocated to Yoichi). Subsequently worked at a creative cuisine restaurant in Akita Prefecture, and now serves as chef and product developer at "Kemuri to Hana" in Koshu City.

My connection to Yamanashi Prefecture began when I started working at "Kemuri to Hana" in Koshu City, an alternative food space for multidimensionally experiencing Koshu's food. Until then, I had cooked in various regions including Shimane, Tokyo, Hokkaido, and Akita, and currently live a two-base lifestyle in Yamanashi and Tokyo.

At "Kemuri to Hana," I cherish cooking that emerges from daily life while keeping an eye on the changing seasons. Feeling affinity with this concept and thinking "I want to learn more about Yamanashi," I discovered this recruitment. Through my life in Yamanashi, my understanding of ingredients, climate, and local characteristics has deepened, and connections with producers have gradually begun. Yamanashi Prefecture has no sea, but precisely because it doesn't, I feel there is "room to create new things." If I become a Regional Revitalization Cooperator, I have many things I want to try, such as developing "Masu-bushi" (bonito flakes-style cured fish) using prefectural trout.

"Yamanashi Fine Wine and Food" official Instagram is sending out information on events and ingredients for chefs and producers!



[Inquiry] Tourism Promotion Division TEL 055-223-8876 FAX 055-223-1438

The Delicious Smiles and Community Bonds a Kitchen Car Delivers

"Mobile Community Cafeteria" Has Launched!

In Yamanashi Prefecture right now, a "Mobile Community Cafeteria" delivering both delicious meals and a "place of belonging" has begun. What does this new kind of "place of belonging" that the whole community nurtures look like? We report from the scene of this model project.



Aiming to Create a "Place of Belonging" Where Multiple Generations Gather

On a clear day in late January, a kitchen car was standing by in front of the community center in Showa-cho Saijo Niku. As the appetite-whetting aroma of the day's featured menu item, "Dashi Curry," wafted through the air, the "Mobile Community Cafeteria" opened for business. This model project is scheduled to continue from January to June 2026, and will be held twice a month in each of two areas: Fujikawa-cho and Showa-cho.

The background is the aging and increase in elderly people living alone that is progressing within the prefecture. Particularly in mountainous areas, many people tend to stay indoors in winter, and data shows that about 40% of residents in the Kyonan region feel lonely. The Mobile Community Cafeteria using kitchen cars was born from the desire to "not just wait, but go into the community to prevent elderly isolation and support health-building."

The aim is to use meals as an opportunity for people to leave their homes and exchange words with community members. People can also receive health consultations such as blood pressure measurement and "frailty checks" by public health nurses. The goal of this project is to become a "health spot for mind and body" for residents.



The meal cost is intentionally set at 500 yen. This is to enable anyone to participate easily without feeling burdened by the sense of "receiving welfare services." Menus are carefully selected for good nutritional balance, adequate hydration, and body-warming qualities. At the first session in Fujikawa-cho, "pork miso udon" was provided.

Operating staff and public health nurses also value unobtrusive "watching over" at the venue: "Are they steady on their feet?" "Are they choking?" "Is their clothing in order?" Noticing small changes from the state of meals and movement, health conditions are confirmed through natural conversation.

A prefectural official notes: "In Fujikawa-cho, many people come by inviting neighbors, and it seems to have provided an opportunity for men who tended to stay indoors to go outside." Meanwhile, in Showa-cho, many women take food home for their husbands via takeout, and the respective local character and the "difficulty of male participation" unique to urban areas have also emerged as challenges. Nevertheless, voices from participants such as "It's wonderful to eat with someone" and "I'm glad I could consult with a public health nurse" are a great encouragement to the operational side.

Saijo Niku District Head Hiroshi Takenaka shares his hopes: "In the future, I'd like to see this develop into something like a local marche, where residents take the initiative to gather regularly. That way, natural care and watching over could flow from conversations like 'We haven't seen that person lately.'" A prefectural official also looks ahead: "The kitchen car is merely a means. Ultimately, we want a place where anyone can casually gather through 'food' to spread throughout the prefecture. The ideal is a form that can become self-sustaining — with color unique to each region — such as collaborating with children's cafeterias or serving local specialties."

