

## The Restoration of Agriculture

### The now-vanished lifestyle of small farmers



▲ Damaged farmland, visible in the foreground, was regenerated through the farmland development program.

Photo courtesy of Agriculture and Rural Development Department, Miyagi Prefecture Kesennuma Regional Development Office

In Minamisanriku, 462 hectares of farmland suffered flood damage.

Before the earthquake, many farmers had owned farmland near their homes, mainly growing vegetables for their own consumption. There was an established lifestyle of giving each other (neighbors and relatives) excess vegetables that they themselves could not consume. The giving and receiving of produce nurtured a community of human contact, with people helping each other whenever a problem arose.

However, with the damage caused by the tsunami, farmers were forced to move to higher ground, leaving their farmland behind. Crops were no longer cultivated, and the culture of produce exchange died out.

When it came to the restoration of farmland, Minamisanriku felt compelled to choose a different path to the farmland management of the past. For individual, small-scale farmers who were also having to rebuild their homes, investing in the redevelopment of agricultural machinery and facilities was a challenge. Local government thus made every attempt to consolidate farmland while also promoting the effective use of agricultural land and efficient farming through measures such as farmland improvement programs.

Farming resumed on 181 hectares, which accounts for approximately 66% of the developed farmland area. Farmland development program was run on 86 of the 181 hectares.