

Lecture: How can Ancient Agricultural Practices in Japan and the USA Inform Modern Agriculture Sustainability?



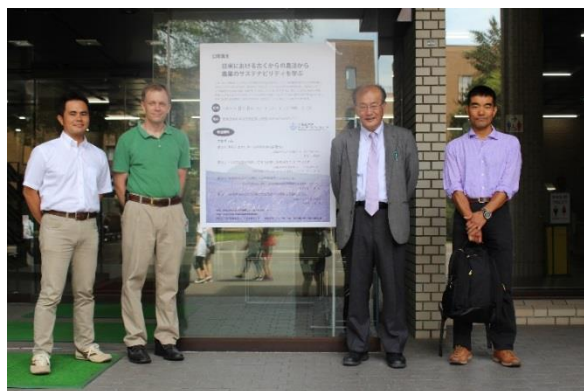
Date and Time August 8 (Wed) 13:30 – 16:30 (Reception 13:00)
Organizer Field Science Center for Northern Biosphere
Co-Organizer Graduate School of Global Food Resources
Venue Conference Hall, Hokkaido University

The expansive *Miscanthus* grasslands in Aso, Kyushu, Japan, have been maintained by farmers for more than a thousand years for grazing, building materials, manure for rice fields and tourism. In the semi-arid southwestern United States, Native American tribes cultivated succulent *Agave* plants for several hundreds of years as crops for food, fiber, beverages, and medicine. In recent years, interest has grown to produce both *Miscanthus* and *Agave* for bioenergy.

In this lecture, participants learned how traditional agricultural practices can inform sustainable, modern-day cultivation of these crops, particularly in the context of overpopulation and global climate change. The researchers from Japan introduced *Miscanthus* while invited researchers from the USA introduced *Agave* plants. Both mentioned the superiority of these kind of plants as sustainable products and their future possibilities.

There were 37 participants, including 18 Hokkaido University students (12 Japanese students and 6 international students), 4 faculty members, and 15 members of the public. Many questions related to the characteristics of *Miscanthus* and *Agave* plants were asked by participants, leading to lively and fruitful discussions.

The researchers are considering applying for the JSPS Bilateral Joint Research Project to develop the lecture content into an international symposium to be held in the USA in the near future. Moreover, they are applying for research funding to stimulate international joint research between Japan and the USA.



Group photo of lecturers



A lecture given by Prof. Yamada