The Mobile Community Cafeteria is available to anyone regardless of residence. Please feel

free to stop by. Delicious food, warm time sharing meals with the community, and wonderful encounters may be waiting for you.



[Inquiry] Healthy Longevity Promotion Division TEL 055-223-1450 FAX 055-223-1469

[Series] Interviews with Yamanashi Residents Earnestly Aiming for the Future —
"Yamanashi Kenjin"

Carving the Resolve to Inherit into Jewels Each Day



Sumire Sakai — Jewelry Craft Fukasawa

A single gemstone determined a vocational student's career path. It was a stone carved with a beautiful pattern called "Koshu Kiseki Kiriko." Captivated by its kaleidoscope-like brilliance, Sumire Sakai stepped into the world of artisans.

The origins of Yamanashi Prefecture's gem polishing and jewelry industry are said to date back to the late Edo period. A craftsman from Kyoto who came to purchase raw crystal produced in the Kinpu Mountain area of northern Yamanashi is said to have passed on polishing techniques. Among the techniques inherited continuously for 200 years, "Koshu Kiseki Kiriko" is considered a gem carving technique unlike anything else in the world. It was born through collaboration between Yoichi Fukasawa, who received the "Yellow Ribbon Medal," and Yukio Shimizu of Shimizu Precious Stones Inc.

HISTORY

2000: Born in Fuefuki City

2019: Enrolled in Yamanashi Prefectural Institute of Gemology and Jewelry Art

2020: Learned of the existence of Koshu Kiseki Kiriko

2022: Joined Jewelry Craft Fukasawa

My Heart Leaped at First Sight

Sumire Sakai, who says "When I get absorbed in something, I can't stop thinking about it," became enchanted by the world of "Koshu Kiseki Kiriko" — gem carving — about five years ago. At the time, she was a second-year student at the Yamanashi Prefectural Jewelry Art College.

"There was a class where we created jewelry of our own design. While brainstorming ideas, I learned of the existence of Koshu Kiseki Kiriko."

The delicate Japanese decoration, the refraction of light created by the kiriko — though it was an image on the internet, Sakai was instantly captivated by its beauty, as if looking through a kaleidoscope.

"At that moment, I thought 'I want to try this!' And coincidentally, Yoichi Fukasawa, the creator of Koshu Kiseki Kiriko, was the teacher for that class."

The material she chose was crystal. Using some of the kiriko techniques, Sakai attempted to carve a snowflake pattern into crystal with its glass-like transparency. However, carving lines into a hard stone was more difficult than expected. Meanwhile, when Fukasawa demonstrated, crystals appeared on the crystal as if drawing with a brush.

"Give it more depth at the center," and other advice from Fukasawa, Sakai worked earnestly to complete her work. The completed work was even selected as the main visual for an exhibition poster.

Gradually, an irresistible feeling began to fill her heart — she wanted to work under Fukasawa. And she reached her final year of school.

"I directly appealed to him, saying 'Please let me work with you,' without any expectation of success."

But no answer came on the spot. "Since the teacher can do everything alone, I would only be in the way. Honestly, I thought it would be difficult."

However, three months later, there was a dramatic turn of events. Fukasawa reached out, saying he wanted to decide on hiring after observing Sakai's class performance. And the result was a successful hiring. Fukasawa recalls those times:

"There are many people with technical skills. But she has an openness and the ability to absorb new things. For an artisan, these are very important qualities."

Henceforth: Practice, Practice, Practice

For a while, Sakai "couldn't believe it was really happening." When she finally settled into her chair in the workshop after joining the company, the surprise finally became real, and joy welled up.

At an exhibition she participated in in her first year with the company, she was blessed with an opportunity where a work she had processed herself was purchased by a customer.

One day, she was tasked with polishing a stone brought in by a customer. The stone already had magnificent kiriko carving by Fukasawa. Polishing tools — metal, silicone, and others — must be selected appropriately according to the stone, because hardness differs entirely depending on the type of stone.

"But that day, what I thought was topaz was actually a stone called fluorite."

Sakai, having mistaken the stone, used tools meant for topaz. As a result, she ended up shaving away the kiriko carved by Fukasawa. By the time she noticed, it was already too late. Left in her hands was fluorite carved jaggedly. Fukasawa never scolded her, but that was precisely what made it painful.

"Since then, I always confirm the stone without fail."

Fukasawa took about 25 years from conceiving the idea of Koshu Kiseki Kiriko to realizing it. Sakai's journey also still has a long way to go.

"I don't want something this beautiful to end with the teacher's generation. I absolutely want to inherit it."

Today, Sakai continues to polish her own skills.



FUREAI SQUARE

PHOTO SPACE

Would you like to have your photos featured in FUREAI? We're waiting for your special shots!



Pool Transformed into a Fantasy Space: "Blue Lotus," one of the works from Fuji Textile Week 2025. The old pool of Shimoyoshida daiichi Elementary School was transformed into a beautiful space.



Double Lucky: A "child-hugging Fuji" and "inverted Fuji" from Shojiko. Even living in Yamanashi, I've never seen it this beautiful.



Enjoying Vietnam!: "Vietnam Hometown Spring Festival 2026" held at Kofu Station North Exit Yocchabare Plaza in February. I enjoyed the exotic atmosphere with Vietnamese food stalls and trying on the traditional Vietnamese dress Ao zai.



A Slightly Rich Reward: UCC Ueshima Coffee's hydrogen-roasted coffee is roasted using green hydrogen manufactured at Komekurayama in Kofu City as a heat source, resulting in zero CO₂ emissions. It's so wonderful that something eco-friendly can also be this delicious!



Famous Parfait from a Popular Drama: The "Hide-and-seek Parfait" at the "Monblan" coffee shop (Fujiyoshida City) that appeared in the drama "Hot Spot." I had fun recreating the drama scene with three friends.



A Quietly Mysterious Spot: A stone Buddha with distinctive shape called the "Neck Jizo" in Yamanashi City Mizuguchi. Legend has it that a traveling monk made it to console the spirit of a girl who was buried under a rock in a landslide long ago.

Children on the Cover



Launched a Hydrogen Rocket, Connected by Balloon: A message card on a balloon launched at the sports day at Kai City Municipal Ryuoukita Nursery. It flew approximately 100 km to the planned construction site of the Nishi-Shinjuku Hydrogen Station of Tomoe Shokai Co., Ltd. The card had the message "May everyone have a happy future." Through this mysterious connection with the company that supports Yamanashi's hydrogen business, the hydrogen rocket experience of that day was held.

Q&A SPACE

This corner answers questions about prefectural administration sent in by readers. The question in this issue is:



Toshihiro Aoyagi, Research Management Official, Fisheries Technology Center

Q: Is it difficult to photograph the spawning of Kunimasu?

The spawning grounds of Kunimasu are at a water depth of 30 meters, with a water temperature of about 5° C, making diving surveys difficult. From long-term research, we predicted spawning grounds, installed live cameras, and for the first time in the world, succeeded in filming in the natural environment.

Q: Is Kunimasu a rare fish to begin with?

Prized since the Edo period, it was said to be a high-value fish called "one fish for one sho of rice" and was used as gifts. It was thought to have gone extinct in Lake Tazawa in Akita Prefecture in the 1940s, but was discovered in Lake Saiko in 2010. Currently, Yamanashi is the only place in the world where Kunimasu exists in the wild.



Q: What new prospects emerged from the successful filming?

The ecology of juvenile Kunimasu is unknown, not just spawning behavior. Using the cameras at the spawning site, we aim to observe how juveniles hatch from eggs and grow, and to establish aquaculture technology for Kunimasu.



Q: What is necessary to protect Kunimasu?

The Kunimasu spawning grounds in Lake Saiko have only been confirmed at one location with spring water at the lake bottom, and it is a miracle that they are still alive today. I believe protecting the natural environment and ecosystem of Lake Saiko is most important.

[Inquiry] Fisheries Technology Center TEL 055-277-4758 FAX 055-277-3049

Delivering the 'Now' — Yamanashi Prefectural Policy News

POLICY NEWS YAMANASHI

01 Creating New Food Culture — Partnership with Major Cooking Class Company — High Value-Added

On February 10, the prefecture concluded an agreement with ABC Cooking Studio Co., Ltd. (Chiyoda Ward, Tokyo), which operates one of the world's largest cooking school chains, for the purpose of adding value and promoting sales of prefectural ingredients.

Both parties will utilize their respective assets and know-how to collaborate on enhancing the prefecture's brand power and tourism promotion through food, as well as creating opportunities for food and learning such as cooking classes for residents. They will also cooperate on dispatching company employees to the prefecture through corporate furusato tax donations, and advance work together on developing furusato tax return gifts and disseminating information to chefs considering opening businesses.

At the agreement ceremony, Governor Nagasaki expressed his hopes: "Through this collaboration, I want many people to come into contact with and become fond of Yamanashi's food culture."

The prefecture will continue to work with companies to disseminate the appeal of Yamanashi's food.



02 Strengthening Connections with India — Exchange Network Established — International Exchange

A framework for municipalities within Japan to cooperate and advance exchange with India — the "Japan-India Friendship Exchange Promotion Governor Network" — was established on February 16.

Compared to the scale of Japanese municipalities, India has many large states with very large populations. Accordingly, this network has Japanese municipalities join forces to advance exchange with India's various states.

Participating municipalities will share information about the Indian states with which they have exchange relationships with other municipalities. Yamanashi Prefecture will serve as the contact point for Uttar Pradesh, with which it has a friendly relationship, and will assist when other prefectures wish to exchange with that state. And when Yamanashi wishes to exchange with other Indian states, it can consult with other municipalities to expand new exchanges.

Even in exchange with countries of greatly different population scales, greater opportunities are created when Japanese municipalities cooperate with each other. Yamanashi Prefecture will continue to promote exchange with India and other overseas countries together with domestic municipalities, further expanding international connections.



Kotaro Dialogue

To Prevent Giving Up Work Due to Caregiving

Caregiving begins suddenly one day.

People take on all the responsibility alone for the sake of their family, making it difficult to balance with work. This is what creates "caregiving retirement."

While working on "zero caregiving waitlists" by developing nursing care facilities and other measures, we are now aiming for "zero caregiving retirement" by supporting carers who are struggling at the stage before that.

On February 5, at the "Talking with the Governor About Building Yamanashi" session, I listened to people who are balancing work and caregiving.

I was reminded once again of the importance of the manager's perspective — not of taking on all caregiving oneself, but of connecting with professionals as needed and organizing the caregiving system.

I will reflect these insights in policy and advance the construction of a support system to support carers.

Let us together create a society where everyone can work with peace of mind, facing this issue as a whole society.

*Starting from this issue, we will be delivering messages from Governor Kotaro Nagasaki.

Consumer Trouble to Watch Out for in a New Life

Unknown Business Operator Suddenly Visiting!? "Door-to-Door Sales" → Firmly decline any unwanted contracts.

"Get-Rich-Quick Schemes" to Watch Out for Even in a New Life → Don't jump at stories that seem too good to be true.

"Communication Contracts" for Internet Lines, etc. → Thoroughly confirm the pricing plan and service details in writing, and receive proper explanations.

If in trouble, please consult at the following:

Yamanashi Prefecture Residents' Life Center ☎ 055-235-8455

Consumer Hotline ☎ 188 (Nationwide common number)



Reader Present — Drawing for 3 Winners

Answer the Survey and Apply!

Please answer items ①–⑤ and the survey. Applications by postcard or application form.

① Postal code ② Address ③ Name ④ Age ⑤ Telephone number

*Applications limited to once per person.

Survey

Question 1: What content in this issue did you find most interesting, and why?

Question 2: Please tell us your recommended restaurant and why.

Application Destination: Yamanashi Prefecture Public Hearing and PR Group, "FUREAI Reader Present" Section

〒400-8501 1-6-1 Marunouchi, Kofu City

Application form: <https://forms.office.com/r/dGYMVfANM9>

Deadline: Thursday, April 30 (postmarked by this date)



Prize: Rich, moist Baumkuchen plain (2-piece set) made with eggs from free-range healthy chickens

*Product photo is for illustration purposes only Product provided by: Kurofuji Farm

FUREAI is also available in English and Chinese.

Published April 1, Reiwa 8 (2026) — Yamanashi Prefecture Public Hearing and PR Group

〒400-8501 1-6-1 Marunouchi, Kofu City

TEL 055-223-1338 FAX 055-223-1525